



SuperStar Communicator Podcast

Talking on Eggshells with Sam Horn

Nick Simon [00:00:00]:

Welcome to the superstar communicator podcast. Our aim is to ensure you speak and communicate with confidence, clarity, credibility and impact so that you present the best version of yourself in all business conversations. Welcome to our hosts, Susan Heat and Wright.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:00:19]:

Now, I've got good news, everybody. We've got the most wonderful person here. Welcome, Sam.

Sam Horn [00:00:27]:

Thank you so much. I'm looking forward to sharing some stories and insights with your community.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:00:32]:

Oh, absolutely. Brilliant. We have been discussing what we've got from the book, but I want to introduce you to everybody because we're really flamed up. We're really up there for this. So I want to introduce you before.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:00:50]:

We before we go on, and that.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:00:54]:

Is that Sam Horn is on a.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:00:57]:

Mission to show how we treat people.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:01:01]:

With respect so they're motivated to respond in kind. Guess what? That's a really good human reaction, isn't it? She has had three TEDx Talks, ten books, including Tongue Fu, Pop, and the latest book, Talking on Eggshells. She's been featured in The New York Times and



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presented to Oracle, Intel Accenture and the Asian Leadership Conference. Honestly, Sam, it is my absolute pleasure and Nick's, pleasure to have you online.

Sam Horn [00:01:40]:

Thank you. We both believe in what we do. Catherine Graham of The Washington Post said to do what you love and feel that it matters. How could anything be more fun? That's how we both feel, isn't? Aren't we?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:01:53]:

Absolutely. And Nick too.

Sam Horn [00:01:55]:

Good. So, shall we share some, hopefully some examples and tips that people can use to deal with difficult people without becoming one themselves?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:02:06]:

Oh, absolutely. We've been discussing the fact that we're in a very, very polarized world here in the United Kingdom.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:02:16]:

If we say the word Brexit, if we say the word Boris, if we.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:02:26]:

Say the word vaccine, we are likely to polarize people.

Sam Horn [00:02:33]:

Yes.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:02:35]:

And it's hard work, isn't it? And as a result, we go down this talking eggshells to avoid having those conversations.

Sam Horn [00:02:44]:

You're so right. In fact, I was on the phone with a friend and I've known this friend for 20 years, and she happened to say that a certain political leader was the best that she had ever



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known. And I thought the exact opposite. And at the end of that phone call, I didn't know if we were ever going to speak to each other again. And I really felt fortunate because I had a crisis of conscience. It's like, I respect and admire this person. How could someone I know so well believe something that is, as you just said, the polar opposite of what I believe is true? And I realized she's not going to change my mind and I'm not going to change her mind. And were we going to sacrifice a 25 year friendship over this one thing that we did not agree about? So I grew up on horses and we lived in a small town and there was quicksand out in the riverbeds. Now, did our parents forbid us from riding our horses, and we just stopped doing it all together. Abandon it? No. We stay clear of the quicksand. And so my friend and I called that a quicksand conversation. And if anyone watching is thinking of a family member, a friend, someone at work, and they have a good relationship, except for this one thing where they disagree, maybe it's time to focus on what we have in common instead of focusing on what we have in conflict.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:04:09]:

That's just brilliant. I should share with you that the day after your last election in the United States, I delivered a leadership program, virtually because it was 2020, to a group of female leaders. And I could sense that there was something in the air because there were things people weren't saying. And I decided not to say it. As an English woman, that could cause conflict to possibly 50% of the people on that call. And I made a call on that. And, in fact, my client said afterwards, thank you for not mentioning it.

Sam Horn [00:04:55]:

Do you know you just practiced interpersonal situational awareness. Desmond Tutu said, we've got to stop pulling people out of the river. We've got to go upstream and find out where they're falling in. And, Susan, you did what we call in the book, think Up River, right?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:05:14]:

Brilliant.

Sam Horn [00:05:16]:

You read the room. You thought bringing this up and listen to these words will serve no good purpose, right? We're going to alienate people. We're going to introduce divisiveness. It's not why we're here, to focus on that. So you anticipated something that might go wrong. You fought upriver, and you prevented it from going wrong. Kudos.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:05:39]:

Thank you very much for that. It was one of those moments I could have said something, but it was not appropriate anyway.



