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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

The Danger in Surface Conversations

As a professional, your day is filled with scores of conversations about a variety of topics. Between verbal and written communication you can bet you're employing thousands and thousands of words. But are all of those words, frequently empty and frivolous, giving you the information and insights you need to develop your people and forward the work? That is the critical question.



Danger lurks in our surface conversations: Potential mistakes; misinterpretations; false assumptions; misunderstandings; poor judgments; wrong impressions; missed opportunities; and disappointments. By taking a few extra minutes many of these problems can be avoided. By digging deeper we're more likely to get the full picture.

As you may guess, I coach clients for lots of reasons. Fallout from staying on the surface, however, could be a big theme in my business. Whiplash after a star staffer suddenly quits and not

knowing why...frustration resulting from a team member's

underperformance...project failure from not probing process details. These are just a few of the issues that can emerge when folks only skim the surface. To avoid or at least minimize these kinds of hassles, check out my feature article below for some really practical guidance.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

7 Questions That Expand and Deepen Conversations

Want to take your work related conversations to the next necessary level? Insert the following requests for information into your next exchange and notice the difference they make:

- Ask for more clarity. Examples: “Explain exactly what you meant by your statement that sounded like you oppose the new procedure.” Or, “Why is this so important to you?”
- Ask how the person feels about the situation. Examples: “How does your teammate’s criticism of your ideas make you feel?” Or, “How does it feel to assume that you may not land the promotion you desire?”
- Ask for more details. Examples: “Talk to me about the logistics associated with such an event.” Or, “What evidence exists that causes you to believe X?”
- Ask the person what she thinks needs to happen. Examples: “If you were in the driver’s seat on this project, what decision would you make? Or, “What is the next step you plan to take?”
- Ask the person what he needs most now. Examples: “Because you are down two staff people this week, I’m curious what you need most under the circumstances.” Or, “Do you need more emotional or practical support right now?”
- Ask *how* you can be a resource or support. Examples: “I want to support you, but you must tell me how I can best do that.” Or, “How can I be a better resource for you during this challenging time?”
- Ask the person if she *feels* heard. Examples: “Although I was listening carefully to what you were telling me, I’m wondering if you actually felt my understanding and empathy.” Or, “As I summarized

your idea to the committee, I'm curious if you were able to feel the value I attached to it."

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What Clients Say

I hired Sylvia AFTER I made a big mistake. Although I am not young or new to my industry, I admit to being inexperienced when it comes to interviewing job candidates. Several months ago I needed to replace one of our analysts, and I thought I had the perfect guy after investing hours of my time into the hiring process. Wrong. The whole thing became a disaster really fast. Looking back, I should have asked more clarifying questions during the interview. For example: When he told me that he wanted to leave his current position because the rest of his team wasn't getting along, I should have asked him to explain in greater detail what he meant by that statement. Sylvia showed me that, by artfully probing into his relationships with colleagues, I may have spared our company a lot of grief and aggravation. I don't know if this individual's peers were problems, but I do know that he was.

- David M., Information Technology Manager, NY

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Offers and Opportunities

Your Next Conversation Determines Your Success

That statement may seem daunting, but there's a lot of truth in it. Every conversation you have either brings you closer to your goal or moves you farther away from it. Your conversations matter. If you know you need to initiate—or continue—a particular conversation at work and you're not sure how to expand it in the desired direction, give Sylvia the opportunity to lead you through it. Send her an email at sylvia@launchinglives.biz before midnight EDT on Friday, October 13th to become eligible to win a FREE twenty-minute phone coaching session. The first two people to express interest will receive this gift.

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RESOURCES

Situations That Call for Deeper Conversations

- ✚ Onboarding new employees; periodic follow up with these folks
- ✚ Restructuring within your department or company
- ✚ Acute or emerging problems
- ✚ Staff personality, communication, or work style conflicts
- ✚ Assessment of a new product or service
- ✚ Recognition of real or perceived failure
- ✚ Observance of insecurity in an employee
- ✚ Expansion of job duties for various reasons
- ✚ Planning an event, special meeting, or conference
- ✚ Periods of stagnancy, uncertainty, or overwhelm
- ✚ Times of planned or unplanned change
- ✚ Observance of hostility or resistance
- ✚ Occasions of individual or collective loss and grief

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TIP

Of the seven question ideas provided in the feature article above, identify the one that, once incorporated into your conversations on a regular basis, can make the biggest positive impact on individual professional development and/or organizational outcomes. Claim one of them as your “stand-by” question, and use it multiple times per day.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

Rubina Azizdin with Central Penn College has invited Sylvia to present

the October 23, 2017 program for her newly created REAL Women's Alliance, a more personally focused support group venue for professionals (and students) of all ages representing various industries. The topic, "A 7 Step Process for Navigating All Life Transitions", will be delivered over lunch to approximately 25-30 women in the college conference center.

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Join Sylvia on these social networks!

About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

Back issues are [available here](#). Send an email by [clicking here](#) to manage your free subscription. Sharing content with attribution is encouraged as is forwarding the Ezine email. Include launchinglives.biz in your list of safe senders or friends, depending upon your email software, to be sure you receive the monthly emailed issues.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking,

business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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