



# Conversational Intelligence

Leading @ Vaxcyte



Guide



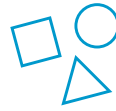
# Program Agenda & Learning Objectives

The following are our agenda and learning objectives for Conversational Intelligence.



## Our Program Agenda

- Defining Conversational Intelligence
- Different Levels of Conversations
- The Neuroscience behind our Conversations
- Trust as a Basis for Conversational Intelligence
- Getting to Level III Conversations



## Our Learning Objectives

At the end of this program, you will have a better understanding of:

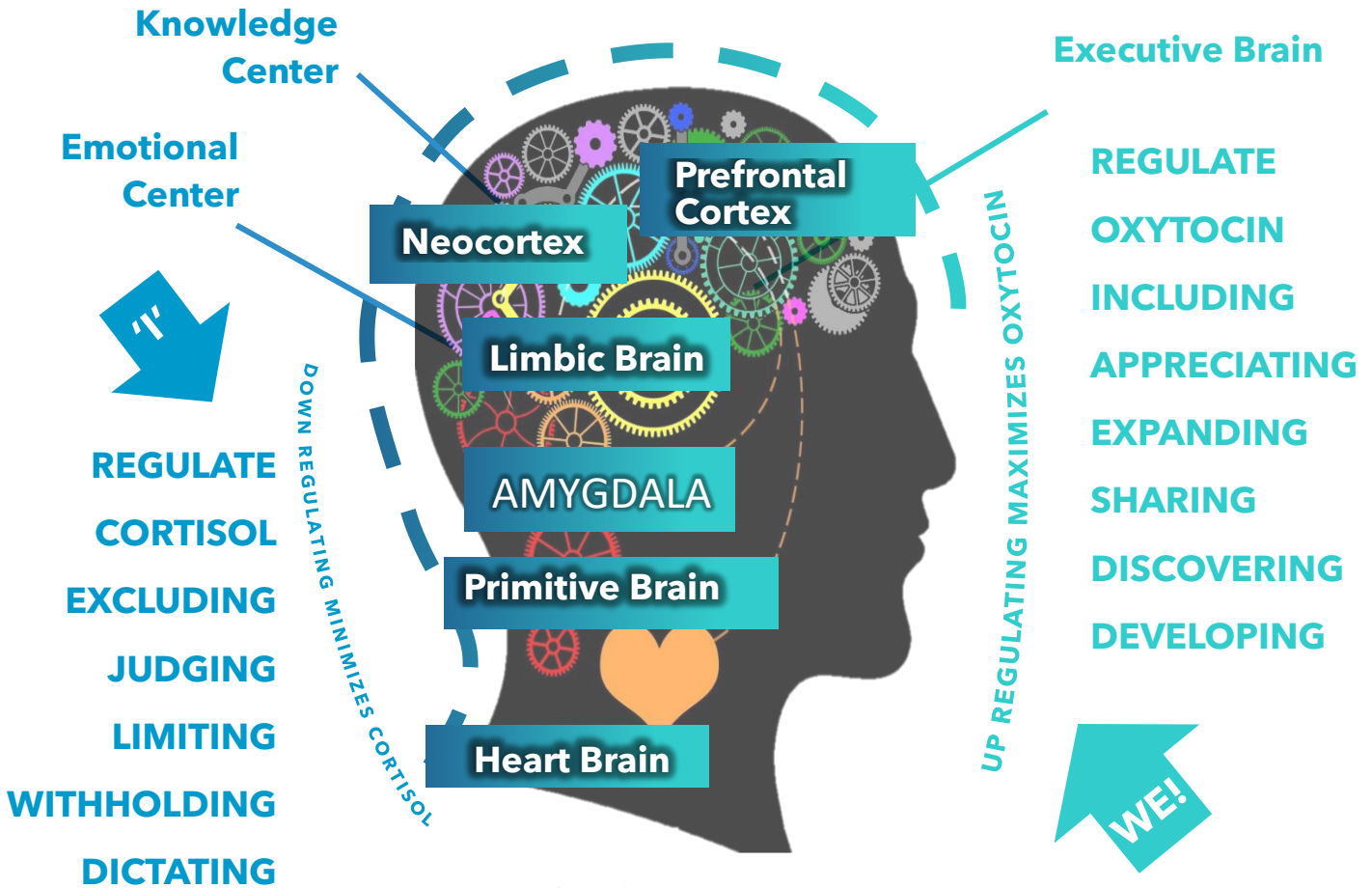
- What Conversational Intelligence is and why it matters
- Why conversations often fail to achieve desired results and relationships
- Why we converse and interact with others the way we do - the science behind this
- How to build trust with others as a foundation for higher-level conversations
- How to up-level our communications, results, and relationships

My Notes: 

# How The Brain Really Works

The Five Brains:

## How The Brain Really Works



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My Notes: 

# How The Brain Really Works



What we now know is that the human brain has evolved over millions of years, and the older brain – what we call the reptilian brain and its sentinel, the amygdala – responds to physical and ego threats. When we are threatened, our listening changes and we listen with “threatened”

ears. When we listen with threatened ears, we distort what we hear and selectively add fear-based interpretations and bad intent to what others are saying. Is the threat true? It is true to us, though it may not be true to the other person. Yet as we experience it, it becomes our truth.

What we have learned through research is that the older brain is our default brain, and it responds to fear and distrust much more quickly than our newer brain can. Our newer brain enables growth, learning, and higher levels of connectivity with others, yet it takes more time to process what it knows or to make sense of what it believes.

The brain works in concert with the higher brain centers to help us regulate our states of mind. This allows us to better connect with others, and when we connect, we feel greater trust to open up and say what’s on our minds.

We read threats, or the absence of them, first, and then our higher brain works to put words to our feelings. Some scientists assert that our lower brain responds at 0.07 seconds, while our higher brain, where language resides, operates at 0.1 seconds. Our brains have evolved to give us great ability to put words to what we feel and think, but our nonverbal processors carry greater weight in the meaning of what we experience, and they make assessments at a much more rapid rate.

The nonverbal part of our conversations is much more important than the verbal element in defining the meaning of interactions. Only when all components of our mind- brain-body system work together in an integrated way, can we fully trust others and ourselves. When we do, we can access our more strategic and advanced thinking skills.

My Notes: 

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# Conversations...

Conversations are more powerful than you may think ... in fact, conversations underpin our relationships with others.



Conversations evolve and impact the way we connect, engage, interact, and influence others; enabling us to shape reality, mindsets, events, and outcomes in a collaborative way.

Conversations have the power to move us from “power-over” others to “power-with” others; giving us the exquisite ability to get on the same page with our fellow humans and bridging the reality gaps between “how you see things” and “how I see things.”

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My Notes: 

# What's a Reality Gap?

**You think we've "arrived"  
at our desired future state.**

**I think we've achieved X.**

**You see A one way.**



**I don't.**

**You don't.**

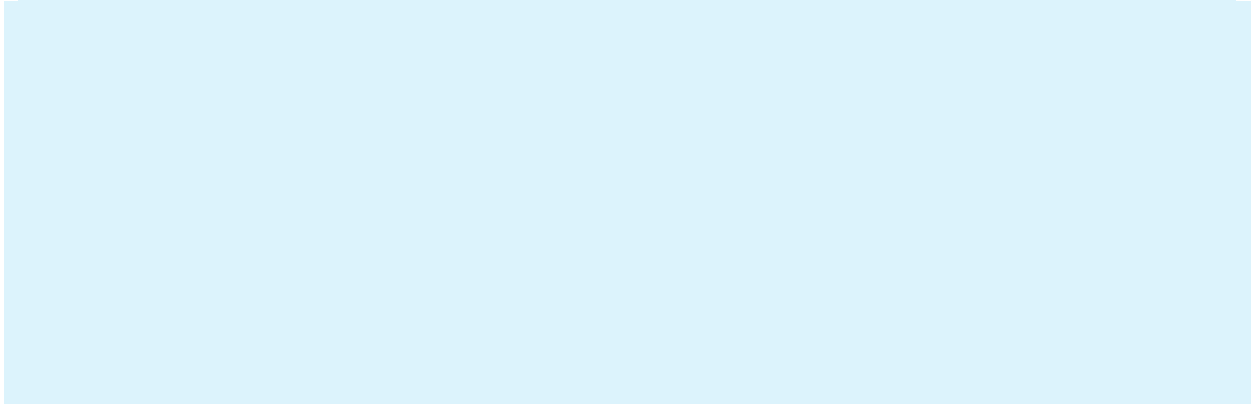
**I see it differently.**

My Notes: 

