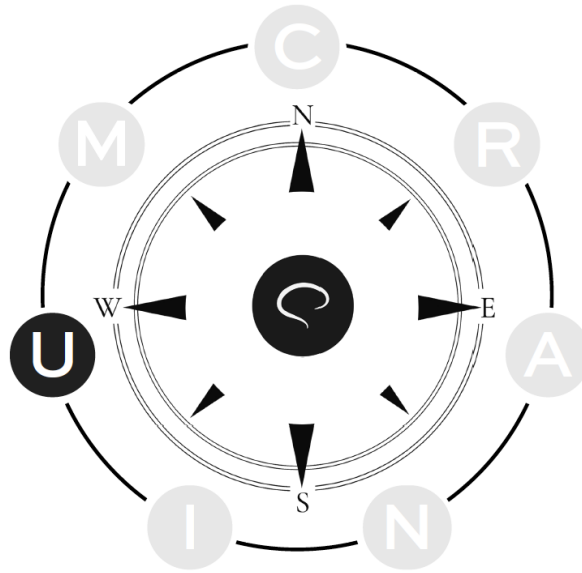
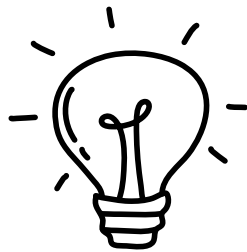


# THE USING EMOTION STRATEGY



**ENGAGE EMOTIONS.  
PRIORITIZE PEOPLE.**

## THE BIG IDEA



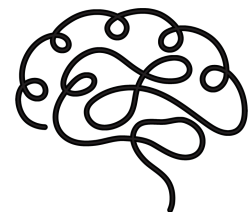
We are all in the relationship business, and the currency of success is connection. Leaders worth following embrace emotional intelligence, recognizing that relationships drive results.

## BREAKTHROUGH BELIEFS

We aren't thinking individuals who happen to have emotions; we are emotional individuals who happen to think.

The question isn't, "How smart are you?"  
The question is, "How are you, smart?"

Where a problem exists, the solution exists.



# Facts About Silence

**The brain is wired for safety first.**

## Silence triggers FOBU

- Fear of Being Unpopular
- Fear of Being Uncertain
- Fear of Being Uncomfortable

## Silence triggers negative threat

Negative threat, the kind that debilitates rather than motivates, typically meets at least three criteria:

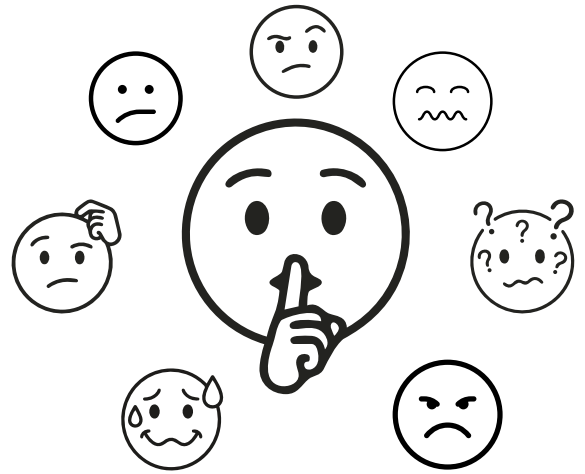
- Confusion: We have more confusion than clarity.
- Control: We feel we have little agency, control over or say in the situation.
- Consequences: We anticipate a negative consequence.

## Silence is the brain's default

Diffusion of Responsibility: the tendency for individuals to feel less accountable for action when others are present, leading them to assume "someone else will handle it."

“

Because of this, we can't rely on courage in the moment. We have to build a system that forces the invisible to become visible.



