

# FUEL

## for Challenging Conversations

### Versions for:

1. Influence & Problem-Solving
2. Group Decision-Making
3. Conflict Resolution
4. Negotiations
5. Negative Feedback
6. Holding People Accountable
7. Repairing Trust (Cleanups)
8. Role Underperformance
9. Letting Someone Go

Online: [www.NeubergGore.com/FUEL](http://www.NeubergGore.com/FUEL)

# FUEL Introduction

## F

### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Framing the conversation is setting the conversation up for success.
- Creating clarity about the goal of the conversation and the agenda will help everyone align and focus on the desired outcomes. Don't beat around the bush--even if it's a tough conversation, and make sure you both are willing to have the conversation.
- In most conversations, we want to establish a mood of openness, collaboration, and connection. Be soft on the person and hard on the problem.

## U

### NDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S WORLDS... THEIR WORLD FIRST

- The best solutions and highest follow-through will come when there is mutual understanding of each party's underlying interests. Don't argue over the solutions--build them together.
- Most people are poor listeners, especially if they are upset or have strong opinions. Set up their listening by first understanding them. Even if they say something you disagree with, stay curious and ensure they feel heard. Paraphrasing is an extremely powerful and much underused tool.
- Also be sure to share your interests and priorities.

## E

### XPLORE OPTIONS

- This is the time in a conversation to create value--to find ways that all the parties can be satisfied. Brainstorm together and expand ideas.
- If you get caught into narrowing into one solution too fast or critiquing solutions, it will shut down creativity and you'll likely leave value on the table.

## L

### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP (3 C's)

- **Commit:** Make sure everyone is clear and aligned on next steps (who is doing what by when). Often, commitments that may have seemed obvious were misunderstood.
- **Collaborate:** See all commitments as mutual ones; work together to make them successful.
- **Complete:** When the task is complete, discuss what worked well and what can be improved in both the task and your next collaboration.
- A commitment loop is further clarified on the next page.

# A Commitment Loop (3 C's)

## Commit, Collaborate, Complete

### COMMIT

- At the end of all meetings, ensure there is clear agreement of who-is-doing-what-by-when.
- Get a committed response (yes, no, counter offer, commit-to-commit).
- Don't accept unclear or half-commitments.
- Be clear on the desired outcome (not just what they are doing, but why).
- Be clear on the action plan if there are multiple steps. If the commitment is over a longer period or critical, setup milestones and check-ins.
- Document the agreement together in an email or plan. Reconfirm alignment.

### COLLABORATE

- Understand your role in the commitment--it's a mutual commitment, not just "theirs."
- Help them win. Give them the advice, support, resources, people, etc. to be successful.
- Offer encouragement and appreciation.
- For longer/critical projects, have regular check-ins to track progress and offer support.
- If you are concerned a commitment won't be kept, have a conversation. Resolve broken commitments as they arise by initiating a conversation.
- Be clear that not all commitments should be kept. Encourage risks and failures to be communicated promptly.
- If they need to renegotiate a commitment, be open to it. Explore options for how to move forward.

### COMPLETE

- Share your satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A simple tool to use is to share plusses (what worked) and deltas (what can be better).
- Learn what you can do better to support their success and be open to their critical feedback. Own your contribution to their challenges--be both a student and a teacher.
- Offer frequent appreciation with specificity, depth and authenticity. It's a bank account of positive regard that allows you to share negative feedback more easily now and in the future.
- Share negative feedback using the FUEL model. Be sure to be committed to their success and understand their obstacles.

# 3.0 Conflict Resolution

## FUEL Best Practices

### F

#### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Set a forward-looking collaborative mood of support.
- Clarify together the desired outcome, which includes addressing both relationship issues and the conflict.
- Care about them personally, but also name the elephant in the room.
- Agree on agenda & timing. Don't expect to solve it in one meeting.
- Name the trust issues and resolve those first, then address content.

### U

#### NDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S WORLDS... THEIR WORLD FIRST

- Set the agenda for you to understand them first, and secondly for them to understand your perspective.
- Be curious: Dig for their underlying interests, cares, and feelings.
- Empathize: Demonstrate understanding through paraphrasing even if you strongly disagree.
- Ask to be heard: Share your story and impact on you. Distinguish facts from interpretations.

