

Building resilience.

ACTIVITY FOCUS: ESTABLISHING LINE-OF-SIGHT

Having a clear view of how your day-to-day work links to what is most important to you is a significant source of resilience. Part of what enables Olympic and Paralympic athletes to commit to heavy training loads day-in and day-out, to persevere through injury and disappointment, is that they can clearly link what they are doing to a vision that has meaning to them. In the workshop, we introduced a model for thinking about this 'line of sight' from daily decisions to goals to vision to North Star, and you had an opportunity to think about a vision of your life 2-3 years out, as well as some of the important elements of your North Star.

In this activity, you will facilitate a 1:1 discussion with someone on your team to help them get in touch with their own vision and North Star, and connect the dots to their work.

This is a great starting point for increasing the resilience of a team member who may be carrying a heavy load or has recently experienced a setback or disappointment. It is also a way for you to build a deeper relationship with members of your team by understanding their goals, aspirations and values. Finally, doing this will make your own job significantly easier – it will give you a touch-stone to reference when the going gets tough, and it will be a source of intrinsic motivation for individuals on your team so that all of the energy doesn't need to come from you.

HERE ARE THE STEPS FOR THIS ACTIVITY:

Step 1: Schedule the discussion. Try to find 45 minutes when you can meet in-person in a place where you have some privacy.

Step 2: Prepare yourself. At first, these discussions may feel a little uncomfortable for your team member. Put yourself in their shoes: you likely felt a sense of trepidation at sharing your vision during the workshop, for example – this is very normal, and it's amplified when disclosing to one's boss. One good way to ease this discomfort and establish trust is through self-disclosure – saying "I'll go first" and sharing some of the elements of your own vision and/or North Star. In service of this, it's a great idea to review what you created during the workshop – and identify elements that you would be comfortable disclosing during the conversation.

Step 3: Hold the discussion. In service of facilitating the conversation, we have included a conversation guide as the final page of this document. You can reference this as you go for a few ideas on how to structure it, questions you might ask, etc. At a high level, there are four parts to the discussion:

- 1) *Set the stage* – establish the purpose of the discussion

- 2) *Vision* – write a ‘postcard from the future’ to get at what success looks like for them 2-3 years out
- 3) *North Star* – use versions of the question ‘in service of what?’ to get at the ‘why’ behind the vision
- 4) *Goals + daily decisions* – Link insights back to their current goals, projects and responsibilities – what exists, and what might be adjusted

Step 4: Summarize and make yourself available for follow-up (if you’re willing). Finish the discussion by reviewing what you’ve heard and, if applicable, any actions that you’ve identified. If you’re willing, you might also commit to checking back in three months to review how things are going: Do you feel like you’re making progress on what you said was really important to you?

DEBRIEFING YOUR PRACTICE

Once you’ve concluded the discussion, it’s a good idea to take a few minutes to reflect on how the conversation went. You might consider:

- What questions worked well for you in uncovering insights?
- What parts were most comfortable or uncomfortable for you?
- What would you do the same next time? What would you do differently?

CONVERSATION GUIDE

Part 1: Open the discussion – Establish the purpose of the conversation and build rapport. Some themes you might reference in the opening include:

- *A desire to support the team member’s goals and aspirations* – e.g., “One of my jobs as a leader is to ensure I’m helping you make progress towards a future that is exciting to you. I want to make sure I understand what’s important to you so that I can do that.”
- *Connection with purpose as a source of motivation + resilience* – e.g., “What we know is that it’s not motivating working without a clear view of how what we’re doing links to what is important to us.”
- *Your own experience with this type of exercise* – e.g., “I went through this process as part of a recent workshop. It was a little nerve-racking at first, but at the end I felt like I had really clarified where I wanted to go, and it’s been very helpful in setting my goals this quarter.”

Part 2: Help them sketch a vision – Coach them in articulating a clear and compelling image of their life 2-3 years out. We really like using the ‘postcard from the future’ approach here: “So, you get a postcard from you, 3 years from now, telling you about your life. If life has gone according to plan, what does the postcard say?” A few tips:

- *Self-disclosure* – As mentioned above, this can feel uncomfortable. To break the ice, you might say “I’ll go first – my postcard says, ‘With that promotion at work, and some scrimping and saving, you’ve made the leap and got your pilots’ license, and bought a 1/5th timeshare in a Cessna.’”

- *A postcard is small and informal* – If they're still stuck, remind them it's a postcard, not a letter! The key is to dash off the high points, not go through an agonizing reappraisal of their life

Part 3: Probe at the 'why' behind the vision – This is the moment at which your role as coach is most vital. The key is to go through the major elements of the vision and, using variations on a theme of 'in service of what?', push beyond the what to get at the why. You can use:

- How come that got space on the postcard?
- What is really important about that to you?
- What does this link to that really matters to you?
- What will that bring into your life that's important to you?

In the scenario above, you might ask, "So, what is really important to you about the pilots' license?" And they might say, "Well, it gives me something fun to bond with my grand kids over!" At this point, you can summarize with "Okay, so connecting with family is very important to you over the next few years."

Part 4: Link to their current reality – Finally, work to cement some linkages between what they are working on and their vision and North Star, or to identify ways that things could be more aligned. You might ask:

- We determined that [connecting with family] is really important to you – how does work help with that?
- So, what are the things you are working on right now that are moving you towards that postcard?
- What are the things you could be doing to be even more aligned?
- What blocks can I help remove?