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Sam Horn [00:05:51]:

At the very least, many leaders feel that this is the number one skill gap in the workplace these days, is that they say, we can hire coders. We can hire techies. We cannot hire people who read and lead the room, people who are attentive to nuance, people who will say, I've talked more than anyone else in this meeting. It's time for me to put a sock in it. I'm requesting this, but it's not good timing. I can tell that they're upset or distracted, and the answer is going to be no. And what we're talking about is, if we're talking on eggshells, if we start paying attention to the signals that are being sent us, we can often respond appropriately in the situation. Instead of stepping on people's toes, do.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:06:42]:

You think that there is so much focus on what we're going to say? I come across people that teach about speak like a leader, and it isn't speak like a leader.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:06:55]:

It communicates as a leader.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:06:59]:

But there's so much focus on our message and what we're going to say and what outcomes there are going to be.

Sam Horn [00:07:06]:

Good for you for bringing this up is that let's have a specific example of how we can communicate not just as a leader, as a human being that prevents conflict and that produces cooperation. Let's talk about what to do if someone's complaining, whether it's one of our employees, our committee members or a customer. Often we think that if someone complains, we should explain, oh, well, the reason why this is starting late, the reason why you didn't get this we think if we explain why something went wrong, people will forgive us. No, they get angrier because explanations come across as excuses. People feel we're not being accountable. So instead, take the A train. A for agree. You're right. The meeting was supposed to start at 09:00. A for apologize, and I'm sorry you've ended up waiting. A for act. And we've got 15 minutes left. Let's jump right into it and rock and roll and listen to how the A Train expedites complaints. Explanations aggravate them.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:08:12]:

And it's showing respect, isn't it, to the other person?



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Sam Horn [00:08:17]:

What you just said is that Mother Teresa said the world is full of good people. If you can't find one, be one. And as leaders, we have a ripple effect of example is that when we set the precedent for respect, most people are motivated to respond in kind.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:08:42]:

Do you have any comments?

Sam Horn [00:08:44]:

Nick?

Nick Simon [00:08:45]:

Yeah, I was just thinking about how you would communicate with different kinds of people. Some people accept that and sort of just go with the flow and that kind of thing. But how would you vary your communication between people who are less conflict, more conflict avoidant, and people who are more willing to sort of fall out and get more conflicting in this kind of situation?

Sam Horn [00:09:19]:

Nick, I'm glad you brought that up. Is that one of the things I discovered in writing, Talking on eggshells is there's basically four conflict styles. One is avoid. Especially if we grew up with parents that fought all the time. We had our pillow overhead just wishing it would go away. And when we see conflict nowadays, we head the other way. And then there's accommodate. And these are the people, pleasers, that go along to get along and the yeses, yes people, et cetera. And then there's angry, maybe. We grew up with a parent, and when they wanted their way, they would get very loud and intense and other people would back off and they learned, okay, this is how you get what you want. And then there's assert. And what we're talking about is how we can assert what we want, need and deserve in a way that is not offensive, that's actually proactive. Here's one of my favorite examples. There's a young woman. She has learning disabilities and she works for something called the Salvation Army. It's the first job she's been able to hold because dealing with customers is very difficult for her. Well, she was thrilled when her boss told her she was up for promotion. The very next day, her boss told her she was in danger of getting fired. Now, if this had happened before, brittany conflict averse, would have dissolved into tears, probably would have gone home, maybe would have quit her job, and would have fallen into a depression. Her therapist had given her six words. So the next day, she went back to work, asked for a meeting with her boss, and she said, could you please help me understand? Could you please help me understand how I'm up for promotion yesterday and I'm being threatened to get fired today? And her boss said that a customer had complained how rude she was.