# Facts About Silence

## Speaking up is a mark of high-performing teams

### Amy Edmondson's Research on Psychological Safety

Amy Edmondson. 2019. *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*

- It's NOT about Being Nice – it's about enabling candor, dissent, and productive conflict.
- The best-performing teams report more mistakes – not necessarily because they made more, but because they feel safe speaking up.
- Teams with high psychological safety are more likely to:
  - Ask questions
  - Admit mistakes
  - Seek feedback
  - Experiment and innovate
- Leaders create (or destroy) safety.

“

The leader's reaction becomes the team's culture.

“

Psychological safety is a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

— Amy Edmondson, Harvard Business School

“

Silence hides problems. Safety surfaces them.

# Rounding with Team Members

| Steps:                                                                                                                                                                   | Comments:                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Make a personal connection<br><i>Connect with something in their life such as children, interests, vacations, etc.</i>                                                |                           |
| 2. What's working well?<br><i>Like what? What's a best practice you've seen lately? Even better if?</i>                                                                  |                           |
| 3. Is there anyone in our department we can recognize for doing great work?<br><i>Who makes your life easier? Has anyone helped you recently?</i>                        | Who:<br><br>What and Why? |
| 4. Is there someone in another department we can recognize?<br><i>Is there someone who has gone above and beyond? Some who has been particularly helpful?</i>            | Who:<br><br>What and Why? |
| 5. Are there any systems or processes that need improving? What are obstacles?                                                                                           |                           |
| 6. Do you have the resources you need to do your job?                                                                                                                    |                           |
| 7. What (tough) questions do you have for me?<br><i>What's bugging you? Keeping you up at night? Is there anywhere you would like clarification?</i>                     |                           |
| 8. Touch Base: (Reminder to every team member)<br><i>Ex: behaviors, policies, initiatives, etc.</i>                                                                      |                           |
| 9. Is there anything I can help you with right now?<br><i>I've got the time, what can I do for you now? What's a pressing need that I can help you with immediately?</i> |                           |

For more information on rounding, visit [www.studergroup.com](http://www.studergroup.com) – the site for Quint Studer

# The Power of Checklists: VOICE

**The best teams don't avoid situations involving mistakes and conflict.  
They talk about them.**

Atul Guwande. 2011. *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right.*

*How Do We Heal Medicine. TED Talk. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3QkaS249Bc>*

## V O I C E

### **V — Verify the Moment**

Define the moments when silence could cost.

- When is a moment when silence could cost us?
- What decision are we about to make?
- What's at stake? (team, partner, neighbor, etc.)
- When will we need to pause?

### **O — Open the Space**

The leader models humility and makes it safe to speak.

- I may be missing something...
- We need everyone's thinking...
- We're figuring this out together.
- I might be wrong.
- We are learning.
- It's safe to challenge this.
- We may be missing something, so let's surface concerns.
- Let's co-create the solution.

### **I — Invite the Truth**

Uncover the silence. Make the invisible, visible.

- What needs to be said that hasn't been said?
- What are we missing?
- Who sees this differently?
- What concerns do we have?
- What could go wrong?
- What concerns haven't been voiced?
- What feels risky to say but needs to be said?
- What questions should we be asking that we haven't?
- What seems stupid?

### **C — Confirm Every Voice**

Ensure everyone speaks. Validate every voice.

- Before we move forward, who has not spoken?
- What concerns haven't been voiced?
- Who sees this differently?
- Who has a different perspective?
- Who do we still need to hear from?
- What is one truth you see today that you are no longer willing to stay silent about?
- Thank you for saying that.
- That's exactly what we need.
- I appreciate your input.
- That's something I was missing.

### **E — Encourage and Elevate**

Have a clear path forward.

- Capture concerns
- Adjust decisions
- Clarify next steps
- Assign responsibility

# Applying VOICE

Directions: What is one specific moment in an upcoming interaction where silence could be costly?

In that moment, what do people likely see, feel, or know but not say? In the right column, identify actions you take and/or questions you can ask to encourage meaningful conversation.