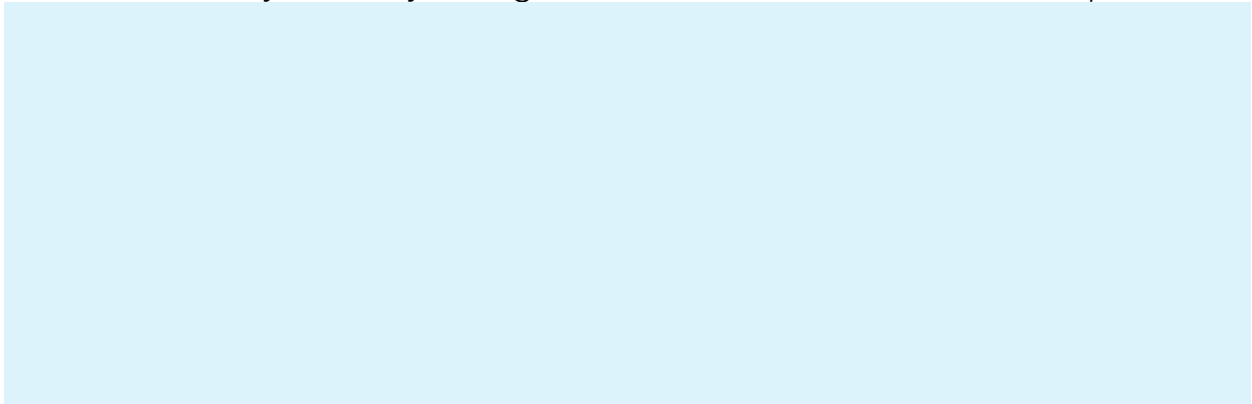


# Reflection: Great Communicators

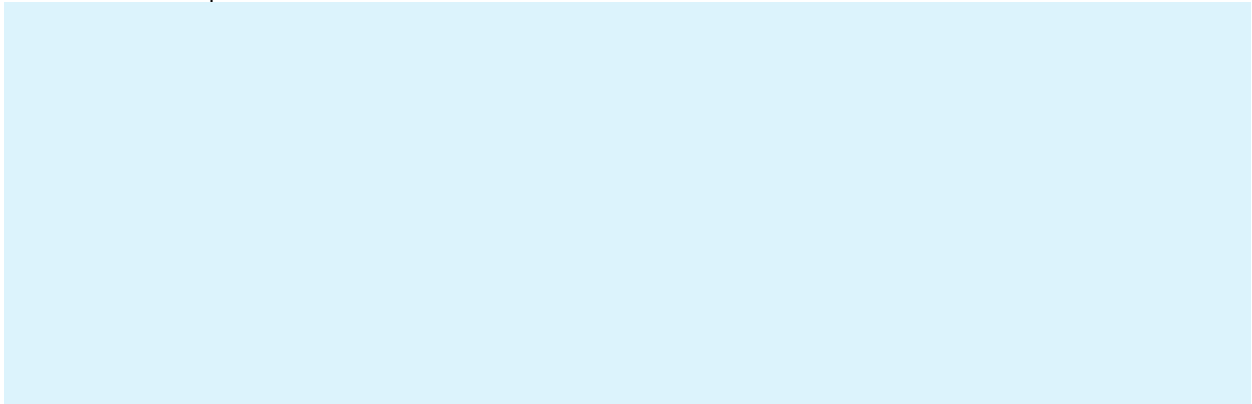
1. In your past experience, when you've experienced someone who's great at communicating with others, what specific actions or themes have you noticed?



2. What exactly are they doing that sets their communications apart?



3. What impact did / does this skill have on others?



# Conversational Blind Spots

Conversational rituals can be I-centric, such as persuading someone until they give in, or intimidating someone before a negotiation so that they give up more than they'd planned. Conversational rituals can also be WE-centric, such as extending the olive branch after an argument. Conversational rituals define how we engage with others, and they make-up the culture of "how we do things around here."

What Judith Glaser demonstrated with the help of neuroscience is that while conversational rituals are designed to help us connect more fully with others, human beings have conversational blind spots. These are beliefs that get in the way of us connecting mind to mind with others, and where we have blind spots, we also have conflicts and breakdowns in communication.

How do we become more conversationally intelligent? One way to improve is to recognize and overcome the five most common conversational blind spots.



## Blind Spot # 1

The first blind spot involves an assumption that others see what we see, feel what we feel, and think what we think.

When we are engrossed and attached to our point of view, we are unable to connect with others' perspectives. If we did, we would realize how differently they see the world. Yet our bodies pick up the lack of connectivity and switch on a stronger need to persuade others we are right. Human beings actually have a high addiction to being right.

When we persuade others we are right, our dopamine level goes up. It's like a natural high - dopamine is part of the brain's reward center. Winning a point makes us feel good - it makes others feel bad, but we often don't realize that.



## Blind Spot # 2

This is the failure to realize that fear, trust, and distrust changes how we see and interpret reality, and therefore how we talk about it. When in a state of fear, we release cortisol and catecholamines, which closes down the prefrontal cortex. We feel threatened, move into protective behaviors, and often don't even realize we are doing it.

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# Conversational Blind Spots



## Blind Spot #3

This is an inability to stand in each other's shoes when we are fearful or upset. Researchers in Parva, Italy discovered through their 1999 research on monkeys (and later humans), that our brain has unique neurons called mirror neurons. These neurons give us a view into what others feel, think, and intend. When we listen deeply, turn off our judgment mechanisms, and allow ourselves to connect with others, we are activating the mirror neuron system, now thought of as "having empathy for others." Yet when we are fearful, that power to connect becomes disconnected, and our sensitivity to others' perspectives recedes.



## Blind Spot #4

This is the assumption that we remember what others say, when we actually remember what we think about what others say. Researchers have concluded two things. One is that we drop out of conversations every twelve to eighteen seconds to process what people are saying, two, we often remember what we think about what another person is saying because that is a stronger internal process and chemical signal. In other words, our internal listening and dialogue trumps the other person's speech.



## Blind Spot #5

This is the assumption that meaning resides in the speaker, when in fact it resides in the listener. For one to take meaning, they need to draw out what they think the other is saying from their own vault of experiences, specifically from the hippocampus, where memory is stored in the limbic system, or emotional brain. Or one may draw from the neocortex, where they store memories of what to do and how to do it. The brain will pull from one's experiences and then bring these into the conversation to make sense of what one hears. That's why "in my mind's eye" I can see a totally different picture of what you are saying than what your mind sees. Meaning resides in the listener until the speaker takes the time to validate and link back to make sure both have the same pictured and shared meaning.

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My Notes: 

# Notes on Conversational Blind Spots

My Notes: 





# **What is Conversational Intelligence and why it matters ...**



# What is Conversational Intelligence?



Conversational Intelligence® is the intelligence hardwired into every human being to enable us to navigate successfully with others.



Through language and conversations, we learn to build trust, to bond, to grow, and build partnerships with each other to create and transform our societies. There is no more powerful skill hardwired into every human being than the wisdom of conversations.



Language is instinctual. It is also utilitarian. All animals use language to communicate, and most of all to signal to each other about how to explore, navigate, and survive in the environments in which they live.



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My Notes: 

## More on Conversational Intelligence?



A seemingly simple act such as talking with a colleague - a small momentary exchange of words in a hallway - has the ability to alter someone's life permanently. Phrases like "You can't do that!" and "If only you knew how!" may take only seconds to utter, but they can be life changing. There is little connection between the time it takes to say the words and the impact they may have on a person, a relationship, or within an organization.

Conversations have the ability to trigger emotional reactions. Words carry baggage; they are rarely neutral. Words carry a history of years of use. Each time another experience overlays another meaning, and it all gets collected somewhere in our brain - 'the vault' - it's there, ready to be activated during a conversation.

Conversations carry meaning that becomes more embedded in the listener than the speaker.

We communicate with each other through conversations; we connect to others through conversations. Once the umbilical cord is cut, conversations are the connectivity that keeps us together. However, words are not external, objective reality. They are projections of our own inner reality.

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# The Power of Conversational Intelligence

Mastering your conversational intelligence will take your relationships and results to new and much higher levels.

**CI gives us the power to influence our neurochemistry, even in the moment.** Every conversation we have with another person has a chemical component. Conversations have the power to change the brain - they stimulate the production of hormones and neurotransmitters, stimulate body systems and nerve pathways and change our body's chemistry, not just for a moment but perhaps for a lifetime. At the simplest level, we say something, and we get a response - I ask you a question and you tell me an answer. However, conversations can quickly become more complex as questions provoke thoughts and feelings about what you mean or your intentions, and this stirs our chemical networks into action. If questions feel threatening, we do more than answer: we activate networks inside the brain to "handle" the threat.

**CI gives us the power to express our inner thoughts and feelings to one another in ways that can strengthen relationships and success.** As we communicate, we read the content and emotions being sent our way and we likewise send content and emotions to others. Conversations are more than the information we share and the words we speak. They offer a way to package our feelings about our world, others, and ourselves. We communicate that we are sad, indifferent, ambivalent, or happy with almost every conversation. As we come to understand the power of language in regulating how people feel every day, and the role language plays in the brain's capacity to expand perspectives and create a "feel good" experience, we can learn to shape our workplace in profound ways.

**CI gives us the power to influence the way we interpret reality.** Conversations impact different parts of the brain in different ways, because different parts of the brain are listening for different things. By understanding the way conversations impact our listening we can determine how we listen - and how we listen determines how we interpret and make sense of our world.

