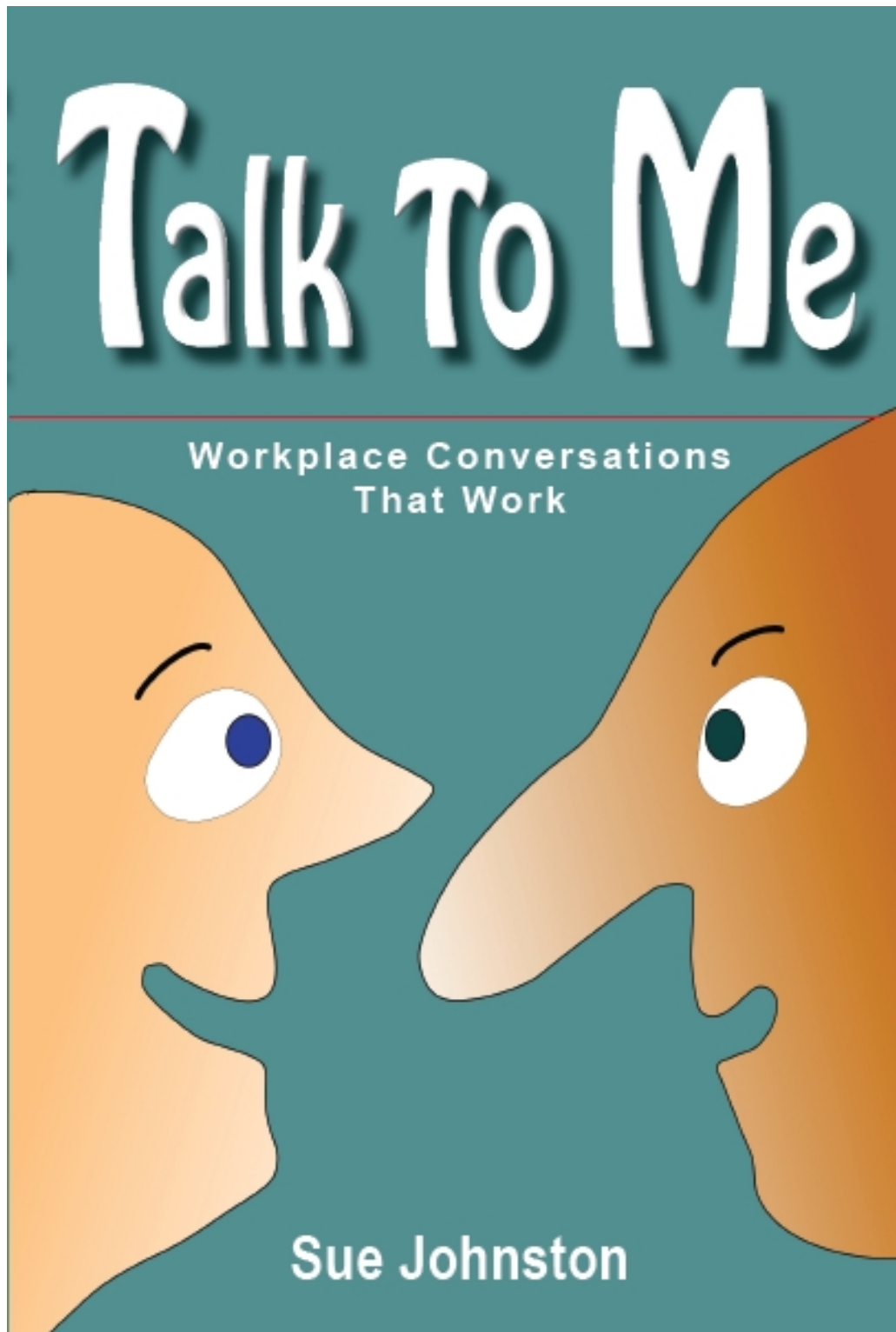


THE WORKBOOK



WORKBOOK – Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work

Copyright 2012 Sue Johnston

Published by Portfolio Publishing a division of It's Understood Communication, Inc.