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Brittany remembered the situation. They had tried to return a mattress with the COVID off, and that's illegal to take back a used mattress. She had politely explained the policy. The customer left in a huff now that the manager knew the real story, apologized to Brittany, thanked her for enforcing the policy, and gave her their promotion. So there's an example of someone who was conflict averse and with the words, could you please help me understand? Uncovered what was really going on, which could be addressed satisfactorily for both of them instead of them never speaking and both of them losing out.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:11:48]:

That's so interesting because there are so many people that are asked to do things, and I'm often told by my clients, but we have a culture of never saying no. I'm sure you've got some tips there.

Sam Horn [00:12:06]:

I was thrilled when I discovered that the book, my original book before talking on eggshells called Tong Fu, was the number three ranked book in South Korea. It was the most checked out book in their library. Why? It's because Cho Sin Biz, who is the newspaper for South Korea, said it teaches how to speak truth to power with respect. Right. I think that we can say no to people. When I talk about the old fashioned scale of justice, can you picture the lady with the two plates like this? And so forth. I think that the success of any relationship at work, in our family, even in public, depends on whether the scale of needs is kept in balance. Because, see, if we always say yes to someone, if we always go along with what they want, if we always give in to what they need, if we always put them first, that's in an equal relationship, isn't it? That means one person is resenting. Even if they're not speaking up, they're still resenting the inequity in the relationship. At that point, it is not rude to say no. It is. Right. Do we have time for a quick example?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:13:22]:

That shows we've got plenty of time. Honestly, we can carry on as long as we want. Can't we?

Sam Horn [00:13:31]:

All right. So here was a college counselor, and she said, I'm at a college where many of the kids have come away from home for the first time, and they're intimidated. They have a lot of anxiety. They haven't made any friends yet. Everything's new. And she says, my heart has gone out to them, so I've given them my home phone number. You know the rest of that story, Susan and Nick, don't you? They call at night, they call on weekends. And now after a while, she's getting burned out. Her compassion and her kindness to them is laudable. However, look at the scale of needs she's feeling, her students needs. Her husband is not very happy because she's on the phone most of the night. On weekends, she's got to run



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chores and then she's too tired for them to go out or for her to do any Hobbies. So do you see at that point, it is not rude, it is not cruel or unkind of her to bring the scale of needs back in balance. So now here's how she handled it with proactive grace with her students. She said, in the past, I have given you my home phone number and encouraged you to call if you needed some support. My husband and I have talked about this and I realized I need to start taking better care of my health and I need to recharge on the weekends and I want to honor our marriage and spend time with my husband in the evening. If it is an emergency, you are welcome to call. We will have a ten minute phone conversation, find out what's going on, if there's action to be taken. If it's not an emergency, my office hours are from one to four every day on the campus. Please plan on dropping by between one and four. And I want to hear what's going on to see how we can move it forward, to see she was able to say no and keep the needs in balance. And now she's serving her students, and she's serving your health, and she's serving your energy, and she's serving her marriage, and she's probably going to continue to work as a counselor instead of quitting because she's burned out.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:15:44]:

Do you have a thought about that, Nick? I know somebody dumb the thumbs up.

Nick Simon [00:15:49]:

Yeah.

Nick Simon [00:15:51]:

Questions if you're watching.

Nick Simon [00:15:53]:

Yeah. I love to have a teacher like that, but it sounds interesting about how the use of language is very particular in that and what kind of language would you use when it comes to that kind of situation? How technical of language should you use, or should it be sort of as empathetic or open as possible? I'm guessing it depends on the situation.

Sam Horn [00:16:28]:

I'm glad you're bringing up specific language because thank you. Other programs or books, they say, let people get under your skin. Well, I agree with that. I just don't know. So thank you. Language, the words. Here's a situation with exact language. What can we say if someone's taking their anger or frustration out on us? What do we say when happening? It's so unfair. So here's the 62nd story, then we'll have the exact language. We can say if that happened to us. I have an 84 year old aunt who volunteers at a hospital. She did this even during COVID And I asked what was like. She said one word stressful. So think of a situation that was stressful when someone was taking a frustration out on you. She said, Sam, I don't