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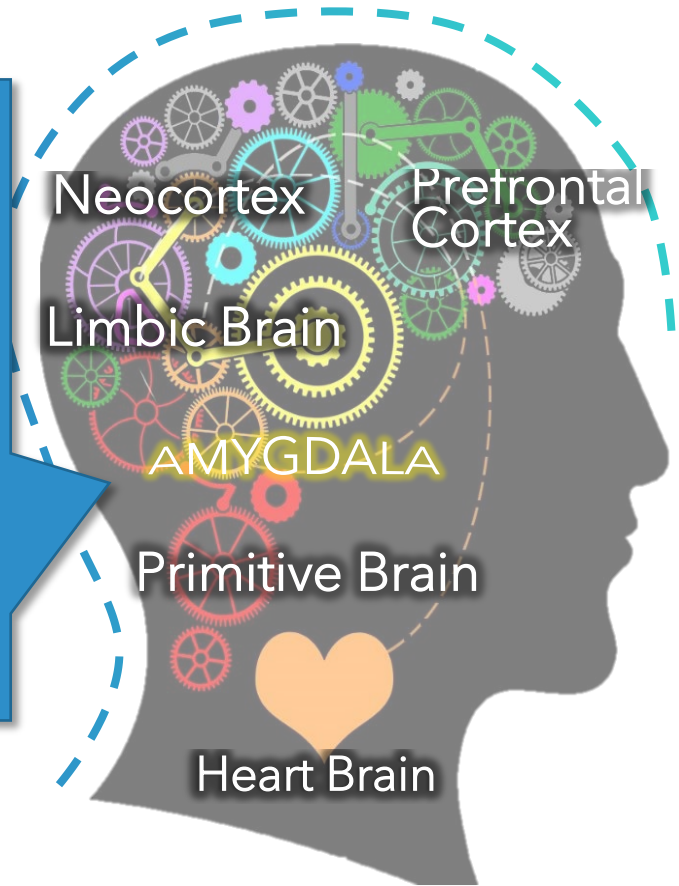


# **The Science behind Conversations...**



# Our Five Brains

- The Reptilian Brain
- The Limbic Brain
- The Neocortex
- The Heart Brain
- The Prefrontal Cortex



My Notes: 



# Our Five Brains

Behind the neuroscience of WE is a model for seeing our brains not as one brain but as five brains, each hardwired to help us sort out and sort through our interactions with others.

The **Reptilian Brain** - informs us about threats (physical and psychological) to our safety (amygdala).

The **Limbic Brain** - helps us identify our friends and our foes and lets us know how to fit in; it is concerned with needs, emotions, and relationships.

The **Neocortex** - sorts through data from our senses, memories, and experiences, and helps us make sense of our reality - promotes understanding.

The other two brains work in concert, and influence what it means to be human:

The **Heart Brain** - our oldest brain, reads the biochemistry of our bodies and enables us to translate the energetic and hormonal messages that arise as we interact.

The **Prefrontal Cortex**, or our Executive Brain - engages us with the outer world and the future, helping us grasp inner and outer truths. By translating current information, impulses, and biochemistry, it helps us make judgment calls, have empathy, and anticipate the future, what we call foresight.

Our brains are made to be social, so when we aren't paying attention to our own tasks and to-dos, we are connecting with others - that is what our brains need. When you're in conversations, let the power of your five brains give you insight how to respond.

My Notes: 

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# Conversations Trigger Neurochemistry

- When we interact with others, we have a **biochemical** or **neurochemical** response.
- We also pick-up **electrical signals** from others as well.
- As our bodies read another's energy, the process of **connectivity begins**.
- We experience others through **electrical energy and feelings** that we have at the moment of contact.
- On top of this, we **layer our old** memories, ideas, beliefs, or stuff we make up to make sense of who the other person is.
- Can we **trust** this person? Will this person hurt us? Can we **connect** and add value to each other's lives?



My Notes: 

# Conversations Trigger Neurochemistry

My Notes:

**Making stuff up.** What we know today is that conversations are multidimensional and multi-temporal. That means that some parts of the brain process information more quickly than others, and our feelings emerge before we are able to put words to them. The things we say, the things we hear, the things we mean, and the way we feel after we say it, may be all separate, emerging at different times; so, you can see how conversations are not just about sharing information - they are part of a complex conversational equation. When what we say, what we hear, and what we mean are not in agreement, we retreat into our heads and make-up stories that help us reconcile the discrepancies.

**Failing to connect.** When we fail to put sufficient emphasis on the need to connect with the other person, we can easily get stuck in our own moviemaking. We immediately retreat to habits such as thinking the other person simply doesn't get how important the subject is, or that they don't care enough. From there, we start concocting a "film" where we deem the relationship as hopeless - we're on the side of right, and the other is on the side of wrong.

**Push and pull conversations.** With a failure to connect, push and pull conversations become more inevitable. We get trapped in our own need to be right, we want to win, we fight to win, and we go into overdrive trying to persuade others to our point of view. When we are out to win at all costs, we operate out of the part of the limbic brain called the amygdala. This part is hard-wired along with the well-developed instincts of fight, flight, freeze, or appease, located in the primitive brain, that have evolved over millions of years. When we feel threatened, unheard, or subjugated in some way, the amygdala activates the immediate impulses that ensure we survive. Our brains lock down and we are no longer open to influence. On the other side of the brain spectrum is the prefrontal cortex. This is the newest brain, and it enables us to build societies, have good judgment, be strategic, handle different conversations, and build and sustain trust.

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# Conversations Trigger Neurochemistry

My Notes:

**Reality gaps.** When we are in conversations and we experience gaps between what we feel in the moment, what we think, and what we mean, then what we hear is altered toward distrust.

**Meaning.** Most people assume that meaning is embedded in the words they speak. But according to forensic linguists, meaning is far more vaporous, teased into existence through vocalized puffs of air, hand gestures, body tilts, dancing eyebrows, and nuanced nostril flares. The transmission of meaning still involves primate mechanics worked out during the Pliocene epoch. And context is crucial: when we try to record a conversation, we are capturing only part of the gestalt of that moment.

**Distrust.** No matter what we're doing in our professional lives, trust is the single most important element in "Creating We" which is what Glaser spent many years researching. She found the best way to achieving extraordinary, sustainable success is through operating with WE-centrism. This is leadership that is built on a level of trust that binds people together. Before we can interact openly with others, we need to answer the question: Are you a friend or an enemy? This profound question is hard-wired into us - it's been honed by evolution, and our lives have depended on answering the question correctly for millions of years. Our brains have evolved to make that decision so quickly that we might not even know it has taken place. Today, in business, our literal survival may not depend on toggling between friend or foe decisions from moment to moment, but our brains don't know that.

# Sidelining Signals from the Amygdala

Yet, when the amygdala picks up a threat, our conversations are subject to the lockdown, and we get more “stuck” in our own point of view.

My Notes:

Noticing how we react to threats - observing whether we go into flight, fight, freeze, or appease

Labeling our reaction as normal

Noticing if we always choose the same reaction (flight, fight, freeze, or appease) and noting how much this impacts us

Choosing an alternative way to react (breathe, go into “discovery conversations,” share how you’re feeling, stay calm and do nothing)

Becoming more aware of our responses and realizing we can override our emotions and shift into other responses

Perceiving what may happen before it happens and interrupting that pattern

Transforming fear into trust



# Notes

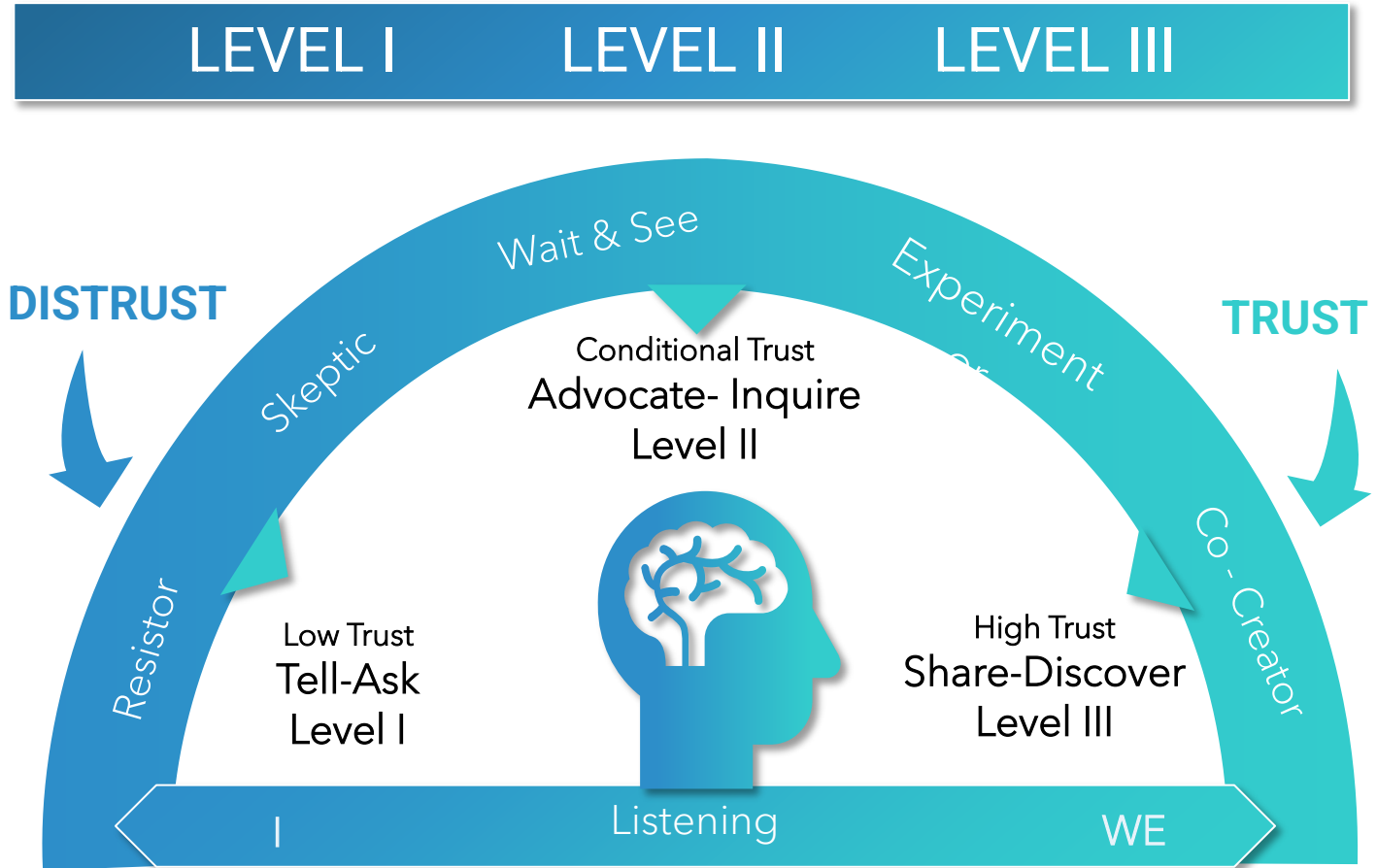
My Notes: 

