

## Practical Tools for Staff Conversations

### March 23, 2020

In an effort to help leaders inspire and motivate their teams, below are a few short excerpts or tools that you can use each day for check-ins:

1. In their recent book, *The Book of Joy*, the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop Desmond Tutu discuss ways in which "courage, resilience and dogged hope in humanity has brought them joy. Their joy is clearly not easy or superficial but one burnished by the fire of adversity, oppression and struggle. Ultimately, our greatest joy is when we seek to do good for others." With this in mind, a check in question you might use with your team is "Tell us about an instance where you found joy in your work yesterday?"

2. Nelson Mandela's book, *Notes to the Future*, talks about courage. He said "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. I felt fear more times than I can remember, but I hid behind a mask of boldness. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers the fear." Similarly, the Archbishop Tutu said "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the ability to act despite it." Check in question for your team- "What does courage look like for you today?"

3. Harvard Business Review's *In Praise of the Incomplete leader* tells us- "No leader is perfect. The best ones don't try to be-they concentrate on honing their strengths and find others who can make up for their limitations." Check in question for your team- Understanding that we can't be all things to all people, what areas can the team help to support you in your work today?

4. Today's offering includes a poem with a question to offer to your team.

"And did you get what  
you wanted from this life, even so?

I did.

And what did you want?

To call myself beloved, to feel my self

Beloved on the earth."

Late Fragment- Raymond Carver

Check in with your team...what is one thing that we can do to ensure that our residents and/or team members feel beloved today?

5. "Everything can be taken from [a person] but one thing: the last of human freedoms- to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl, Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist.

Check in- How would you describe your attitude today?

6. If you find yourself feeling like you have no control, the following techniques may help you change your emotional state:

**Change your focus-** Grab your phone and look at pics of those you love. Surge your body with great memories. Think about the things you are grateful for in life.

**Change your physiology-** Stand up, take a drink of water, take a few deep breaths. If you have been on the run try slowing down for a minute to regroup.

**Change your language-** Language matters...the words we use have an impact on our own emotions and how others perceive our emotions.

Check in- What are some ways that you have been successful in changing your emotional state during this uncertain time?

Adapted from the "Anxious Achiever," *Harvard Business Review*

7. "Everyone is a bit scared, but we are less scared together. Tears fall for a reason and they are your strength not weakness. Asking for help isn't giving up, it's refusing to give up." *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, Charlie Mackesy

Check in- How can the team help you feel less worried or anxious today?

8. Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths-based, positive approach created by David Cooperrider that operates under the idea of focusing on what is working and shining a light on the bright spots in your organization. The practice suggests that if you only focus on fixing problems and what is not working, then your problems will get bigger.

Check-in -What are some lessons we learned last week related to things that went well that we could apply in other areas?

9. When disaster strikes, gratitude provides a perspective from which we can view life in its entirety and not be overwhelmed by temporary circumstances. A crisis can make us more grateful—but research says gratitude also helps us cope with crisis. Consciously cultivating an attitude of gratitude builds up a sort of psychological immune system that can help cushion us if we fall. Research suggests that grateful people are more resilient to stress, whether minor everyday hassles or major personal upheavals. *Gratitude Works*, Robert Emmons

Check-in- What are you grateful for today?

10. During difficult times, it is important to find levity and light...ask your team "What songs would they include on a COVID-19 music Playlist?" (You might get them started with *Don't Stand So Close to Me*, Police)