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even have to think about it. A woman rushed into the Er holding up her phone, saying, I just got a text from my daughter. She was in an accident. She's in the, er I need to see her. Well, Kay called the, er Someone was already with the daughter. Now, you may remember the rules in COVID is that there was no visitors per patient, or only one visitor per patient per day. Kay had to tell the woman she could not get in with her daughter, and she lost it. She is screaming, sobbing at Kay. Now, if we juxtapose this, if you put a vertical line down the center of a paper, and over on the left are words to lose, and over on the right are words to use. Over on the left, put the words, how rude. How rude. Why are you taking this out on me? I'm not the one who made the rules. Do you see how all of those how rude, how offensive, how mean, how cruel those are reactions that make it worse. Over on the right, she asked herself four words. Do you know what they were?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:18:31]:

How does she feel?

Sam Horn [00:18:34]:

Well, Susan very close. How would I feel? Right, Susan? How would I feel if my daughter was in the Er and I couldn't get in to see her? It moved her from impatience to empathy, from contempt to compassion, and gave her the incentive to turn. There's nothing I can do to let me see if there's something I can do. She called the Er back and she said, who is with the daughter? It was the Uber driver who had brought the young woman in. Kay was able to explain the situation. Thank him, he left. And the mother was able to get in with the daughter. And that's the beauty of the language at the right time. Whether it's something we say to ourselves, how would I feel? It's like, why might they be doing this? That moves us from contempt to compassion.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:19:33]:

Do you feel that there's an element of reframing a situation?

Sam Horn [00:19:39]:

I just love your questions, Nick and Susan. Keep them coming.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:19:44]:

And anybody else who's watching, we've had some questions beforehand.

Sam Horn [00:19:51]:

This is absolutely all about reframing, and it is about being a pattern interrupt. The singer Elvis Presley said, when things go wrong, don't go with them. And see, over on the left,



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people accuse us of something. That's not true. We deny it. That's not true. Now we're arguing with the people, right? If someone says, you women are so emotional, we're not emotional. Now we are, right? So, over on the left, if someone makes an accusation, do not deny it, because if someone says, you don't care about your customers, we do too, care about our customers. Now we're arguing with our customers about whether we care about our customers. Over on the right, say these four words what do you mean? Because if we say, what do you mean? They may say, Well, I've left three messages and no one's called back. Oh, I am so sorry. Do you see how it reveals the real issue? And we can address that instead of reacting to the attack.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:20:52]:

That's so interesting, because only last week I was working with a client, and she'd been accused of accused of being aggressive rather than assertive, which we know both know, Sam, that there is a tendency for women to be accused of that, even if it's an assertive thing. They've said using your what do you mean? Would be a great response and doing it calmly and having that conversation and to perhaps come to the conclusion that the other person had some unconscious bias, possibly.

Sam Horn [00:21:37]:

Thank you for the subtitle of the book is Soft Skills for Hard Conversations. I don't think any of us like to be accused of being aggressive, and the natural reaction is to deny or defend, which, once again proves their point. So I was speaking at a women's leadership conference one time, and a woman put her hand up and said, why are women so caddy it to each other? Well, I don't know, Susan Nick, if you've heard that before. I've heard that a lot, and I decided it was time to redirect that conversation, to change it. And so instead of denying it, I don't think women are caddy to each other because, see, we're arguing and reinforcing her negative stereotype there. We just say, do you know what I found? That's the bridge. Do you know what I found? Women are real champions for each other. They're real mentors. In fact, I wouldn't have this job if it wasn't. So, once again, if someone says you're too aggressive, instead of arguing with them over which, uhoh, it's kind of proven their point, what makes you say that? Why do you think that? And now they may say, well, you really pushed hard for that legislation. You're right. I did push hard, because I really believe it's important and I want to get the vote out. Do you see how you claim what you do want to be on record for instead of denying an inaccurate stereotype? Yeah.

Nick Simon [00:23:08]:

That's great. In a kind of high stakes situation. What can we say in the first 60 seconds of that situation of communication to win a kind of buy in?