# 3 Levels of Conversational Intelligence...



# 3 Levels of Conversational Intelligence

3 Levels of Conversational Intelligence:



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My Notes: 



# Conversational Intelligence Worksheet

My Notes: 



What was the topic?

What was your role in this?

What was your intention going into the conversation?

What did you hope was the impact or outcome of the conversation?

What was the level of trust between the parties (going into the conversation)? Low, conditional, or high? Why?

How did you open the conversation or how was the conversation opened?

How did you seek to understand the other person?

How did you seek to involve the other person in the conversation and also the outcome?

How did the conversation end? What was agreed?

What happened after the conversation? What actions (if any) were taken?



# Notes

My Notes: 

# Open-ended Questions

## LEVEL I

Are you okay with taking the second writing sample to add to our marketing materials?

## LEVEL II

I'm fascinated by the second sample. It's got all the qualities of great writing. How are you thinking about it?

Can you join me in making this decision?

Is anything stopping you from getting on board with this?

## LEVEL III

Which of the writing samples will achieve the best outcome for our sales promotions and marketing?

What assumptions do you hold about the project's success that we should consider?

How would you describe success in this situation?

Are there any feared implications that we should consider and talk more about before we decide?

My Notes: 

# Conversational Intelligence Matrix

	LEVEL 1 TRANSACTIONAL	LEVEL II POSITIONAL	LEVEL III TRANSFORMATIONAL
WHAT DO WE EXCHANGE?	"Exchange Information"	"Exchange Power"	"Exchange Energy"
INTERACTION DYNAMICS	Ask-Tell	Advocate-Inquire	Share-Discover
SPACE	Closes Space	Limits Space	Creates Space
FOCUS	<i>CONFIRM what you know</i> Giving and taking information	<i>DEFEND what you know</i> Exploring others' positions / seeking a win-win solution	<i>EXPLORE what you don't know</i> Exploring others' perspectives; joining with others to transform reality; innovating; co-creating
BLINDSPOTS & OVERUSE	"Tell-Sell-Yell Syndrome" Tendency toward telling more than asking	"Addicted to Being Right" Tendency to ask questions for which you have all the answers	"All Talk, No Action" Tendency for too much talk and no action
INTENTION	INFORM	PERSUADE	CO-CREATE
LISTEN	To protect	To accept or reject	To connect
I - WE	I-centric	I & We-centric	We-centric
SUCCESS	My success	Win at all costs	Mutual success
TRUST	Low trust	Conditional trust	High trust
INFLUENCE	Not open to influence	Desire to influence	Open to influence
SKILLS TO DEVELOP	Ability to ask open ended questions and foster "give and take"	Ability to share the conversational space with others; expand power	Ability to ask questions for which you have no answers; co-creating

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# Conversational Intelligence Prep Sheet

My Notes:



What is the topic of this conversation?

With whom do you want to have this conversation?

What is your intention for this conversation?

What is your hope for impact on the other party in having this conversation?

What is your hope for the outcome from this conversation?

What is the level of trust between you and this other party? What can you do to increase the trust?

How will you focus on the relationship first?

What did you intend to share with the other party to demonstrate your openness?

What questions do you intend to ask to discover what you don't know?

What other notes do you have / want to make before this conversation?

# The 5 Questions

Notes:

1

Question I: Protect - How do I protect myself, and do I need to?

2

Question II: Connect - Who loves me, who hates me, and can I trust this person?

3

Question III: Belong - Where do I belong and fit in?

4

Question IV: Be strong - What do I need to learn to be successful?

5

Question V: Partner - How do I create value with others?

# Trust Plays a Huge Role ...



# The Importance of Trust

Think about a person at work, whether currently or in the past, where you felt as if you could never really connect with them. You didn't understand them, and they didn't understand you. If you had to work with this person regularly, it may have felt like sheer drudgery. Consider whether you trusted them, or they trusted you, or neither? If your answers are yes (a lack or absence of trust), ask yourself again why trust was lacking or fully absent?

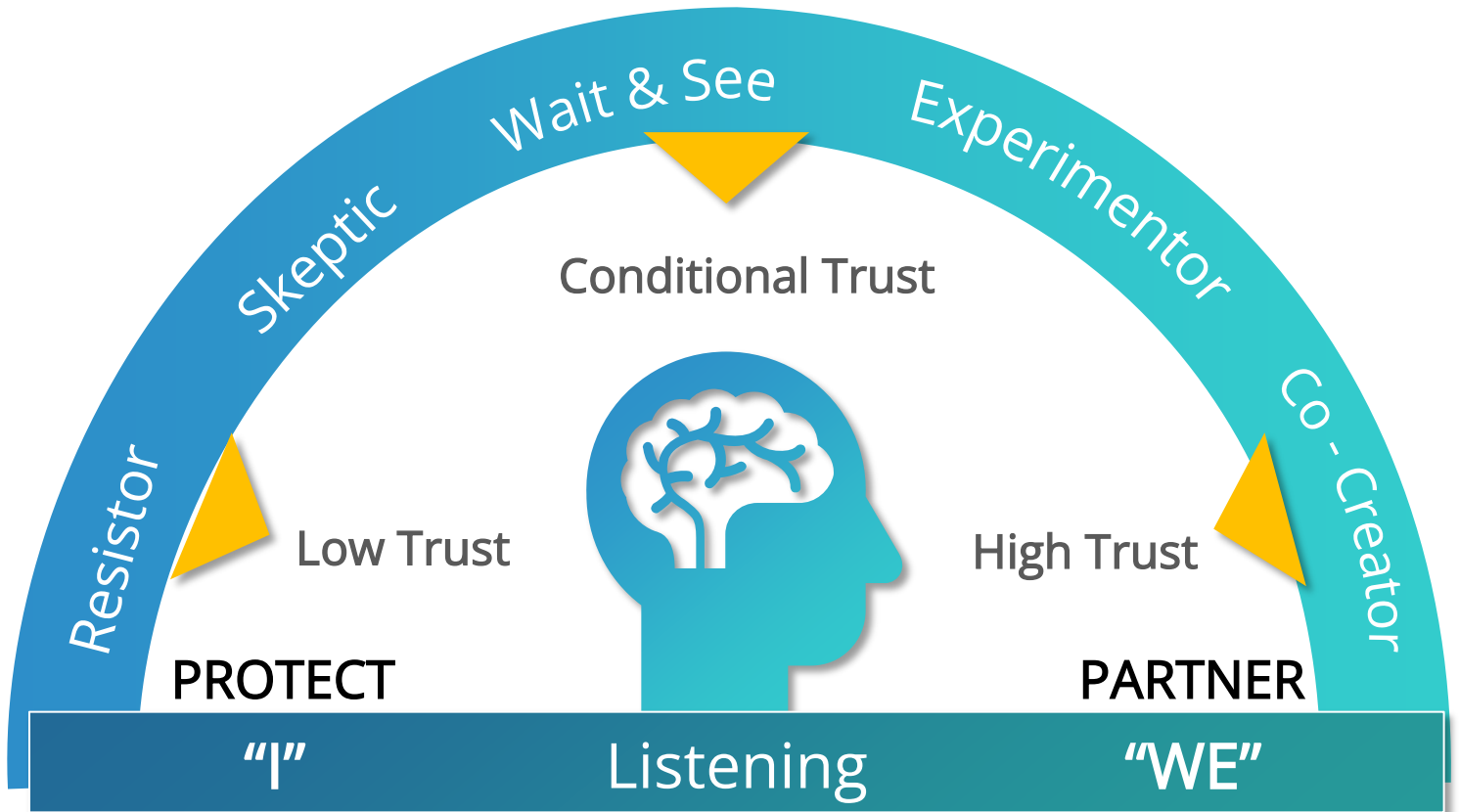


My Notes: 



# "I" Centric vs. "WE" Centric

Notice how trust shifts from low to high in the conversational intelligence dashboard:



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My Notes: 

# "I" Centric vs. "WE" Centric

According to the research of Angelika Dimoka, PhD, and other neuroscientists who use fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) technology to study what happens inside the brain, trust is centered in the prefrontal cortex and distrust in the amygdala and limbic areas of the brain. These areas light up when a research subject is asked to respond to questions or perform activities that stimulate "trust" or "distrust."