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2K 3Y1

<http://itsunderstood.com>

Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work, by Sue Johnston, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution - Non-commercial - No Derivative Works 2.5 Canada License. To view a copy of this license, visit

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>

Book Cover Design by Jim Bisakowski

Cover illustration by Sue Johnston

Interior doodles by Sue Johnston

Beta edition

This workbook is designed to accompany the following publications:

ISBN-13: 978-0-9782830-1-8 (.pdf version)

ISBN-13: 978-0-9782830-2-5 (.epub version)

ISBN-13: 978-0-9782830-0-1 (print version)

eBook versions can be ordered at <http://leanpub.com/talktomebook>

A print version can be ordered at <http://talktomebook.com>

Contents

Introduction..... 4

Chapter1- An Invitation to Talk..... 5

Chapter 2 – A Powerful Business Tool..... 6

Chapter 3 – An Audience of One..... 8

Chapter 4 – The Things You Can Control 10

Chapter 5 – The Communication Styles 12

Chapter 6 – What’s Going Right?..... 14

Chapter 7 – I Want That Too!..... 16

Chapter 8 – Not Another Re-plan 17

Chapter 9 - Catching the Virus 18

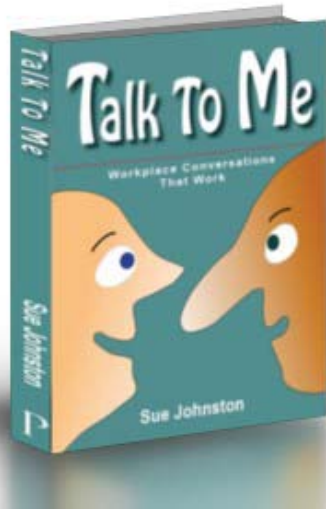
Chapter 10 – Reporting In..... 20

About Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work 21

What others have said about Talk To Me 22

Introduction

This workbook is designed to support readers of *Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work* – particularly those who read the eBook version or who got it from their public library and can't mark it up. This workbook is designed for you to write in.



From the back cover:

A mission-critical project is spinning out of control. Failure will mean lost customers, lost revenues, lost prestige for a venerable financial institution and – no doubt – lost jobs. Can anyone or anything save it?

When Paul Hunchak is invited to take on the task of bringing Project Delta back on track, the first thing he does is update his résumé. Saying no to the quirky CEO would be a career limiting move.

Saying yes looked just as bad. A not-so-chance encounter with a neighbourhood barista induces him to take a chance, take the assignment and take on the real problems with the project and the organization.

Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work follows the adventures of a reluctant hero as he strives to make sense of the nonsense. Join Paul as he discovers how the way we talk affects the way we work. You'll learn breakthrough techniques to end the habits that lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Part novel, part workbook, *Talk To Me* weaves practical lessons around a story of one man's experiment in helping his team to use the most powerful business tool we will ever have – conversation. The book examines ideas emerging from such studies as positive psychology, social and emotional intelligence, neuroscience, and coaching.

Chapter1- An Invitation to Talk

In the book, this chapter is designed to help readers build awareness of the communication patterns in their life.

Consider the activities of your day-to-day work, and identify the people you collaborate with, whose work influences yours or whose work you may influence.

Select one of them as the subject of your fieldwork. He or she is a contributor to your success. Over the next few days, track and examine all your communication with this person. Your aim is to get a sense of the frequency, nature and quality of your communication with this person. The following questions can be your guidelines.

1.	How many times a week did you interact using the following means?	
	Telephone	
	eMail	
	Face-to-face, just the two of you	
	Face-to-face, in a group meeting	
2.	How many times did you start the communication?	
3.	How many times did he or she start the communication?	
4.	How many interactions were required to get the work done, the mystery solved or the matter settled?	
5.	Does the very act of being aware of your communication with this person change it, in some way? How?	

