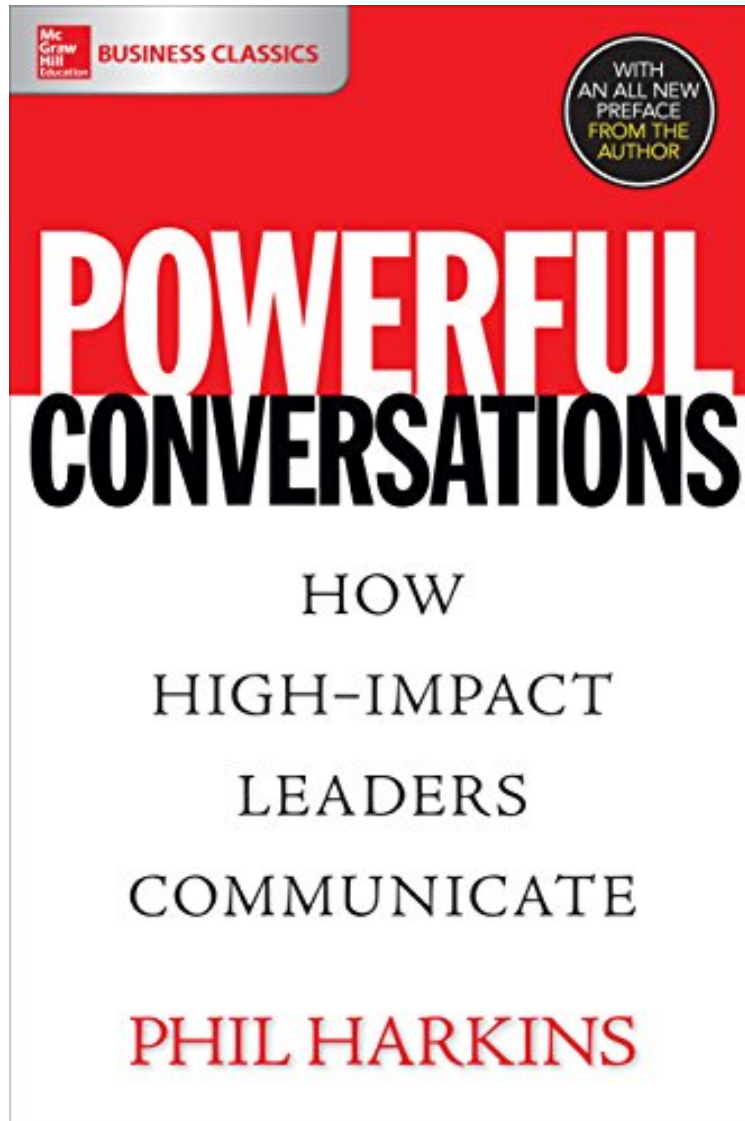


## Powerful Conversations: How High Impact Leaders Communicate (Business Books)

*Phil Harkins*

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**Phil Harkins : Powerful Conversations: How High Impact Leaders Communicate (Business Books)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Powerful Conversations: How High Impact Leaders Communicate (Business Books):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Useful guide to the power of conversations and how to conduct powerful conversations By Chris I read this almost 10 years ago, prepared notes for an executive roundtable, recently 'found' these, thought they may be useful to anyone contemplating reading. This is a redacted summary of select

messages. Conducting a powerful conversation is but one tool in the behavioral toolbox, but it is an important one. This is one methodology, deserves more than 4 stars, less than 5. Part 1: defines powerful conversations ... what, structure, objectives, impact, output Part 2: practice - how leaders use powerful conversations to foster trust, drive change, motivate and retain people, deliver their own special message Appendix: toolbox - summary, model, leadership assessment instrument, trust tool, change tool, retention tool

Part 1 Overview- Importance of quality conversations that involve shared feelings, beliefs, and ideas with exchange of wants and needs that translate into mutual commitments and action steps.- Link between powerful conversations and high-impact leaders - the importance of trust and the say/do relationship.- Story of a high-impact leader in action

