



Notes

These are my notes from the PMI Nashville keynote. In addition, you can download the eBook on breaking down silos at <http://www.hipposolutions.com/ultimate-guide-break-down-silos/> as well as a list of really good questions from the PMI download location.

Opening Thoughts

Next generation project management is about being, not doing. It's a deeply personal and nuanced topic. The question is really who do I want to become? And how do I need to change in order to become that person?

The 5 Habits

HABIT #1: They re-order their communication process

Our typical order is React > Retreat > Rethink. The problem is that we are dealing with negative emotions and operate out of defensive aggression and avoidance. This typically doesn't work out well for us. We come across to other people in ways we don't even realize, we make assumptions and judgments, and we rely on our "comfortable" communication styles and methods.

NexGen PM's switch the order to Retreat > Rethink > React. This uses an entirely different psychophysiological system. We operate out of engagement and challenge in a healthy way with positive emotions. In this paradigm, we strategically choose how to react and what communication approach fits the situation. We also have a plethora of communication approaches in our toolbox that we try and continue to work on.

HABIT #2: They power-up their questions

We ask questions for a variety of motives including:

- 1) To judge or blame
- 2) To start a conversation
- 3) To get information
- 4) To guide the conversation
- 5) To learn

Most of us stop there and never get to the "**magic motive**": TO UNDERSTAND



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- What's in it for them?
- What do they want?
- What is the real issue for them?
- What's behind their resistance?
- What are their desires, motivations, challenges, doubts, concerns?

A *Harvard Business Review* article tells us that we don't ask really good questions to understand because:

- 1) We don't care enough to ask questions
- 2) We think we already know everything
- 3) We worry we'll ask the wrong question
- 4) We are eager to impress others with our own thoughts, stories, ideas
- 5) We just don't understand how powerful it can be

But...people want to be seen, to be known, to be heard. There is power in authentically asking questions to understand others.

How? BROAD to NARROW. We start by asking BROAD questions that are:

- Open-ended
- Their agenda, not mine
- Draws out
- Builds, not blames

These come from the book *Riser* by Greg Joiner.

We then ask lots of follow-up questions, using what and how questions. Follow-up questions signal to your conversation partner that you are listening, care, and want to know more.

Examples of Broad "Starter" Questions include:

- What's on your mind?
- What has caught your attention about [insert topic or situation]?
- What's important to you about [insert topic or situation]?
- What will it look like if we things continue as they are?

Note: I'm not saying we shouldn't ask other types of questions, or that we shouldn't use other communication methods such as being direct, challenging, affirming, informing, or correcting. I'm saying that asking questions to understand has a magic power and is a skill most of us miss. The best



recognize this skill, add it to their repertoire, and use it often. It helps them build relationships, understand the true problem, and know what's important to other people.

HABIT #3: They intentionally build connection

Michael Stallard in his book *Connection Culture* lists 3 types of leaders:

- 1) Intentional Disconnecter
- 2) Unintentional Disconnecter
- 3) Intentional Connector

Most of us are unintentional disconnectors. There is something that keeps us from being able to build connection *with* other people and / or build connection *between* other people. This could be a focus on task excellence to the exclusivity of relational excellence. It could be a negative communication pattern that we can't see – such as being argumentative, a know-it-all, people pleaser, avoider, etc.

How do we build connection?

On a personal 1x1 level:

- 1) Spend 1x1 time with one person
 - a. Ask for their ideas, opinions, and feedback.
 - b. Use the 3:1 rule: 3 parts affirmation, 1 part correction (from the Leadership Freak blog)
 - c. Help people connect their role to the overall strategy, vision, and purpose. People want to know that they matter!! That they are contributing to something. I'm not just working on insignificant matters.
- 2) Do this in your next project meeting: choose one person – and have 3 people answer this question – “Mary, I see you at your best when...” (from the Leadership Freak blog).

On an organizational level: hold a forum and bring people together to connect and share information.

And stop complaining...

PM's shouldn't add to the culture of complaining, they should add to the culture of collaborating.



HABIT #4: They stop

When they stop, they do 3 things:

- 1) Learn and grow
 - a. Read, training, certifications
 - b. Mentors
- 2) Refresh: you can't add value to others if you don't add value to yourself.
- 3) Self-examine: ask themselves provocative questions (some of these are credit: leadership freak blog)
 - a. What's working? What's not working?
 - b. How am I coming across to others?
 - c. What is my motive here?
 - d. Am I being transparent?
 - e. How am I adding value to people?
 - f. What am I doing that makes me feel energized? What does that say about me?
 - g. What makes me feel connected with people? What blocks connection?
 - h. What is my role – not title – on the team? In my organization?
 - i. What's confusing? Where do I need greater clarity, simplicity, or focus? How can I get it?
 - j. What am I reluctant to try? What makes me reluctant?

A common objection is that I'm too busy. Dr. Brene Brown says that this is often just a defense mechanism. If you're too busy, you don't have to look at the mirror; you don't have to face reality; you don't have to work on developing better habits; you don't have to look into how others see you; it's much easier.

How do we stop and think?

- 1) Find a place
- 2) Find a time
- 3) Self-examine: Ask the questions

You can also do this with your team.

HABIT #5: They add value to people

This is the ballgame. Nothing matters if we don't get this right. You can't *will* behavior change. It flows from the heart.



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According to the book *Leadership and Self-Deception*, there are two ways that we view people: as objects to get what we need, or as human being with stories and value.

How do we do this? John Maxwell said this best at a recent speaker's conference:

Leadership = influence

Influence is adding value to people.

We add value to people by:

- 1) Value people
- 2) Think about ways to add value to people
- 3) Look for ways to add value to people
- 4) Add value to people
- 5) Encourage others to add value to people

Bottom line: We DECIDE how we are going to show up every day.

Books to Read / References

Connection Culture by Michael Stallard

Daring Greatly by Brene' Brown

Good Leaders Ask Great Questions by John Maxwell

Leadership and Self-Deception by The Arbinger Institute

Love Does by Bob Goff

Riser by Greg Joiner