Chapter 2 – A Powerful Business Tool

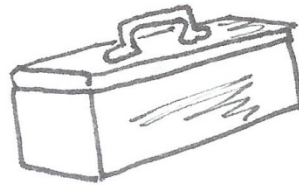
In the book, this chapter introduces the idea that effective communication works as a tool to get work done and achieve our goals.

Once again, think of several people with whom you collaborate, whose work influences yours or whose work you may influence. Identify some of the things you communicate about. What's one of your desired outcomes from the communication?

Select one of these individuals as the subject of your fieldwork. This might be the person you chose for the exercise in Chapter 1.

1.	Of the things you discuss with this person, which is the most important to your work or his/hers?
2.	Regarding this topic, what is one desired outcome for you?
3.	Why is it important? What does it mean for you and the organization?
4.	What do you suppose is the other person's desired outcome?
5.	What has to happen for your outcome to be achieved?
6.	What has to happen for the other person's outcome to be achieved?
7.	How will you know when you've reached that outcome?
8.	How will the other person know?

9.	What's your role in making all of this clear?
10.	Besides getting the job done, what are other benefits of making it clear?
Ponder this:	What one thing, if you could make it happen, would make you love your work?



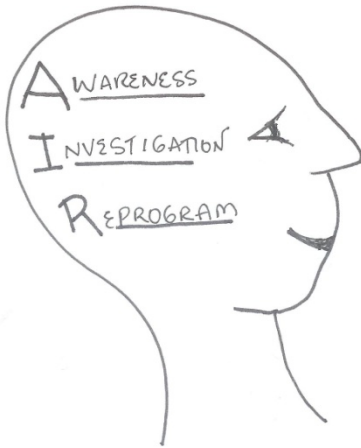
CONVERSATIONS = BUSINESS TOOLS

Chapter 3 – An Audience of One

In the book, this chapter introduces the idea of the conversation we have in our head, 24 hours a day, telling us things that may or may not be true.

The first task is to examine your self-talk. Think about a work situation you're involved in that's causing you some concern or isn't unfolding the way you'd like. Practice the AIR technique.

What's the situation?



A = Awareness - What are you telling yourself about the situation? How are you describing your role in it? Are these explanations supporting you and meeting your objectives?

I = Inquire, Investigate, Interrogate - Is what you're telling yourself true? What evidence do you have? Could something else be true? What else might that be?

R = Reprogram - Think about alternate explanations that better serve you and your objectives. Write these helpful explanations down and read them out loud. This helps create new links in your brain.

The next time you notice you're telling yourself the same old story, you'll think of these new stories.

Note: Reprogramming isn't the same as parroting positive affirmations, such as, "I'm beautiful and successful," in hope they'll come true. Instead, you're introducing your brain to new possibilities, upgrading your thinking process to use all the information available, not just what's in the old familiar stories.

The second part of your fieldwork is to examine how you learn. Not everyone learns in the same way. What methods work for you?

Think of something you learned to do as an adult. What motivated you to learn it? How did you learn to do it? What was the process you used?

Which of these processes works best for you: reading, watching someone, talking about it, trial and error?

Knowing your style helps you determine how to approach your own learning. If you have a drawer full of unread software and appliance manuals, you probably don't learn through reading and may not benefit from how-to or self-help books. On the other hand, you may be very successful with a live teacher, coach or mentor, who can explain, discuss or model the behaviour you want to learn. If you learn best by trying something for yourself, nothing will substitute for experience.

Some activities lend themselves to a certain way of learning. We don't want to ride on a bus where the driver learned all he knows about the job from reading the Highway Code or the vehicle's Owner's Manual.

When it comes to communication, too, reading, watching and discussing the principles have value, yet real world practice is the best way to become proficient.