Sam Horn [00:23:26]:



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Thank you. If this were softball, you just heat it up and we get to hit this one out of the park. Okay, so now I hope, unless you're driving, that people grab a piece of paper because I'm about to share a technique of what to say in the first 60 seconds of a presentation of a pitch of a negotiation, can get people's eyebrows up and can win respect and buy in the first 60 seconds. So first, I hope everyone listening in watching. Think of a project you've got where you want to get it funded. Or think of a program that you want approved. Or think of an idea that you want green lighted. So what is something you want? Think of the situation where, whether it's online or in person, where you're going to be requesting this or recommending. So everyone have an idea in mind. Now, here's the story. And then we're going to unpack three steps of what to say in the first 60 seconds that has the power to help that get a yes. So I was the pitch coach for something called Springboard Enterprises, which has helped entrepreneurs generate \$27 billion in revenue. So one of my clients, who is Kathleen Calendar, a pharma jet, came to me, said, Sam, I've got good news. I've got bad news. I said, what's the good news? She said, I'm pitching to a room full of investors. I said that's great news. I said, what's the bad news? She said, I'm going at 230 in the afternoon and I only have ten minutes. She said, Sam, you can't say anything in ten minutes. How are we going to talk about our finances, about our team credentials, about our patent pending, about our exit strategy? I said, Kathleen, you don't have ten minutes. You have 60 seconds. They will have heard 16 other presentations. Okay, here is the 62nd opening we came up with that not only helped her win millions in funding, she was selected as Business Week's most promising social entrepreneur of that year. Okay, ready? 60 seconds. Did you know there are 1.8 billion vaccinations given every year? Did you know up to a third of them are given with reused needles? Did you know we're spreading and perpetuating the very diseases we're trying to prevent. Imagine if there were a painless one use needle for a fraction of the current cost. You don't have to imagine it. We're doing it. She's off and running. Are your eyebrows up? Do you want to know more?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:25:58]:

Absolutely.

Sam Horn [00:26:00]:

Now, here's how everyone can do this. Three steps. First step, ask three did you know? Questions with startling statistics about the problem you're solving, the issue you're addressing, the need you're meeting. Because most of us are taught to tell people we're going to tell them. Tell them that's a prescription for being Abor, Snore, or chore. Do not start off by telling people that's infobeesity. Instead, ask three, did you know? Questions with these startling statistics. And I didn't know how bad it was. I didn't know that many people were being affected. I didn't know that it's getting worse. Do you see how we got eyebrows up by asking instead of telling. Second, use the word imagine.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:26:49]:



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I love that word.

Sam Horn [00:26:51]:

Isn't it, Susan? Because it pulls people out of their preoccupation. Right now, they're picturing our point. They're seeing what we're saying. Link the word imagine to three benefits of what it is we're proposing. So go back to Kathleen Calendar. What are her decision makers thinking about? Reuse needles. So we made it one use. They're thinking about painful inoculations. We made it painless. Most decision makers are thinking about money. We made it a fraction of a current cost. Do you hear how in a world of infobeesity, we distilled into one sentence? That who wouldn't want that? And then the third step, say these words back to you, Nicholas. Language. You don't have to imagine it. We're doing it now. Come in with precedence or evidence to show this isn't speculative, this is a done deal. Here's the proof of concept. You can do that in 60 seconds. You're going to have people at hello if you do that.

Nick Simon [00:27:50]:

And if you've got people in imagining it, you've essentially got your idea in their heads and they're thinking about it.

Sam Horn [00:28:00]:

Nicholas, think about what you just said. Not only are we in their head, they're picturing it, imagining it. Which is closer to it being a done deal. Right. Is that they are. Now we're in a dialogue instead of a monologue. Right? We're not just talk. They are, just, as you said, actively engaged, where they're taking it on board. Which means they're halfway to a yes.

Nick Simon [00:28:28]:

Yeah.

Sam Horn [00:28:29]:

Great.

Nick Simon [00:28:29]:

And following along with the 60 second motif, what can we say in the last 60 seconds of a high stake situation to prompt, follow up and or close a deal?

Sam Horn [00:28:44]:



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Okay, so now I hope everyone watching, listening, are thinking about what they're going to ask in the first 60 seconds instead of tell. Now let's go to the last 60 seconds. So, once again, a story to show how this works in the real world. Then we'll unpack it with step by step suggestions on what you can do so that you're going to motivate people in the last 60 seconds to follow up with you. Because do you know how most people end a presentation or a pitch?