The networks involving trust and distrust are, of course, complex. However, it's important to know that their locations in the brain are distinct - the fact that the brain processes these two responses separately offers a core insight into how to develop CI.

We can't connect to others if our amygdala is overreactive. Fear and distrust close down our brains.

CI focuses on how to create conversational space that creates deep understanding and engagement rather than fear and avoidance.



Connecting intention and impact

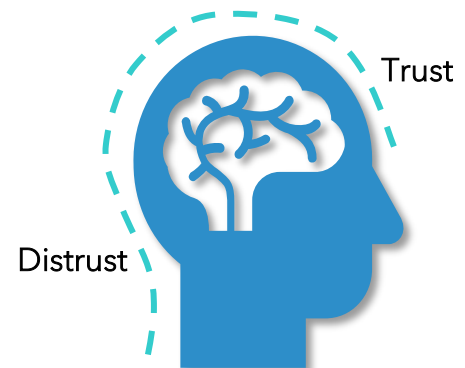


Healthy conversations are built on high levels of trust

My Notes: 

# "I" Centric vs. "WE" Centric

Trust and distrust have different addresses in the brain. Trust is not just the absence of distrust: the two take place in different parts of the brain. Distrust is signaled through the amygdala and trust is signaled through the prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is where we compare our expectations of what will happen (or what does happen) against reality. This is where we match our worldview with that of other people; where those views align, we feel the greatest trust. This doesn't mean we cannot disagree with others. In fact, we often put the greatest trust in those with whom we can disagree without negative consequences.



When employees are given honest feedback, even if the feedback suggests they have room to improve or change, the conversation can have a powerful impact, energizing them, and motivating them to access new skills and talents. When handled well, honest feedback triggers growth, and employees will trust this feedback in the future.

Yet, when the interaction feels judgmental, unfair, or dishonest, an entirely different cascade of neurotransmitters creates a very different - and often distrustful - brain landscape for our future interactions.

What happens when we are uncertain? We've seen that trust and distrust take place in different parts of the brain, yet there is one place where trust and distrust overlap - and that is where we assess uncertainty.

While trust takes place in the prefrontal areas of the brain where we are assessing the credibility, intentions, and predictability of a person's behavior in the future, distrust takes place in the lower brain, where we are assessing another person's threat level, and this is the area of the brain where we experience the fear of loss.

Researchers have linked the orbitofrontal cortex to uncertainty and demonstrated that activating this part of the brain increases distrust. At the moment of contact, when we engage with others and feel uncertainty about how to interpret the interaction, our orbitofrontal cortex activates.

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My Notes: 

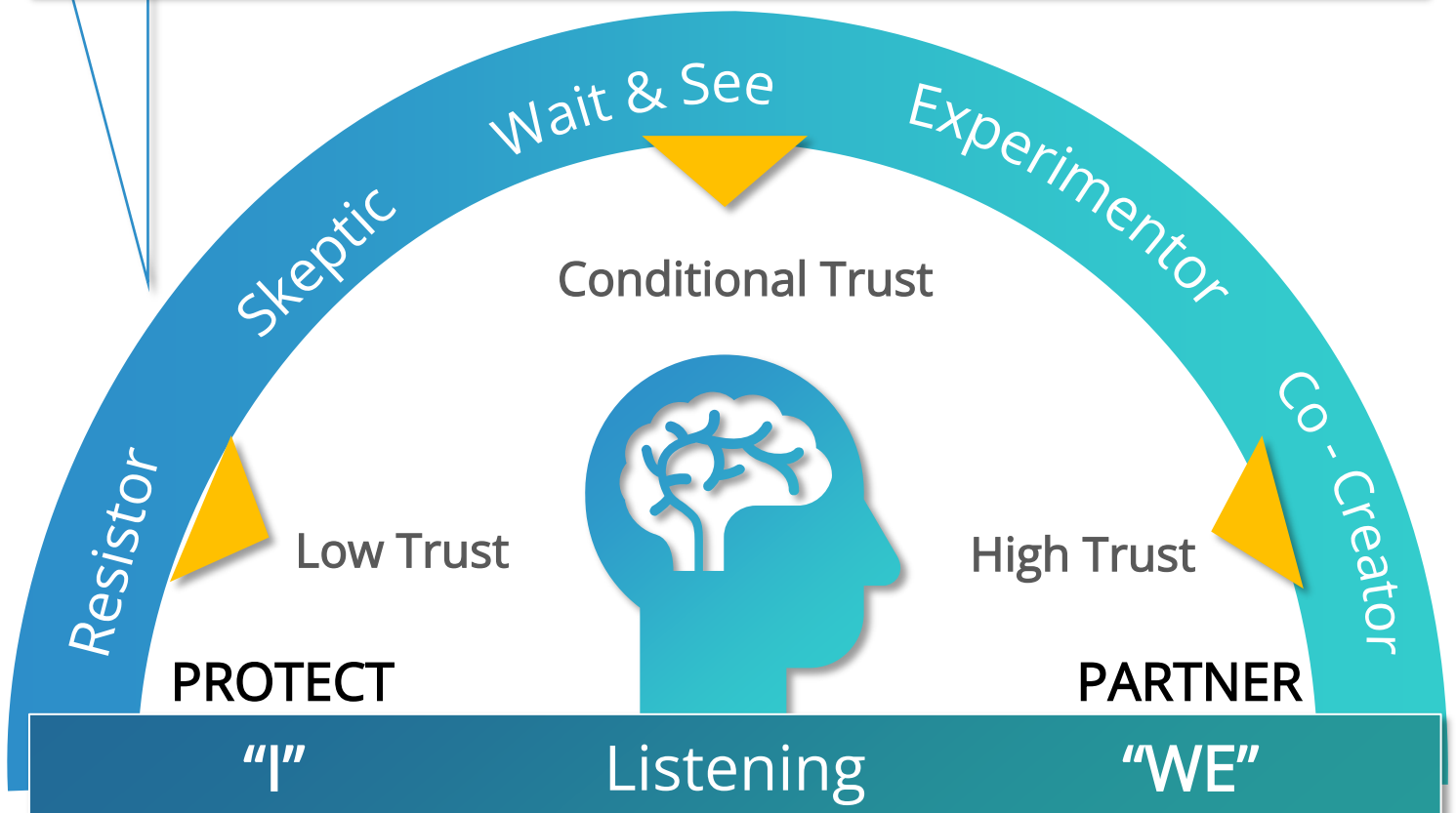
# How the Brain Responds to (Dis) Trust



We have trust and distrust networks.



They operate as a system; we can't turn either of them off, yet we can influence them.

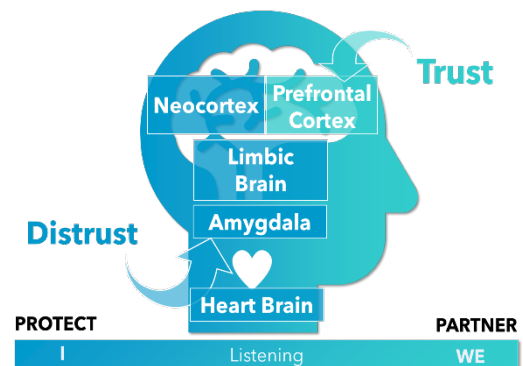


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# Distrust & Trust

Conflicts often arise from opposing interpretations of reality. These conflicts trigger an array of fears about where we stand with other people. When people focus their attention on their fears, like loss of approval, their minds fall victim to the neurochemistry of fear. Our fear-based neural networks are then activated, causing us to process reality through a fear-based lens instead of a trust-based one.



Being in sync with others is vital to healthy relationships. And this is not just a metaphor. Research indicates that when we are comfortable with someone, our heartbeat becomes more coherent, sending signals to the brain to relax, open up, and share with that person. When gaps arise between what we expect and what we get, we become uncertain of our relationship and our fear networks begin to take control of our brains. As a result, we find ourselves lacking the neurochemical and hormonal support for placing trust in others. Our good judgment gives way to defensive, aggressive, or passive-aggressive behaviors that have a huge impact on our ability to be effective at our jobs.

Our challenge therefore is to find ways to head off our fears or, at the very least, understand where they may be coming from so that we can work backward to find a solution. This is part of priming for Level III conversations.

## About Amygdala Hijacking

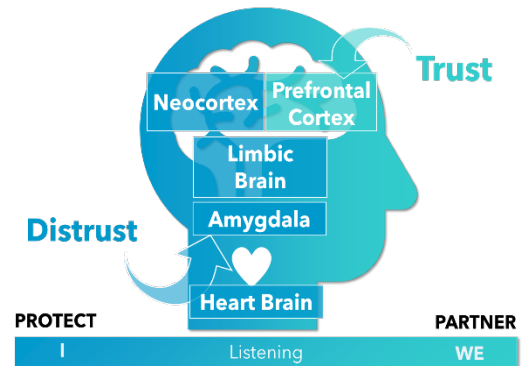
Protecting ourselves is hardwired in our brains. Fear and conflict not only change the chemistry of the brain, but they also change how we feel, how we behave, and how others perceive us. In a nanosecond, we can move from being seen as a trusted friend and advisor to being seen as a frightening threat, a person deeply distrusted, because fear has tipped the scales.