Chapter 4 – The Things You Can Control

In the book, this chapter introduces the idea that you are responsible for more than half of a conversation. You can control what you say – that's obvious. You can also often control the setting and timing of a conversation. You can even reduce the levels of stress.

Think of an important upcoming conversation. If you assume 100 per cent responsibility for the way you communicate and the way you are understood, how will you approach this discussion?

Who will you be talking with?	
What will you be talking about?	
What do you hope the other person will do as a result?	
When and where will you talk?	
What will be the best format? (formal/informal, group/1-to-1)	
What facts are important to you?	
What facts will be important to the other person or people?	
What emotions or feelings might arise on your part or theirs?	
How will the elements of the SCARF model affect them? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status• Certainty• Autonomy• Relatedness• Fairness	
What questions will you ask?	

How will you know you are really listening?	
What will you do if the need to be right arises for you?	
What will you do if the need to be right arises for them?	
How will you benefit from considering these issues?	

Over the coming weeks, you can use these questions to help develop the habit of conscious, thoughtful planning for conversations that will enable you to assume 100 per cent responsibility for your communication and inspire the same accountability in others.



Chapter 5 – The Communication Styles

In the book, this chapter introduces the idea that we don't all communicate the same way and identifies four styles that show up most often. Knowing someone's style helps you shape your communication in ways they will best understand it. Knowing your own style helps you see the patterns that may naturally shape your communication so you know when and what to adjust.

This short assessment will give you some clues about your communication style. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers and there is no style that is “better” than the others. The goal is to provide you with some insight into your own communication style and that of others. Understanding communication styles can help you adjust your approach so you can connect with others “on their wavelength.”

Circle the answer that is most true for you.

Circle the answer that is most true for you.	
I would rather be known for: (a) Doing things properly (b) Doing things cleverly (c) Doing things from the heart (d) Doing things creatively	I feel good about myself when I use: (a) My dependability (b) My intellect (c) My people skills (d) My ingenuity
I tend to trust: (a) Tried and true methods (b) Pure reason and logic (c) My intuition (d) My instincts	I'd like to have more: (a) Safety and security (b) Efficient ways of doing things (c) Self-awareness (d) Adventure
I like to work with: (a) Processes (b) Ideas (c) People (d) Tools	My advice is: (a) Be careful (b) Be smart (c) Be friendly (d) Be flexible
I'd rather have: (a) Stability (b) Knowledge (c) Wisdom (d) Spontaneity	My top strength is: (a) Reliability (b) Curiosity (c) Empathy (d) Creativity
The route to success is based on: (a) Following proven methods	I'm most interested in: (a) Meeting my responsibilities

(b) Experimentation (c) An inspiring vision (d) Taking action	(b) Solving problems (c) Uncovering possibilities (d) Making things work
---	--

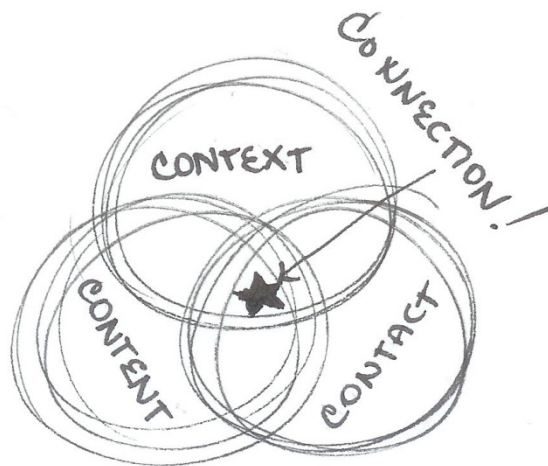
Total the number of times you choose each letter				
a =	b =	c =	d =	Total = 10
Guardian Style	Rational Style	Idealist Style	Artisan Style	

As you probably guessed, the highest number will indicate the style that you are most likely to use.