Stages of a Powerful Conversation, pp. 22-23, immediately followed by discussion of barriers and importance of listening

- 1) Advancing the agenda - expression of honest feelings or sincere needs with desired outcome, goals. Constitutes request for help and solicits contribution.
- 2) Shared learning - mutual exploration of issues with skillful probing of wants and needs of other participant(s); place to discover hidden agendas and connect facts with underlying assumptions.
- 3) Stronger relationship - closing stage to make sure participants have nailed down next steps and are open about what they will do to make those commitments for action come to life. Closes by leader asking openly about whether the other person got what they wanted from the conversation. (... good time for leader to ask "how can I help? what do you need from me to be successful?")

"Tower of Power" Model - 4 step plan/tool to lead through the 3 stages of a powerful conversation, ensuring that the right steps happen, pp. 32-36

- Step 1: "What's up?"
  - o Strive to make emotional contact with the other person so they will open up, share a dialogue, and reveal their hidden agenda and "undiscussables".
  - o Leader should express her/his agenda, wants, needs.
  - o Establish openness and trust by "pulling" the conversation by leading with openness and vulnerability.
- Step 2: "What's so?"
  - o Focus on discovering the hidden factors underlying the issue or problem. Typically, people move too quickly from facts to inferences and assertions (quickly climbing the ladder of inference).
  - o Probe and question to determine facts and soundness of reasoning behind assertions.
- Step 3: "What's possible?"
  - o Leads to a similar question leaders should ask (not in book) ... `what needs to happen for this to work, or to solve this problem?'.
    - o Imagine alternatives, creative solutions.
    - o Leaders should challenge people to `see with fresh eyes', think differently (ref. "Theory U")
- Step 4: "Let's go!"
  - o Confirm mutual commitment to action.
  - o Action steps expressed, clear and explicit.
  - o Comment: Reflect/restate ... "I understand you will do this ... I hear you agreeing to take this action." Build the foundation. Don't force upward or skip a step

5 Primary Types of Powerful Conversations

Actualize strategy around Focused Drive - defining clear and simple goal(s), determine and communicate steps to reach the goal, instilling a sense of urgency, necessity, and determination (can capability) to reach the goal (motivating to actualize). Stabilize through conversations around Emotional Intelligence - perception and emotional maturity used to calm stressful situations and provide hope for optimistic outcomes, dispelling distress, fear, and anxiety. Build trust through conversations around Trusted Influence - achieving a balance between commitment and empowerment - conversations have 3 legs of support: 1) saying what you are doing and doing it consistently, 2) demonstrating genuine sense of caring, 3) expressing and sharing beliefs in nonjudgmental ways. Drive ideas with conversations around Conceptual Thinking - hitting the right balance between innovation and big picture thinking with innovation addressing new solutions/ideas and big picture thinking looking at big picture themes and systems. Systemize and focus work processes through conversations around Systems Thinking - hitting the balance between work process orientation and mental discipline needed for rigorous thinking needed for difficult situations.

Bad Conversations - getting bogged down in `the swamp', and getting out - conversations we all have at work, and sometimes with family. Characteristics ...- unclear, poorly expressed or poorly understood content, issues- unfocused content marked by veering off on tangents, too many facts, wants, concerns, needs- frequent interruptions, poor exchange, frustration- lack of active listening.- unexpressed beliefs, guarded emotions, unspoken needs- harsh emotions and tone, out of tone with meeting- non-verbal signs of negative feelings- unresponsive body language- outputs ... bad feelings, bad judgments, bad decisions

Steps to get out of "the swamp"

- 1) drop your original agenda - deal with what is happening in the room
- 2) validate issues and feelings - uncover the roots
- 3) create a list - get it all out
- 4) confirm the list and get a clear understanding of issues
- 5) start with the last item; early items tend to be smoke screens
- 6) build up the issue - have the sponsor explain why this is important
- 7) hold up the mirror - establish the line of reasoning, make it visible for all to examine
- 8) leave the swamp - use the "tower of power" to reframe the issue, assumptions, new possibilities, and craft actions for commitment to move forward