### E

#### XPLORE OPTIONS

- Co-create many possible solutions to (1) resolve the conflict and (2) rebuild trust.
- Don't narrow into one solution.

### L

#### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Decide and commit to clear next steps. Do not accept unrealistic commitments.
- Agree on what will you do if & when situations come up again.
- Setup a check-in meeting now to ensure you rebuild trust together.
- Discuss what went well in the conversation and what could be better next time.

## 3.1 Conflict Resolution Common Mistakes

### F

#### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Assuming other people navigate conflict like you do—level of intensity, honesty, pace, etc.
- Focusing on the conflict rather than what's possible when it's resolved.
- Getting lost in anger, blame or other negative emotions.
- Discussing the issues before resolving relationship or trust issues.
- Having the conversation in the wrong circumstances.

### U

#### NDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S WORLDS... THEIR WORLD FIRST

- Discounting their concerns, priorities or story (verbally or nonverbally, e.g. rolling your eyes).
- Lack of empathy for their perspective, especially when you disagree.
- Trying to be right and prove a point, rather than focusing on mutual understanding of two different perspectives.
- Stating opinions and perspective as fact without double checking the facts.
- Softening your truth and impact on you because they may react poorly.

### E

#### XPLORE OPTIONS

- Not developing options for both solving the issue and repairing trust.
- Underestimating the relationship damage.

### L

#### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Rushing into solutions.
- Playing next steps by ear, including not scheduling a check-in (usually because you are relieved you got here in the first place!)
- Going too big—it's better to take baby steps that are realistic than find yourself deeper in the hole.
- Not expressing appreciation for the conversation.

# 3.2 Conflict Resolution

## FUEL Preparation

### FRAME

What is the shared desired outcome?

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What do you want them to do? What do they want you to do?

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What will you do if you can't find resolution? What will they do? What could you do together?

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What is the mindset you need to be open and collaborative?

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What are you afraid to say?

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What will you say to create an open and collaborative conversation?

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### UNDERSTAND YOUR INTERESTS

List your interests and then rate their priority:

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### GUESS ABOUT THEIR INTERESTS

List their interests and rate priority:

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### EXPLORE OPTIONS: RESOLVE ISSUE

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### OPTIONS: REBUILD TRUST

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**LEAD NEXT STEPS** Who is doing what by when? What will you do if/when this arises again?

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# FUEL Checklist Review

## FRAMED THE CONVERSATION

### The What

- Created a shared vision of success.
- Set a forward-looking positive tone.
- The elephant was named (the problem, the complaint, the request).
- It is clear what is being discussed or decided (and what is off the table).

### The Relationship

- Friends not foes—they know you are a support for them .
- Context of appreciation.

### The How

- Agreed on topics, agenda, and timing for the conversation.
- For decisions: identified who else needs to be consulted.

## UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER’S WORLDS...THEIRS FIRST

### Their world

- You understand their world and their point of view even if it’s inaccurate (interests, cares, feelings, priorities challenges, or concerns).
- You demonstrated understanding through paraphrasing.
- For cleanups, you identified what you did to contribute to the problem and took responsibility for any negative impact you had.

### Your world

- They understand your world, point of view, and underlying interests and priorities.
- You owned your opinions as interpretation not fact.
- You ask to be paraphrased if there was any doubt of understanding.

### Shared reality

- You have a shared reality—where you agree, disagree, or are uncertain.
- Identified common priorities and differences.

## EXPLORED OPTIONS

- Brainstormed options; avoided debate and assessment.
- Developed several options and did not narrow too quickly on the first solution.
- Let the ideal path be generated through the brainstorm.
- For cleanups, also discussed the relationship and how to ensure the misunderstanding doesn’t happen again.

## LED A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Gained clear commitment on next steps (who is doing what by when).
- Left the meeting in a way that WE had a shared commitment.
- For cleanups, agreed to specific actions to deal with similar breakdowns in the future.
- Reconfirmed your support for the other person.