You can find and complete the assessment online at <http://talktomebook.com>. Completing the assessment there will let you download a useful guide that puts all this in context and explains what to do about it.

If you're interested in a more in-depth look at your communication style, you may want to take an assessment such as the [Myers-Briggs Type Inventory \(MBTI\)](#).

Another idea introduced in this chapter is that real connection happens when context, content and contact intersect.



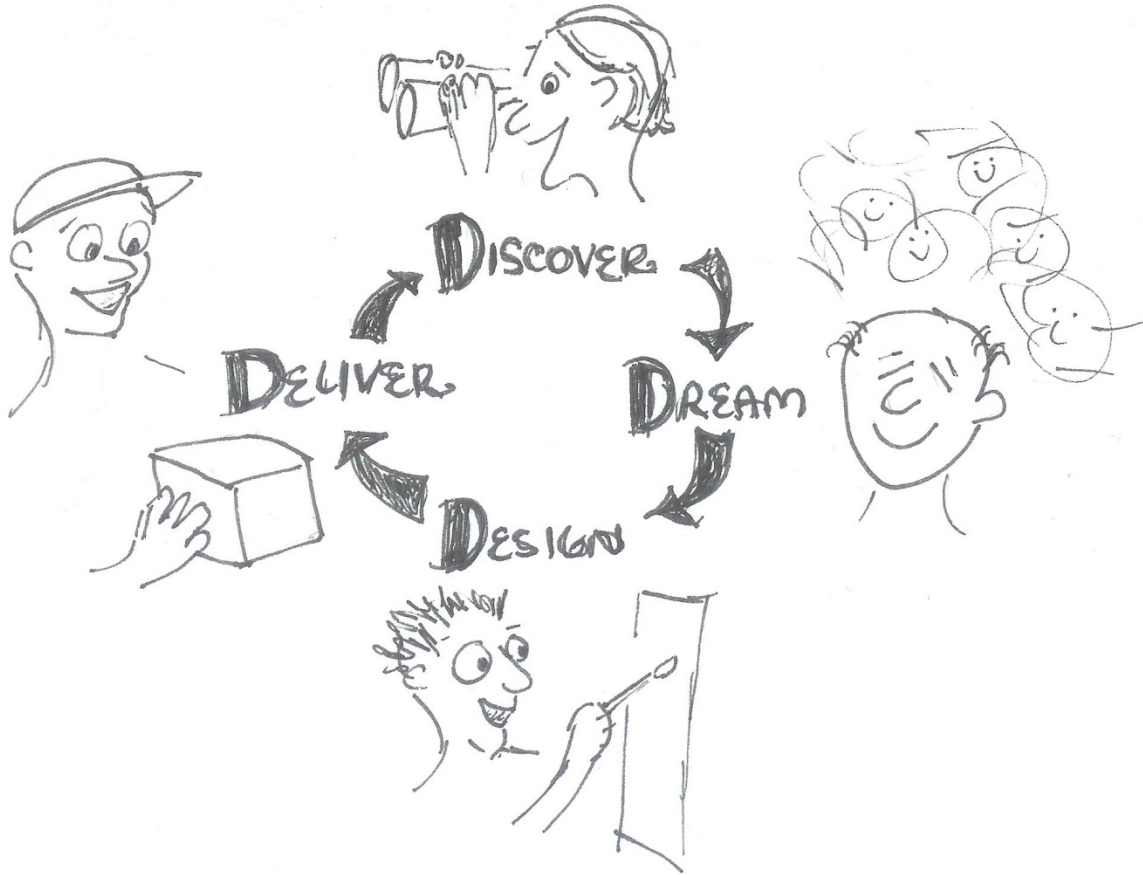
Chapter 6 – What’s Going Right?

In the book, this chapter introduces the practice of appreciative inquiry, a technique where a team will focus on things that went well and how to replicate success, rather than look at problems.