Part 2 Trust importance, meaning, levels of trust (see also "The Trusted Advisor")

4 C's of trust: caring, commitment, clarity, consistency

Rules of trust

- o begins with a commitment
- o requires being clear and consistent
- o loyalty occurs only through consistent acts of caring
- o requires living one's own beliefs
- o involves an interlocking system of internal beliefs (shared)

Levels of trust: 1) commitment, 2) loyalty, 3) belief

Trust breakdown, rebuilding

Change - comment ... a major role for the leaders ... They listen to and spend time with employees at all levels of the organization. They are caring people who are very direct (telling it like it is). They do exactly what they say they will do. They do not let the strategy overwhelm the people. They are incredibly open to diversity (divergent opinions and perspectives with due respect).

Steps to an agenda for change

Develop an agenda for Change vision by setting the goal and clearly defining objectives. Focus the senior leadership team on defining and fine tuning the architecture for the Agenda for Change. Focus managers at all levels on the vision and objectives.

Institute a learning system (every change effort involves learning). Ensure that passionate champions are heading up specific, critical components of implementation and operation ("free radical leaders" to make things happen). Champions are ... o highly driven and enormously focused, with strong mental discipline, o trusted inside of organizations; everyone knows their commitment to getting things accomplished, o see the big picture, but don't often invent, o not necessarily systems thinkers but are always perceptive o achievement oriented, o drivers, capable of creating unstoppable momentum, o don't entertain probabilities of not reaching the goal. High impact leaders ... o spend quality time with passionate champions on a regular basis, o frequently check in with passionate champions to ensure they stay on track, o follow up on commitments they make to their passionate champions. 18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. A piece of the jigsawBy Sheilah. BockettThe title Powerful Conversations: How High-Impact Leaders Communicate led me to believe that this book was primarily concerned with interpersonal communication. I found, however, that it is largely focussed on the ethics of leadership and the philosophy of emotional intelligence as applied to big business. The book is of high calibre in this respect, and for this reason I gave it 4 stars. But if you are looking for a hands-on manual on communication you will need to look elsewhere. Anyone who is sufficiently motivated to read this book will no doubt be already aligned with the basic philosophy of trust, openness, honesty, and clarity. The challenge lies in implementing such a philosophy. No doubt Harkins takes a more practical approach in his corporate training programme, and it would be a very large and expensive book if it were to contain such a programme in full. However, I find it frustrating that Harkins spends far more time explaining why than he does explaining how. Some methodology is woven into the text, but on the whole, the presentation focuses largely on principles and attitudes. All of these elements, of course, provide a necessary foundation for any system; after all, rote behaviours are largely unsustainable. But there is also a need for clear directives on the progressive action steps that need to be taken. The book must serve exceedingly well as a door opener for corporate clients, but the owner/operator of a small business will not find definitive steps that he or she could progressively implement from the book alone. I should add that I am not advocating the rigid paint-by-numbers formula that some other motivational books follow. What I most question is Harkins' representation of trust as a primary focus, rather than as an outcome of deliberate and conscious process. Trust, far from being a subjective quality only, is an objective competency that employees as well as their leaders must progressively develop and demonstrate. For example, in his book, Leadership, Rudolph Giuliani describes the functioning of his mayoral team with great frankness. In so doing, he demonstrates clearly how trust is not assumed at the beginning; it is developed over time and established through frank and honest appraisal of each team member's verbal and practical input. I miss this in Harkins' book. I have nevertheless reserved a place for Powerful Conversations on my bookshelves. But to round out Harkins' perspective, I have added books like Rudolph Giuliani's Leadership, Jim Loehr's Tony Swartz's The Power of Full Engagement, Dorothy Leeds' The 7 Powers of Questions and Meryl Runion's Power Phrases. Together, they make a mighty team. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommendedBy Edwin F Taborda CExcellent book.