Nick Simon [00:29:13]:

Thanks.

Sam Horn [00:29:15]:

That's it. Talk about leaving money on the table. Right.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:29:19]:

Do you have any questions?

Sam Horn [00:29:22]:

That's right. Another kind of passive sweeping platitude that a lot of people think, no, I just want to get out of the room at this point. I don't want to prolong it. So here's Marcia. And now, Marcia had been an executive at MTV, and now she was starting her own business. She, too was pitching to investors. I said, we're going to give you a competitive edge. Everyone else is going to say, do you have any questions? Or thank you, or Run long and be hustled off the stage. So here's what she said. Then we'll unpack it. Once again, I'm Marcia. I'm the one with the white spiky hair. At our next break, I'm going to be at our booth at the lobby at 230. If you would like a product demonstration, if you'd like to talk with our CMO about what we're going to be doing to market this or our CFO about our financials, please come and speak to us. Once again, I'm Marcia with the white spiky hair. I look forward to seeing you at 230. Guess who was surrounded by people at 230?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:30:25]:

Everyone knew what to do. You told them and we told them.

Sam Horn [00:30:31]:

And we invited them, didn't we? And we gave them incentives. So here specifically, I hope everyone's thinking about their project number. Step number one, say your name with a pause and a punch. Because most of us rush and blush. If I put my first and last name together, my name is Sam Horn. You go look. Look at those eyebrows and crunched up eyebrows mean, I don't get it. And if we don't get it, we don't remember it. So my name is



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Sam. Pause, pause, pause, punch. Horn. The last name is louder than the first name because now people can repeat it after hearing it once. Now, mention something you're wearing. I'm Susan in the blue shirt. I'm Nick in the check shirt. I'm Sam with the gold necklace. Because if we're at a conference and there's a sea of suits, we kind of blend in with the crowd. But if we go oh, there's Susan Heat. And right in the blue blouse, you see how you stand out. And people do not walk up to someone if they don't remember their name because it's awkward and embarrassing. You just made it easy for them to find you and approach you. Now, second step, always say where and when they can follow up. At lunch, I'm going to be at the far table on the right. If you'd like to continue the on Monday, I'm going to be in my office from one until four. On the first week of August, I'll be back in London. Do you see how if you say a time and a place, people now are already thinking, oh, I know when to call them or when to walk up to them and where to find them. Now, the third step. What are three reasons why they would want to continue the conversation? If you'd like a copy of that article we wrote about, if you'd like to see the video that I mentioned, if you would like this. So people are going, yes, I want that. I know where I can find them, I remember their name. And you have dramatically increased the likelihood people will take action because you are proactive instead of passive about setting it up.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:32:46]:

That is just superb. That three steps is so clear. And you're right, aren't you? So many people want to sort of scuffle off, say thank you and then go and get a coffee or hide. Because they imagine there's going to be a walk of shame, that no one is going to come and talk to them. But the reality is that people need to know that it's okay to come and talk to you and know your name and know what you look like and know what to talk about, think about.

Sam Horn [00:33:20]:

We call these friendly phrases in the book because we've heard the saying, it's nothing personal, it's just business. Come on, we're dealing with people here. It's all personal, right? And yet many, especially online communication these days, is so cryptic. It's emojis. It's one sentence. Will you be at the meeting? When will that project be ready? It's like you got to call Tony in accounting or something like that. It's very abrupt, bordering on rude. And no wonder there's this friction between people. We can warm up our communication by doing something that's called bookending. And as an author, we know that if we start with something and then reference it in the last page, people feel a very satisfying full circle, right? So let's start bracketing our communication with these warm phrases. Appreciate and look forward. I look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you for bringing this to my attention. It's like what wanted to confirm our agreement. Listen to these words that put the humanity back into business instead of it just being just the facts.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:34:34]:



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Do you know, it's so interesting because one of the things I do, I talk about ding dong words. Sorry, but I just want to say, yeah, you're going like this. And I have a little bell that I ring and everyone goes, oh, my goodness, yes, I do that.