This exercise invites you to sample some appreciative questions. In answering them, you’ll gain a sense of the approach and the process. You may also observe that something happens to you as you recall high points, times when you and your group or organization were at your best.

1.	What drew you to the topic of workplace conversations?	
2.	What ideas do you have for ways a communication initiative might help your group or organization achieve its mission or goals?	
3.	When you look at your group or organization with an appreciative eye, what positive characteristics show up, in its daily life and service to others, when it is at its best?	
4.	What positive characteristics contribute to your group or organization’s capacity for co-operation and collaboration?	
5.	What strengths in your group or organizations help you operate at your best?	
6.	What do you want more of in your group or organization?	
7.	If you had three wishes, what would you wish for it?	
8.	How might appreciative communication help you realize these wishes?	
9.	Describe the ways appreciative communication contributes to success in your group or organization?	
10.	How do people in your group or organization benefit from hearing and telling stories of	

	times when it and they were at their best?	
11.	Are there situations in which you find yourself where you can practice asking positive questions?	
12.	What questions might you ask to elicit positive stories?	

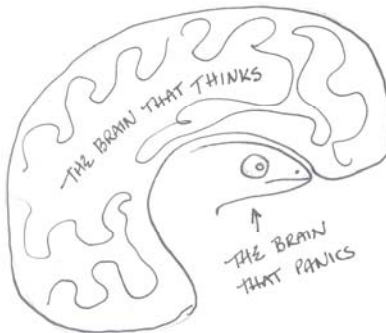


Chapter 7 – I Want That Too!

In the book, this chapter looks at ways to identify and highlight shared goals. That's a great technique for building common context and reducing stress in a conversation.

Think of a situation happening or brewing where you work or live. This exercise will have you look at the parties, including you, and what's at stake, emotionally, for each.

1.	What do you think is at stake for you?	
2.	What is the feeling that goes with that?	
3.	What is the best outcome for you?	
4.	Imagine you're one of the others involved. What's at stake for him or her?	
5.	What do you think he or she might be feeling about that?	
6.	What is the best outcome for that other person?	
7.	Where do your best outcome and his or hers overlap? This is the common ground - and the place from which you can build the conversation.	
8.	How can you help the other person understand that you share his or her goal?	



This chapter also discusses the brain that thinks and the one that responds, fight, flight or freeze.

Chapter 8 – Not Another Re-plan

In the book, this chapter shows how making assumptions about communication can lead to misunderstanding. It also looks at ways to avoid that.

In the next few conversations you participate in, notice what gets and keeps your attention?

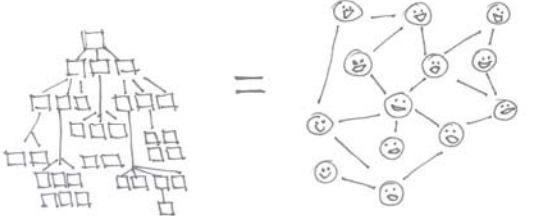
Examine your listening patterns.

- Are you curious about what the other person is saying?
- Are you listening for new ideas?
- Are you listening for information that supports your views?
- Are you waiting for a chance to make your own point?

Write down three-to-five things you wish you had heard at the last meeting you were at.

Write down three-to-five things you wish you had said at the last meeting you were at.

Ask yourself why these things weren't said.

	 <p>The diagram shows two interconnected concepts. On the left, a hierarchical organizational chart is drawn with squares representing nodes and lines showing a top-down structure. Below it is the word "ORGANIZATIONS". On the right, a network of circles representing people is drawn with lines connecting them in a non-hierarchical, multi-directional way. Below it is the word "CONVERSATIONS". An equals sign "=" is placed between the two diagrams, suggesting an equivalence or relationship between the two structures.</p>
--	--

Chapter 9 - Catching the Virus

In the book, in this chapter looks at commitments made and accepted and how to make sure it works for both sides.

Identify a conversation you've been avoiding rather than tackling.

What's the best thing that will happen if you have this conversation?