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# Distrust & Trust (continued)

Worse yet, when the amygdala goes into overdrive, it activates the limbic area of the brain, which stores all of our old memories. Once triggered, this part of the brain begins to remember other similar hurts and threats and lumps them together into their “movie.”

Trust is difficult to sustain when we build a rich inner world of drama that we do not share with those around us. Put another way, trust is difficult to sustain when we are afraid to share our inner world; that’s the only way to close the gap between what we’re thinking and what others are thinking about what’s real, not to mention what’s smart, right, and fair.



## The Power of One Word

Emotional threats send us into states of fear. In addition to picking up on nonverbal threats, we can also be threatened by the power of one word.

Words spoken by leaders in positions of authority carry greater weight in our minds than words spoken by those at lower levels.

Once we have had a bad experience and begin to become distrustful of someone, that notion becomes embedded in our brain and can be difficult to dislodge. Unless we learn to hit the pause and rewind buttons to review exactly what happened.

The promising news is that if we learn to identify the signs of developing distrust before the amygdala is triggered, we can activate the higher-level brain functions in the executive brain, where empathy, judgment, and more strategic social skills reside. When we learn to down-regulate, or reduce, the effects of fear, we can up-regulate, or increase, the impact of the executive brain. This helps us form social connections, strengthening our ability to bond with others instead of withdrawing from them. In fact, researchers have found that by learning to read the signals sent by the amygdala and head them off, we become far more effective at embracing trust – and we become more conversationally intelligent.

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# When Trust is Gone

**Distrust:** When we are picking up any of the signals of distrust, our neurochemistry shifts. More likely than not, distrust produces:

- Higher levels of cortisol and the presence of catecholamine, which closes down our prefrontal cortex, where new ideas, creative thinking, empathy, and good judgment reside
- Changes in the dACC (dorsal anterior cingulate cortex), a part of the brain that is sensitive to conflict; this center responds by sending signals to the amygdala to take over and protect
- Higher levels of testosterone, which makes us more aggressive and induces us to fight to protect our territory
- Higher levels of norepinephrine, which cause us to want to think more negative thoughts and want to fight

**Trust:** When we are picking up any of the signals of trust, our neurochemistry shifts: More likely than not, trust produces:

- Higher levels of dopamine - happy hormone - which gives us a positive outlook (glass half full) and assigns good feelings to our interactions; we have more positive memories to look back on and more positive views of the future
- Higher levels of oxytocin - a bonding hormone - which makes us feel closer to others and want to be with them and be open with them
- Higher levels of endorphins, which makes us feel good, and feel more excited
- Higher levels of serotonin, which also makes us feel good

My Notes: 

# Ladder of Conclusions

**Consider the Ladder of Conclusions from the bottom-up.** From the moment of contact, bio-reactions occur at the chemical level; our reactions proceed to the cognitive level, where we are entrenched in our point of view and “attached to being right.”



- 1. Bio-reactions.** Conversations take place at the chemical level first and fastest – judgments are made within 0.07 seconds. Cortisol or oxytocin may go up; our hearts may beat faster. The reaction at the moment of contact activates a network, either the “protect / fear network” or the “trust network.”
- 2. Feelings.** We label our interactions either as “feel good” or “feel bad.” This translates into a judgment about whether the person we’re speaking with is a friend or foe, with the corresponding judgment: I can trust you or I can’t.
- 3. Thoughts.** As we move up the ladder to the thought level, we put our feelings into thought – we make meaning (and sometimes we are making stuff up).
- 4. Beliefs.** Once we make up our story, or create meaning, we pull in other beliefs we have about this situation or person; we draw from our experience, and we affirm our thoughts.
- 5. Conclusions.** When we have reached “Conclusions,” we block out a lot of other people’s opinions. We stop seeing or hearing other points of view. We may even move into a state of denial.



# Trust Changes Reality

The foundation of trust cannot be overstated.

## Distrust:

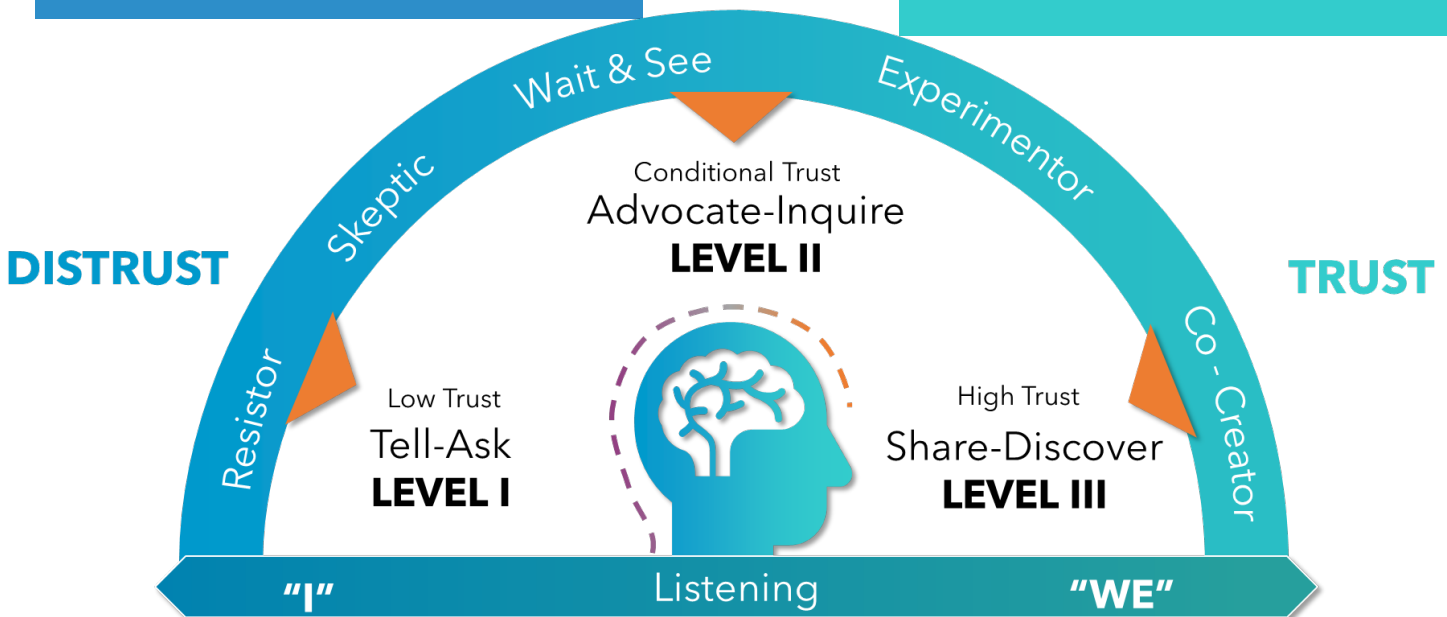
We see reality through threats and fear and close down.

- Reveal less
- Expect mistakes
- Assume the worst
- Look with caution
- Interpret with fear
- Tell secrets
- Yes people

## Trust:

We see reality more clearly and are more open to engage.

- Reveal more
- Expect the unexpected
- Assume the best
- Look with an open heart
- Interpret with facts
- Tell the truth
- Yes, to truth-telling



My Notes: 

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# Creating a Conversational Makeover



# Your Conversational Makeover

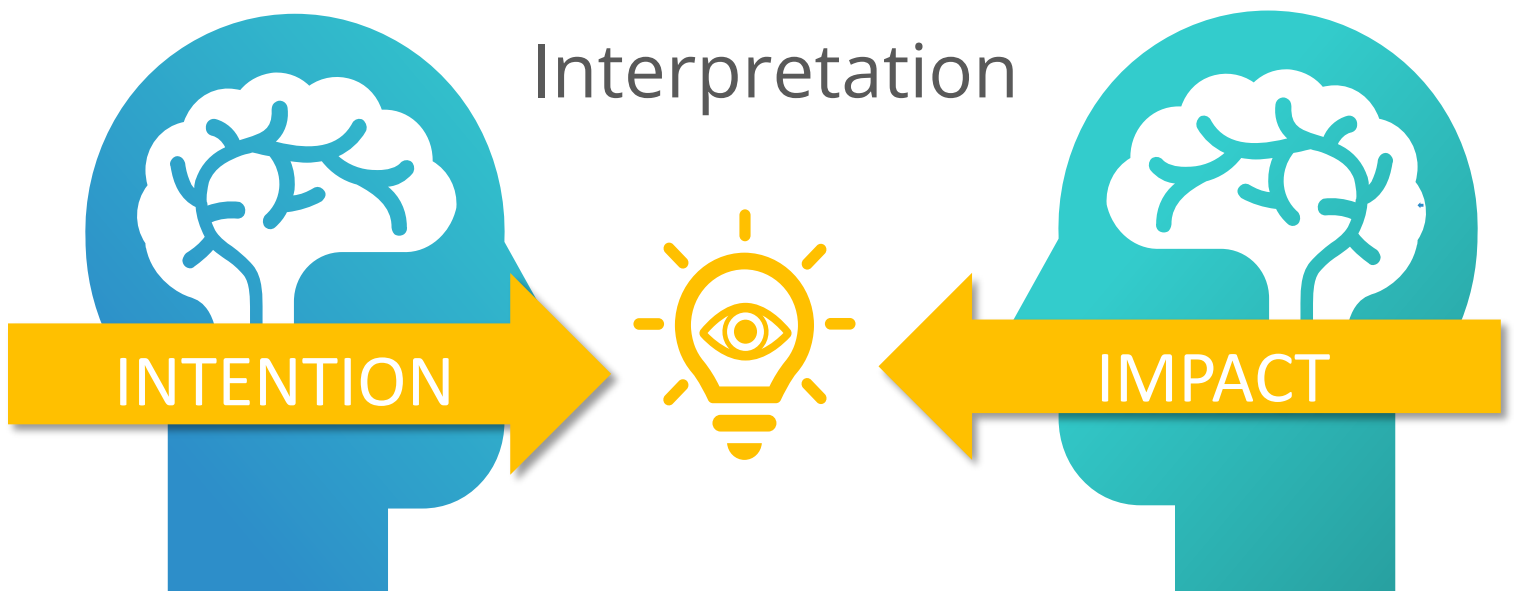
We each have the opportunity to significantly up-level our conversational intelligence, the value, and outcomes of the conversations we have ...