## Actions/Questions

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- Assign responsibility

# GROW Conversations

## Goal:



State the goal of the conversation. State a goal that is compelling to everyone involved. State the goal in the positive.

- What is the perfect outcome?
- What is the ultimate goal for this conversation?
- What outcome would you like to create through this conversation?

## Reality:



Allow everyone to share what he or she is experiencing. Fearlessly and objectively discuss the current situation. The purpose is not to reach agreement on reality but rather to establish there is a gap between where we are and where we need to be.

- Where are you now?
- What's holding you/us back?
- What are you experiencing?
- What are current costs/struggles/frustrations?
- What assumptions are you making?
- What are your expectations and needs?

# GROW Conversations

## Options:



Collaboratively explore options to close the gap between the reality and the goal.

(If you are their leader, set clear performance expectations.)

- What are all of our options?
- What ideas do you have?
- What haven't you tried?
- What can you do differently?
- What has worked in the past?
- What are your non-negotiables?

## Way Forward:



Decide on the best options and clearly communicate the next steps, responsibilities, and timeline.

Set a follow-up conversation.

- What option(s) makes the most sense?
- Who will do what?
- What resources will you need?
- How do you hold each other accountable?
- When can you have a follow-up conversation?

# Coaching GROW

Directions: Have the speaker share the situation succinctly. The back story isn't necessary.

As the coach, you are not allowed to give advice, share your story, or solve their issue. Your job is to simply ask generative questions.



## GOAL

Identify the outcome you want to create and what people must feel to get there.

### Goal Questions

- What does success look like?
- What relationship do you want after this conversation?



## REALITY

Assess the current reality of the situation, including the emotional reality.

### Reality Questions

- What emotions are present?
- What facts do you know?
- What assumptions might you be making?
- What is under your control?
- What part of the story might you be missing?



## OPTIONS

Intentionally select the leadership style(s) that will close the gap between reality and the goal.

### Options Questions

- What options are you considering?
- If trust were your primary objective, what would you do?
- What would a leader worth following do?



## WAY FORWARD/ WINNING

Execute on the best option.

### Way Forward Questions

- What are your first 5 words?
- When will you have this conversation?
- What could get in the way?
- What mindset do you want to have when you hold this conversation?

## 2026 GRAB & GROWS

February 18, 2026

### Responsive Communication: How to CONNECT in a Digital World

In today's remote and hybrid workplaces, your brand is no longer built in hallways. It's built in inboxes, on screens, and through response time. Every message you send, every meeting you attend, and every delay in follow-up either builds trust or erodes it. The question is not whether you are communicating. The question is whether you are connecting.

This session explores the neuroscience and strategy behind responsive communication. You'll discover how your digital presence, your words, and your follow-through shape how others experience you. Learn practical tools for showing up, speaking up, and stepping up.

Outcomes:

- Explore what diminishes credibility
- Understand how digital presence shapes your professional brand
- Increase engagement and influence in virtual meetings
- Apply simple strategies to communicate with clarity and build trust

May 20, 2026

### 3 Essentials to Building Radical Trust and Cooperation

Ever experienced the pain and agony of trying to get results when there was low trust and little cooperation? The reality is this: when threat is high and trust is low, everything is unnecessarily difficult. We pay unnecessary taxes in time, energy, and productivity. The greatest one thing we have learned in all of our years of working with thousands of people in premier organizations is the invisible variable that makes all the difference. This session shares three essentials to building radical trust and cooperation.

Outcomes:

- Discuss unnecessary taxes that result in low trust cultures
- List the behaviors that lead to trust
- Address how to think trust, speak trust, and live trust
- Discover power words and phrases that instantly build trust

August 19, 2026

### The Hidden Superpower: How Listening Builds Trust, Influence, and Impact

In a world full of noise, listening is rare and powerful. It's more than hearing words; it's about creating connection, uncovering insight, and transforming relationships. This session explores what neuroscience reveals about how the brain responds when we feel truly heard, and how poor listening triggers threat, defensiveness, and disengagement. You'll learn how to listen beyond the words, reduce distraction, and respond in ways that build trust, collaboration, and influence.

