

Trailblazer Conversation Cheat Sheet

Everyone agrees that diverse perspectives and contributions make us better. Sadly, our habits, lizard brains and conditioning make it more difficult to share than it should be. The following tactics are for individuals seeking to change the culture, even if it is just one action at a time.

Team Members	
Clarity is Kindness	
Ask Questions	"I apologize if this sounds like an accusation. Please know I'm just challenging myself to be more informed and make sure we're all on the same page. Why..."
Give Feedback	"I have an observation that I think might be helpful to you, though I'm worried it may come across wrong. Will you help me share it with you?"
Reference the Corporate Principles	"This is a bit outside of my comfort zone, but I'm challenging myself to be better at X. After all, it is in the handbook."
Plan for Derailments	"I recognize that when something like this gets brought up, it usually means another project for that person. I'm not prepared to take this on, but I think it's important that we discuss..."

Leaders	
Disrupt the power dynamic	
Beware the invitation to "fix"	"My most important job is to help you not need me for this kind of challenge. Let's figure out how you can solve it."
Blame the system, not the person	"What could be in place so that the organization is better at this, even if you and I aren't here?"
Walk through your "Open Door" policy	What would YOU have brought through an open door? Go ask for it. "What have you been thinking about that didn't seem worth it to come in my office about?"
Invite Feedback with Teeth	"What have you been trying to tell me that I'm just not hearing?"