My Notes:

	Be transparent	
	Focus on building relationships, respect, and rapport before focusing on the task	
	Listen more deeply to understand others' perspectives	
	Focus on shared success, rather than only self-interest	
	Tell the truth and test assumptions about reality gaps when they exist and make sure to discuss these without fear of reappraisal or retribution	

# The Third Eye


People who routinely have Level III conversations, where the intention is to share and discover with the other party, operate with a “third eye,” which proactively manages the congruence between their intention and the impact they have on others. They are literally watching what they say, how they act, and how open they are to others’ perspectives by managing both their intention and the impact they have. In other words, how does the recipient interpret the sender’s intention? Words, as we’ve discovered, do not carry the full weight of the communication.



My Notes: 

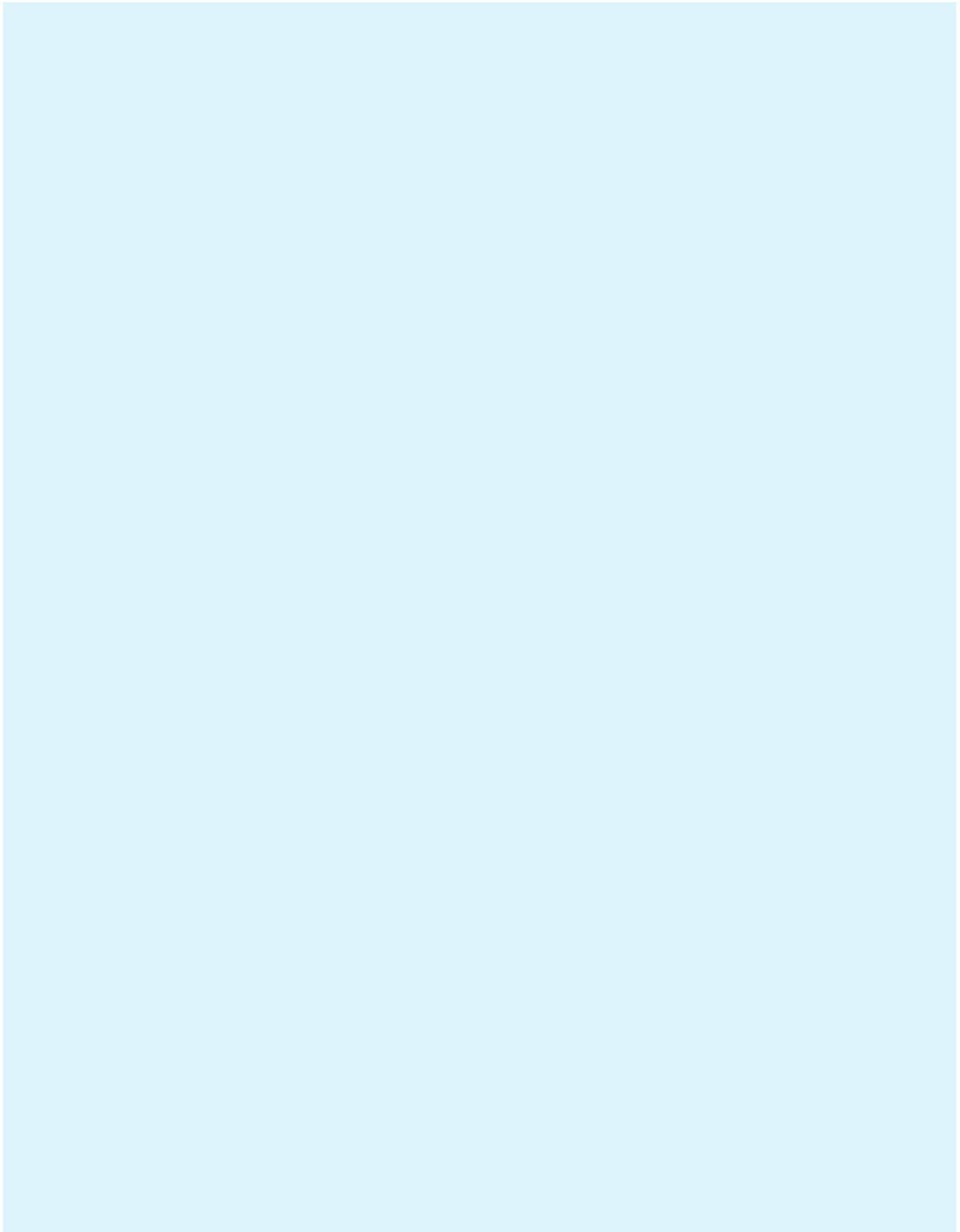
# Perfecting My Third Eye

My Notes: 

 What is the topic for this conversation?	
What is your intent?	
Is your intent to exchange information and basically tell the other person what's going to happen?	
Is your intent to advocate your position and see if you can sway the other party to your thinking?	
How do you intend to share information openly with the other party?	
How are you intending to ensure you understand where the other party sits?	
How are you intending to co-create the outcome with the other party?	

# Notes on Perfecting My Third Eye

My Notes: 



# Conscious Awareness is Key

What impact are my words having on others?

Am I thinking I-centric or WE-centric?

When you are perceiving with your Third Eye, you are able to step back and ask yourself if you are triggering your territorial instincts (distrust / protect) or your vital instincts (trust / growth).

Once you recognize the difference, you gain mastery over your mind-set, link intentions with impact, and create healthy work environments through healthy conversations.



## Self-Assessment

Are you withdrawing and excluding others?

Light blue rectangular area for response.

Are you defensive and reactive, setting the context for territorialism to emerge?

Light blue rectangular area for response.

How can you shift your mind-set from exclusion to inclusion and set a new context for open, trusting conversations that enable you and others to partner for mutual success?

Light blue rectangular area for response.

# Our Watch-ins / Watchouts

Judith Glaser talks about the need to prime our pump before we step into conversations where Level III is our goal

**Be mindful of your conversations and the emotional content you bring - either pain or pleasure.** Are you sending friend or foe messages? Are you sending the message "You can trust me to have your best interest at heart" or "I want to persuade you to think about things my way." When you're aware of these meta-messages, you can create a safe culture that allows all parties to interact at the highest level, sharing perspectives, feelings, and aspirations, and elevating insights and wisdom.

**Understand that conversations have the ability to trigger emotional reactions.** Conversations carry meaning - and meaning is embedded in the listeners even more than the speaker. Words either cause us to bond and trust more fully, thinking of others as friends and colleagues, or they cause us to break rapport and think of others as enemies. Your mind will open as you see the connection between language and health, and you'll learn how to create a healthy team through your conversation rituals.

**Remember, the words you use in your conversations are rarely neutral.** Words have histories informed by years of use. Each time a new experience overlays another meaning on a word, the information all gets collected in our brains to be activated during conversations. Knowing how you project meaning into your conversations will enable you to connect with others and, in so doing, let go of much of the self-talk that diverts you from working together effectively.

My Notes: 



# Priming for Important Conversations

There are certain steps you can take to prime for important conversations ...



## Rules of Engagement

You can shift the outcome of a meeting by starting with a trust-building activity. This signals to the amygdala to slow down and be quiet and allows other parts of the brain to actively seek data that says this will be a good, trusting experience. The best way to do this is to co-create rules of engagement with the total group.

On a flipchart write “Rules of Engagement.” Ask everyone to identify the practices or “rules” that would give this conversation and meeting the best outcome. Then, ask people to identify the conditions - behaviors, attitudes, and the like - necessary to create the most trusting conversational space.

As people add to the Rules of Engagement, their brain chemistry changes. Their amygdala feels satisfied that it doesn’t need to act as the “protector,” and the conversation settles down. The limbic brain - our emotional vault - is being taken care of because people are talking about the conditions under which real emotions can be shared safely, e.g., “We will all listen to each other without judgment.”

The neocortex is invited to participate when we make rules such as “Every idea is valuable.”

The prefrontal cortex is open and ready to think empathetically, because once the amygdala is quieted, neurochemical messages sent to the prefrontal cortex let it know it’s safe to operate.

My Notes: 

# Priming for Important Conversations



## Shaping the Space for Trust and Openness

As a leader, be careful about where you sit, or how you otherwise position yourself. When people assert positional authority, they send “alpha dominant” signals to others’ brains. To moderate this power stance and send signals of trust, do several things in advance:

- Send the agenda ahead of time. Be open to suggestions for adding agenda items.
- Expand the circle of trust. Ask who else might attend the meeting and who would benefit from being included in the conversation.
- Send a revised agenda. Resend the agenda with new items added.
- Rethink seating. At the meeting, sit among your team, or beside your counterpart - not in an oppositional or hierarchical seat.
- Attend to the quality of the conversation. Focus on keeping conversations open, collaborative, and non-oppositional.