Outcomes:

- Understand how listening (or not listening) impacts the brain and relationships
- Learn practical tools to reduce mental distractions and listen with full presence
- Apply powerful listening techniques to increase trust and influence

November 18, 2026

### Habits of High Performers: What High Performers Do Differently (and Daily)

"If we study what is merely average, we will remain merely average." Shawn Achor. If our goal is to be a high performer, let's study what high performers do. Success leaves clues. So does struggle. This session reveals surprising habits of exceptional performers, and how those habits impact results.

Outcomes:

- Discuss how current rules are driving current results
- Explore five surprising habits of high performers
- Apply the habits to a real-life challenge
- Create a personal action plan

# The CRANIUM Cohort Challenge

*Every behavior shapes the future. Which behaviors will shape ours?*

At our upcoming 2026 retreat, your cohort will have 15 minutes to pitch one leadership behavior from your assigned CRANIUM strategy that you believe deserves Connect's commitment.

Intrigued? Keep reading.

## Step One: Review the content from your assigned CRANIUM strategy

Choose one leadership behavior.

For example, if every leader at Connect consistently \_\_\_\_\_, our culture will continue to excel.

You can select behaviors that were discussed in the LEAD session or pull from that chapter in the book.

## Step Two: Prepare your unforgettable pitch

Collaborate with your cohort to create your presentation using the GROW framework.

G

### GOAL

Paint the future

- What behavior are you pitching?
- What would winning look like?
- How would it impact the culture?
- What business results could we expect?

R

### REALITY

Convince us the problem is worth solving

- Why does this behavior matter?
- What unnecessary cost or interference are we experiencing today that this behavior solves?

O

### OPTIONS

Don't explain it. Demonstrate it.

- Get creative. Make it memorable!
- Stories, activities, surprises, games, emotions, curiosity
- Interactive, fun, engaging

W

### WAY FORWARD/WIN

Leave your mark with a giveaway

- Leave behind an asset
- Framework, toolkit, checklist, questions
- Video, conversation starters, guide

# The CRANIUM Cohort Challenge

## Leadership Investement Scorecard

Presentations will be scored based on the following criteria:

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                               | Points |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>The Big Idea</b><br><br>Clearly identified one leadership behavior aligned with the assigned CRANIUM Strategy. Is the recommendation focused, compelling, and worthy of organization-wide adoption? | 20     |
| <b>The Business Case</b><br><br>Made a persuasive case for why this behavior matters using evidence, stories, observations, neuroscience, and/or the cost of the current reality.                      | 20     |
| <b>The Experience</b><br><br>Created an engaging, memorable, and brain-friendly experience that allowed us to feel the leadership behavior rather than simply hear about it.                           | 20     |
| <b>The Investment</b><br><br>Presented practical implementation ideas and a meaningful Hardwiring Tool (leave-behind) that would help embed the behavior into Connect's culture.                       | 20     |
| <b>The Pitch</b><br><br>Demonstrated executive presence, teamwork, creativity, professionalism, and persuasive communication worthy of executive investment.                                           | 20     |

# The Using Emotion Strategy

## Application

**I commit to:**

**To reduce interference, I will**

**so that**

### **Recommended Reading: The Using Emotion Chapter, pages 250-293**

*The Science of High-Performance Leadership: 7 Brain-Based Strategies to Become a Leader Worth Following*

## TEAM TALK

Use the VOICE meeting checklist.

Round monthly with each team member using the rounding form.

Teach GROW to your team. Use the GROW model for meaningful conversations.

Use the GROW coaching questions to prepare for GROW conversations.

Review Grab & Grows with your team and attend the upcoming sessions.



**Silence is not silent.**  
**High-performing teams see feedback as a gift and conflict as a place of possibilities.**