Ten Conversations To Have At Work
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Conversation	What this creates	What to expect	What happens if it is missing	Ways to start the conversation
Meaning	Creates a shared context for our working together. It allows people to show their values and principles; it reveals intention.	A connection with others; grounding for coordinated action; insight into our beliefs and values.	Our understanding of our work together remains superficial and our commitment to doing the work together is ambivalent. It is often evidenced by lack of action, motivation, energy	Why is this important to you? Why does this matter? What are we supposed to be doing?
Personal Power	Generates the awareness of inner knowledge. Validates personal wisdom and experience as sources for addressing complex problems.	A sense of purpose, energy and drive that create trust, responsibility and a willingness to see new possibilities and make new offers.	There is an over-reliance on rules, compliance and positional power to generate strategy and take action.	If you could move forward on your own, what would you do? What prevents you from exercising your power? If there were no constraints how might you approach this? What do you need from us to support you?
Relationship	Creates commitment, accountability, trust, and responsibility	This conversation results in moving into action with a shared purpose and ownership	Without conversations of relationship the possibility for effective coordinated action is compromised. We lose our cohesiveness, potential, the ability to have a meeting of minds, etc.	I'm not satisfied with our level of commitment and I'd like us to talk about it. I'd like to hear what you value about our working together? How can we build a cohesive working relationship
Success	Conversations of success allow us to understand our client and each other's conditions of satisfaction around outcomes.	This conversation enables us to align different needs and wants for effective action.	Without this conversations, we are may go off in different directions with our own ideas of success and thus fail to deliver satisfactory product or service. Even if the work is satisfied we could experience personal disappointment and alienation.	What would constitute a successful outcome for each of us? What are the client's conditions of satisfaction for this project?
Possibility	Creates new futures and potentials for action. It calls forth the creative artist in all of us.	This conversation brings new ideas, directions, or opportunities to our organizing. Possibility allows discovery of new terrains/ horizons.	Without conversations of possibility, new ideas would be limited; we may rely too much on existing frameworks and established ways of doing things.	What can we create together? What is possible? What are the different options? What is open to us? What is our true potential? What haven't we considered?

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Accountability	Conversations of accountability generate publicly our intentions for the things for which we want to be responsible.	Individual promises and commitments and the personal responsibility for their fulfillment.	Possibilities for coordinated action are unknown and group members operate on ungrounded assumptions and expectations. With continued breakdowns the trend is to go towards compliance.	In what ways are you willing to contribute towards our success? What are you willing to say yes to? What do you say no to? What are the consequences for each of us of taking this action? What's required of us that no one has yet taken responsibility for?
Commitment and Promises	Future action. Conversations of commitments and promises are linked to accountability. These conversations tell others what I am willing to do and what others can expect from us.	All the elements for coordinated action are in place.	Without conversations of commitments and promises the possibilities for coordinated action remain vague. May contribute to a culture of blame and recrimination.	What is your commitment to the project so that we can meet our goals? What is your commitment to me so that I can be successful? What has each of us promised to?
Action	Conversations for action generate the doing that allow fulfill our intentions and achieve our desired outcomes.	Activities consistent with promises and commitments that we have agreed are needed for success.	Without conversations of action, there is likely to be confusion and conflict about what to do next. Without this conversation, we could be stuck in speculation.	Lets coordinate our tasks in order to get this work done. How are you progressing on your section of the report? Do you want my input?
Results	Generates the conditions of satisfaction for completing the work	Clarity on what we are trying to achieve; an understanding of what will satisfy us. It makes tangible our commitments, promises and accountability	Lack of agreement/understanding as to when the work is complete. The grounds for verifying whether our promises and commitments have been fulfilled	What outcome do we want to see? Is this bottom line reasonable? What does our customer expect? What do you expect as a result of our working together? What do you expect that our work will produce?
Reflection	Conversations of reflection generate the insights derived from reviewing and assessing where we have been and what we have learned.	This conversation allows us to make sense of complex situations. It is the springboard from action to learning	Without conversations of reflection opportunities for learning are limited. We might repeat the same mistakes or miss opportunities for future action. Therefore, scope of future conversations of possibility is smaller.	What just happened? What did we learn? What should we do next time? Were our working assumptions accurate when we started? Isn't it time to stop and reflect?