Our brains sense when space is shrinking and when it’s expanding. Expanding is read as “growth” while shrinking is interpreted as limiting autonomy and growth.

### Priming During

During meetings and conversations, we can find ourselves in awkward moments. We may disagree with someone, face a conflict, or hit a brick wall. We know things might get worse, and this may send us into an emotional state when we’re not open to listening anymore, or we get more and more entrenched in our own point of view. When this happens, the best negotiators use “disengaging.” Disengaging allows you to tactfully stop the meeting and take a break, so that you can come down from your ladder of conclusions and let go of some emotions that may be blocking good judgment. This practice also down-regulates cortisol and other negative neurotransmitters so that they have less impact on your system and the conversations.

My Notes: 

## 3 Rs- Reframe, Refocus, and/or Redirect

You can use techniques, such as reframing, refocusing, and/or redirecting when your conversations need to shift to and remain at Level III:



**Reframing** is a great conversational tool for taking difficult situations and turning these into opportunities for finding trust and common ground with someone. We are learning that conversations have space, and if the space feels conflicted, people won't step into it with you. If it feels safe, they will - and that is the role of reframing. In reframing, you give the person you are talking with an opportunity to mentally take a break and think in a new way. Reframing can change the context and give new meaning to a situation.

### Example:

COMMENT - I don't feel good about myself because I make so many mistakes. (The person may be in a fear state.)

REFRAMING - Those who make mistakes are taking risks - and that is how we learn. People who take risks and make mistakes have a higher chance of finding the best new ways to do things. Edison made 900 light bulbs before finding the one that worked. (You are elevating the person into a trusting state using Level III sharing and reframing the context.)

My Notes:

## 3 Rs- Reframe, Refocus, and/or Redirect



**Refocusing** is another tool that allows you to elevate people out of the place where they are stuck and point them toward another part of a larger topic where they can see connections they had not seen before. There are parts of the brain that are keenly designed by nature to help us focus, refocus, and even defocus. The reticular activating system (RAS) in the brain, which emanates out of the brain stem, is an energy system that enables us to guide our minds and focus our intention.

Example:

COMMENT - I am really annoyed about how much time I spend on these small projects that don't seem to go anywhere. (The person may be stuck in a worry state and be fearful of not getting it right.)

REFOCUSING - You seem to care a lot about these projects. They must be important to you. I'd love for you to apply your care about your work to a number of new projects rather than just a few small ones. This will allow you to expand your areas of focus and attention. My guess is that you have a lot of great expertise now that you can bring to some new and challenging initiatives. (You are elevating the person's self-confidence, encouraging them to take more risks.)

My Notes:

A large, empty light blue rectangular area intended for taking notes.

## 3 Rs- Reframe, Refocus, and/or Redirect



**Redirecting** is another tool for taking a difficult situation and turning it into an opportunity for finding trust and common ground with someone. Redirecting helps a person move from a place of being stuck and emotionally bound to a place where they can see new opportunities. This is such a great trust builder because it communicates that “I care enough about you to help you see things in a new light,” rather than communicating a judgmental message that implies the other person is not bright enough to see these opportunities.

### Example:

**COMMENT** - There is no way we can do anything other than what we did. (Stuck in the past.)

**REDIRECTING** - I recently worked with someone with the same issue and challenges that you had. They too thought it was a dead end. Here’s how they handled it. I never would have thought of it - but it really is amazing and offers a new way to look at things ... (Providing trusted insights to alternatives.)

My Notes:

Large light blue rectangular area for taking notes.

# Using the 3Rs

How can you apply the 3Rs?

My Notes:



What was the topic?

What was your intent going into the conversation?

What did you hope for as the outcome?


What do you think went "wrong" in the conversation - whether before, during, or after?

What could you have reframed to move towards Level III?

How could you have refocused the conversation to move towards Level III?

Were there times when you should have redirected the conversation to move to or remain at Level III?

# Final Notes

My Notes: 

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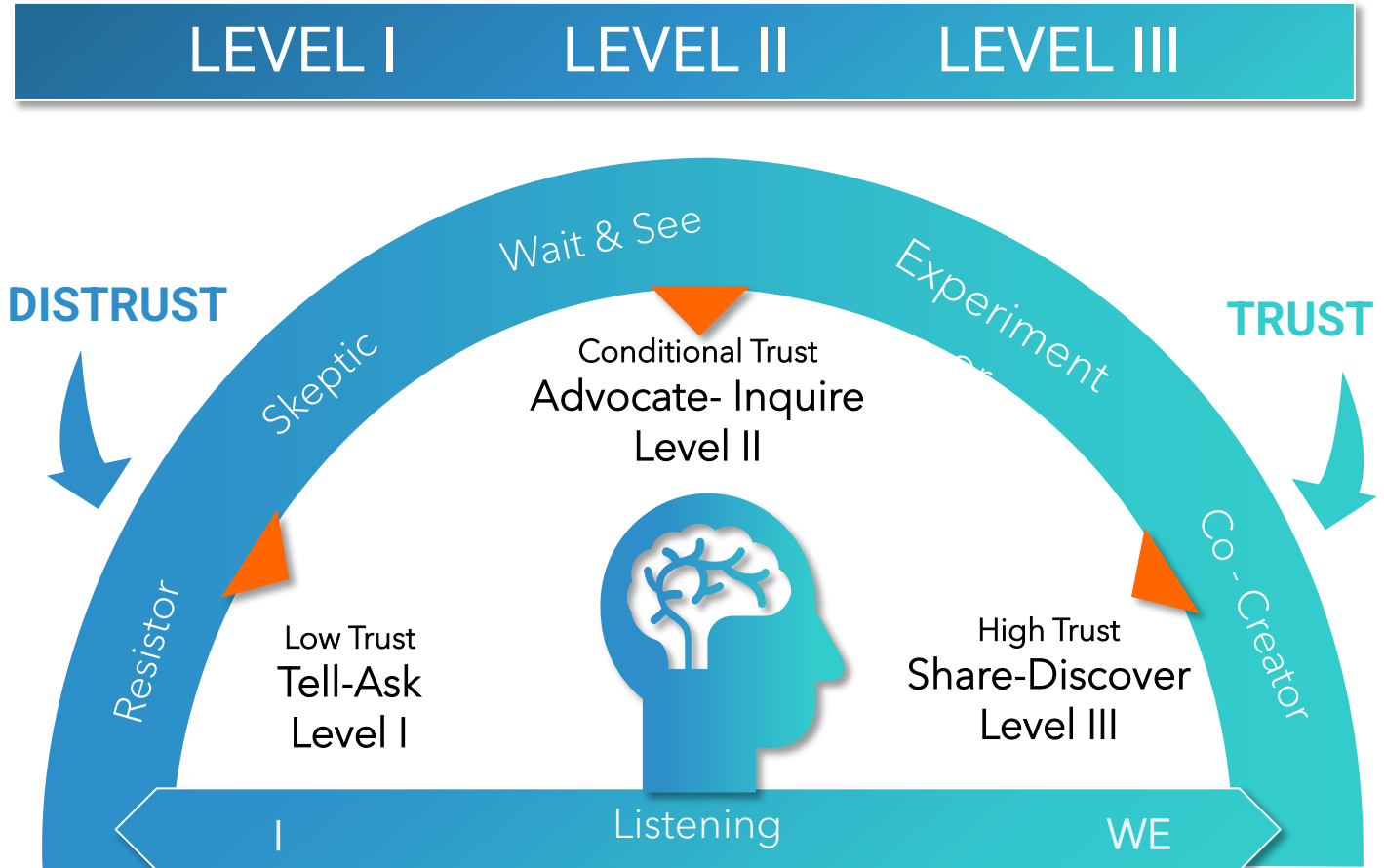


# Appendix



# 3 Levels of Conversational Intelligence

What we've learned is that there are 3 levels of conversational intelligence, and our goal is to operate at Level III, where we're sharing and discovering with the other person.



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My Notes: 

# Conversational Intelligence Worksheet

My Notes: 



What was the topic?

What was your role in this?

What was your intention going into the conversation?

What did you hope as the impact or outcome of the conversation?

What was the level of trust between the parties (going into the conversation)? Low, conditional, or high? Why?

How did you open the conversation or how was the conversation opened?

How did you seek to understand the other person?

How did you seek to involve the other person in the conversation and also the outcome?

How did the conversation end? What was agreed?

What happened after the conversation? What actions (if any) were taken?

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What happened after the conversation? What actions (if any) were taken?	

# Conversational Intelligence Prep Sheet

My Notes: 



What is the topic of this conversation?

With whom do you want to have this conversation?

What is your intention for this conversation?

What is your hope for impact on the other party in having this conversation?

What is your hope for the outcome from this conversation?

What is the level of trust between you and this other party? What can you do to increase the trust?

How will you focus on the relationship first?

What did you intend to share with the other party to demonstrate your openness?

What questions do you intend to ask to discover what you don't know?

What other notes do you have / want to make before this conversation?

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# Conversational Intelligence

Leading @ Vaxcyte



Guide