What's the worst thing that will happen? Is that likely?

What will happen if you don't have the conversation?

How can you create safety for yourself and the other participant(s)?

Have you ever accepted someone's commitment without knowing what they have to do to honor it? Why did you do that?

If you were disappointed, what do you think you should have asked to ensure it could be done?

Have you ever made a commitment without fully understanding what it would take to honor it?

Why do you think the person accepted your commitment?

If you failed to live up to the commitment, what do you think were the consequences?

How do you feel when people ask you probing questions about how you will meet your commitment?

If you feel annoyed by these questions, how do you think they might be asked so they wouldn't be annoying?

ASK THE QUESTION
BEHIND THE QUESTION



Chapter 10 - Reporting In

In the book, this chapter helps us recognize that if we're going to have useful, productive conversations, we need to take the first step.

What one action can you take, today, to engage in a real conversation?

List some phrases you can add to this conversation that will create connection and trust.

List some phrases you can eliminate to reduce defensiveness and fear.

Who and where are the people who are likely to join with you in developing a Talk To Me culture in your organization?

How can you begin a conversation with them that will lead to better communication in your workplace?



About Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work

A mission-critical project is spinning out of control. Failure will mean lost customers, lost revenues, lost prestige for a venerable financial institution and – no doubt – lost jobs. Can anyone or anything save it?

When Paul Hunchak is invited to take on the task of bringing Project Delta back on track, the first thing he does is update his résumé. Saying no to the quirky CEO would be a career limiting move. Saying yes looked just as bad. A not-so-chance encounter with a neighbourhood barista induces him to take a chance, take the assignment and take on the real problems with the project and the organization.

Talk To Me: Workplace Conversations That Work follows the adventures of a reluctant hero as he strives to make sense of the nonsense. Join Paul as he discovers how the way we talk affects the way we work. You'll learn breakthrough techniques to end the habits that lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Part novel, part workbook, *Talk To Me* weaves practical lessons around a story of one man's experiment in helping his team to use the most powerful business tool we will ever have – conversation. The book examines ideas emerging from such studies as positive psychology, social and emotional intelligence, neuroscience, and coaching.

Some of the characters you'll meet



Taylor Flynn



Burt Shepler



Paul Hunchak



Emma Bateman



Lynnette Benson



Katy De Marco
Barrister-turned-Barista

What others have said about Talk To Me . . .

“Sue Johnston has turned the explication of effective workplace communication strategies into a page-turning narrative that I couldn’t put down. Both practical and passionate, this is a story that will make you think about the power of self-awareness, listening, learning and being positive – the cornerstones of communications that deliver business – and personal – results. A must-read whether you work in a corporate environment or the local café.” - **Debbie Weil**, CEO of [Voxie Media](#) and author of *The Corporate Blogging Book*

“Sue Johnston has done a masterful job with her book, *Talk to Me: Workplace Conversations that Work*. Using an engaging story that runs throughout the book, Sue shows us how conversations are business tools, and essential ingredients to success within an organization. Of particular usefulness are the notes at the end of each chapter, with questions and activities for reinforcing what we’ve learned as we progress through the book.

“All of us can do a better job of communicating at home, at work, with friends and family and in our volunteer roles. *Talk to Me* can help!” – **Donna Papacosta**, [Trafalgar Communications](#).

“In her new book, Sue Johnston captures a key area that is critical to business and often missed by leaders. At a time when we are experiencing a massive leadership crisis in organizations and everyone is feeling overwhelmed by social tools, this book is a gift to help us get back to basics.

“Two way-conversations are key to implementing strategy and reaching goals. It’s not about the “meeting in a box” or “frequently asked questions.” Sue helps us understand that what we need most is to make sure that employees have the information they need to be effective in their jobs. A definite must read for every manager with helpful tips that you can use right away.” – **Ayelet Baron**, VP, Strategy and Transformation, Cisco Canada