"Phil Harkins has it exactly right. To be a leader is to communicate powerfullymdash;as he does in this thoughtful book." - Robert B. Reich, Professor of Social and Economic Policy Brandeis University. Powerful Conversations breed a powerful organization. POWERFUL CONVERSATIONS is packed with goal-oriented strategies, tools, and real-life examples from great leaders. Use its deliberate, directed techniques to achieve exceptional levels of performance, create and maintain valuable relationships, and forward the goals of both yourself and your organization with every word you speak. Mastering the three stages of a Powerful Conversationmdash;from shared feelings and beliefs, to an exchange of wants and needs, closing with action steps and mutual commitmentsmdash;will help you exercise more control over your interactions, and greatly enhance both your leadership skills and your success. Look inside to discover:How to plan, conduct, and measure Powerful Conversations;Using the Tower of Power as a tool in coaching;The four Cs of Trustmdash;clarity, caring, consistency, and commitmentFive strategies to satisfymdash;and keepmdash;your best employeesTools to turn the company grapevine from a poisonous plant into a pathway for learningDetermining your leadership competencies through the Leadership Assessment InstrumentTargeting Passionate Champions to drive an Agenda for Change. Leaders across the country are praising POWERFUL CONVERSATIONS: "Phil Harkins has it exactly right. To be a leader is to communicate powerfullymdash;as he does in this thoughtful book." - Robert B. Reich, Professor of Social and Economic Policy, Brandeis University. "Powerful Conversations have made a real difference in the effectiveness of the Operations Senior Leadership Team. We are delivering unprecedented results thanks to the clearer communication and improved working relationships." - Larry Gundrum, Senior Vice President, Kraft Foods. "In my business, Powerful Conversations are leading to believability and a growing sense of achievability by our employees that they can drive a massive agenda for change." - Linda Coughlin, Managing Director, Scudder Kemper Investments, Inc. "In a fast forward world, candor and clarity are prerequisites for success. POWERFUL CONVERSATIONS is a must read book for leading into the 21st century." - Steve Ozonian, Chairman and CEO, Prudential Real Estate and Relocations Solutions. "A powerful guide, both savvy and wise, to emotional intelligence in action. Phil Harkins has given us an essential handbook for leaders at any level." - Daniel Goleman, Author, Working with Emotional Intelligence.

From the Back Cover All Leaders Talk. It Is The Power of Their Talk That Determines Whether They Win Or Lose. "Phil Harkins has it exactly right. To be a leader is to communicate powerfullyshy;shy;as he does in this thoughtful book."shy;shy;Robert B. Reich, Professor of Social and Economic Policy, Brandeis University "Powerful Conversations have made a real difference in the effectiveness of the Operations Senior Leadership Team. We are delivering unprecedented results thanks to the clearer communication and improved working relationships."shy;shy;Larry Gundrum, Senior Vice President, Kraft Foods "Powerful Conversations is a thoroughly terrific book combining vivid stories, acute insights, and penetrating observations into an original and compelling look at the ways in which successful leaders communicate with their followers. It should be widely read for lessons, prescriptions, and sheer pleasure."shy;shy;Doris Kearns Goodwin, Historian and Biographer "In my business, Powerful Conversations are leading to believability and a growing sense of achievability by our employees that they can drive a massive agenda for change."shy;shy;Linda Coughlin, Managing Director, Scudder Kemper Investments, Inc. "In a fast forward world, candor and clarity are prerequisites for success. Powerful Conversations is a must-read book for leading into the 21st century."shy;shy;Steve Ozonian, Chairman and CEO, Prudential Real Estate and Relocation Solutions "A powerful guide, both savvy and wise, to emotional intelligence in action. Phil Harkins has given us an essential handbook for leaders at any level."shy;shy;Daniel Goleman, Author, Working with Emotional Intelligence About the Author Phil Harkins, Ph.D. is president and CEO of Linkage, Inc., an organizational development company founded in 1988. He is co-chairman of the Global Institute for Leadership Development, and has held leadership positions in industry and academia.