

# 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.

# 7.0 Repairing Trust (Cleanups)

## FUEL Best Practices

### F

#### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Share your support for the other person and your commitment to a powerful working relationship.
- Assume positive intent.
- Request a conversation to resolve a concern. Co-create the conversation.
- Avoid using the word “trust” because people take it personally.

### U

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

- State your interpretation. Separate facts from interpretations. Focus on what happened and the impact on you.
- Put everything on the table rather than withholding parts. Clear it all up.
- Appreciate the other person’s view of the situation even if it’s inaccurate.
- Stay curious about what you did to contribute to the situation. Apologize if appropriate.
- Create a shared reality and take responsibility for your role.
- Be careful about your need to be right vs. need for a way forward.

### E

#### XPLORE OPTIONS

- Co-create many possible solutions to resolve the situation.
- Also discuss how to ensure that the misunderstanding doesn’t happen again.

### L

#### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Decide and fully align on clear next steps. Agree to specific actions to deal with similar breakdowns in the future.
- Reconfirm your support for the other person.
- Work as a team to make it happen and stay in communication.

# 7.1 Repairing Trust (Cleanups)

## Common Mistakes

### F

#### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Creating disconnection through blame, anger, or a poor mood.
- Unilateral moves such as insisting when the conversation happens.
- Assuming the cleanup is a one-way street.
- Not creating a positive tone.
- Forgetting that there are two conversations—the cleanup and also creating a way to move forward.
- Also forgetting they may have issues to bring up with you.

### U

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

- Assuming that your story or point of view is accurate and complete.
- Not clarifying the difference between intent and impact.

### E

#### XPLORE OPTIONS

- Focusing just on the past, rather than also focusing on how to ensure trust is maintained in the future.

### L

#### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Not setting up a check-in in a month or period of time that is appropriate to make sure everything is on track.
- Lack of clarity around what will be different.

# 7.2 Repairing Trust (Cleanups)

## FUEL Preparation

### FRAME

What is the best possible outcome from the conversation?

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What happened—what are the facts, not your opinions/generalizations?

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

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

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### UNDERSTAND YOUR PERSPECTIVE

What's your story about their role?

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### GUESS ABOUT THEIR PERSPECTIVE

How do they see it? How might they think that you were also at cause?

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### EXPLORE OPTIONS

Brainstorm what you could do to resolve the situation:

How could you make sure this misunderstanding doesn't happen again?

### LEAD NEXT STEPS

What are your next steps? What will you do to deal with similar breakdowns in the future?

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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.