

SETTING THE STAGE FOR UNITY & PROGRESS

Our steps for facilitating effective team outcomes

Prior to engaging in the process of helping teams to do challenging work, we conduct a thorough assessment to help create a picture of the culture we will encounter. The assessment also assists organizational leaders and guides training and change objectives.

In most cases, the steps that follow assessment loosely parallel Tuckman's phases of team development—Forming (Connection), Storming (Movement), Norming (Growth), and Performing (Consolidation). A group development framework accounts for the responses of people engaged in conversations previously avoided or glossed over. Presently, most teams are re-learning how to relate to each other and communicate as they have tough conversations. Catalyst coaches employ the following strategies to lay the foundation for conversations that move the needle and make a difference.

THE PATH TO SETTING THE STAGE

1. **Lower the Temperature**—We first disarm our audience by guiding conversations in ways that feel safe and calm—a distinct departure from what some people have experienced over the years. With a set of strategies for “Turning the Corner,” we equip teams with guidelines for creating a productive environment. Our participants commonly report feeling calm and reassured, because we ensure that our sessions are free of personal attacks and singling out that can derail productive conversations.
2. **Spotlight the Elephant in the Room**—Ownership is essential. It is all but guaranteed someone in a room has sat through training that hasn't delivered. Someone must own that shortcoming. We call out mistakes of the past and assure our participants we will create a space that feels safe to explore. Sometimes you must fix things you didn't break.
3. **Discover Common Ground**—We have found that finding common ground is one of the most efficient and effective ways to prepare groups for challenging conversations. With activities that reveal commonalities (basic similarities, life events, values, vision, goals, mission), we stimulate the formation of a type of bias—Affinity Bias. In the case of building bonds quickly, this type of bias can be desirable. People feel closer once they have identified similarities with one another.
4. **Build Intimacy**—With similarities revealed, we often have teams work in small groups, where individuals are more likely to engage in conversations, share their perspectives, and take risks. With greater intimacy comes greater empathy. People more easily put themselves in others' shoes. Intimacy and empathy inoculate relationships for tough conversation. When people care for each other, the words between them have more power.

5. **The Emergence of Trust**—Trust is a product of safety—the safety of things we value most. Creating an environment where each participant is charged with the safety of the others—not their own—can be a very effective method for building trust. Most people value relationships, reputation, peace, expression, autonomy, respect, etc. If steps 1-4 are effectively implemented, then trust will follow. The rate and depth of trust-building will vary, based on the people in an organization.
6. **Successful Rehearsal**—Where a certain level of risk is involved, each conversation between training participants is a rehearsal—a test. With each successful test, people learn that it is possible to take risks and emerge in a better place. Even if there is no major progress, sometimes emerging unscathed can be a win. Our job is to ensure, at a minimum, that every rehearsal concludes with participants feeling whole and heard.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

If we set the stage properly, relationships will be the result. Even participants with existing relationships will discover a deeper understanding and richer dialogue. Relationship building is an ongoing element of successful training experiences. The strategies we employ create the space for relationships and, as a result, the capacity for entry into dialogue that is likely to be uncomfortable for some participants at points. Relationship building overcomes communication barriers as the similarities between people, and the possibilities available, overshadow the challenges they face. Relationships make the work worth doing.

Where relationships exist, people are more prone to listen intentionally and share authentically. Through each other, they see more of the “big picture”—the whole story. When there are more voices in the conversation, blind spots become visible and behaviors change.

Ultimately, the existence of relationships and a safe environment to learn, creates a space where blind spots—unconscious bias—can be discussed and identified in a way that illuminates rather than ostracizes.

**Want to discuss how to create an experience that helps you and your team
see what you've been missing?**

Schedule a 30-minute consultation with us!

Go to www.connectmovegrow.com and click the button to schedule.

www.connectmovegrow.com