Sam Horn [00:34:56]:

And it's soft.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:34:57]:

It's sugar coating, isn't it? But it's not making it human, like what you said. Do you understand the difference that the ding dong words are self deprecating, aren't they? Whereas the words you're using are still human. They're still respectful, they're not sugar coating, but they're not being disrespectful to other people.

Sam Horn [00:35:28]:

You have just made such an important point, Susan, because remember we talked about that second style of conflict. Aversion is accommodate, right? And when we do self well, it's just my opinion, those kinds of things are essentially approval seeking. It's like, I'm not convinced about this. I haven't done my research about this. I'm not speaking from a place of authority. I'm speaking from a place of people pleasing correct. And especially if decision makers are trying to decide whether to put us in a position of leadership. This does not have a voice of authority, and we can have warm authority. It's like instead of saying, well, I hear what you're saying, but I hear what you're saying, and can we find out where that went wrong last time and how we can keep that from happening again this time? See, and instead of but should, well, you should have called if you didn't understand that from now on, if you'll please call. If you don't understand that shapes behavior instead of shames it, you'll have to well, you're just going to have to wait. We haven't received approval from payroll yet. Those you have to are orders, and most people don't like to be ordered around. If you could please call payroll and see when they're going to be able to. So as you're saying, there are warm, professional words that have humanity and a voice of authority that connotes leadership that can be trusted.

Nick Simon [00:37:06]:

And if we anticipate our decision makers will be skeptical, how can we turn their no into a yes?

Sam Horn [00:37:17]:

Well, once again, you've asked a great question. So if we have that piece of paper and once again, why do I have these words reactions on the left and words responses on the right? It's because a publisher called Barrett Kohler, Steve Persante was the publisher, and I asked him,



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what's your criteria for publishing a book? He said three words. You know what he said? Show the shift. Right. So, see, as leaders, when we take notes, if we have a piece of paper and a vertical line down the center and on the left are the beliefs, the behaviors, the attitudes and the actions that sabotage our effectiveness. On the right are the beliefs, the behaviors, the attitudes, and the actions that support our effectiveness. So this is conflict on the left, cooperation on the right, resentment, resistance on the left, rapport and respect on the right. So now we're coming back to what you just said, Nick. It's like, let's put a no on the left, right? We're going to get a no. They're skeptical, cynical. They're thinking, we don't have money in our budget for this. They're thinking, we tried it before, we didn't work. The answer is no. Over on the right. Let me tell you a story and then once again, we'll unpack it. And I hope everyone listening is thinking of a situation where they anticipate that the decision maker is going to be sitting there like this, resisting it, just waiting for us to stop talking so they can tell us no. So I had an opportunity to work with a client who was going to pitch the CTO of the London Olympics. And I said, how much time do you have? He said, I have an hour. I said, Mike, you don't have an hour. I said, Put yourself in the shoes of this decision maker. What is he thinking? I said, well, he's probably thinking we're 212 days out from the Games. We don't have time for this. I said, Step one, guess what the first words out of your mouth are. You may be thinking not I know you're thinking because that's presumptuous, right? No. You might be thinking, or I imagine you may be thinking, we're 212 days out from the London Olympics. We don't have time for this. So step one is anticipate why they will say no and say it first. Because if we don't say it, they're not listening and they're waiting. Second step, we just talked about it, Bridge, with the word and rather than but, because as soon as we say, I'm sorry that happened, but I understand it's important to you, but it's like, I know you said no to this in the past, but we are setting up a conflict. Use the word and. Third point, make their objection moot. So if they're thinking we don't have money in our budget for this, you can say, you may be thinking we don't have money in our budget for this. And I've identified where we're going to find that money and make it back in the first three months. Then it's going to be stream of revenue, then the months thereafter. Now they're at least going to give us a chance, right? And you want to know the fourth step? It's based on something Richard Branson said. He said, time is the new money, and I think time is a new trust. Always take less time than they anticipate. Because, Mike, if you walk in there and say what we've said and then say, and I know we have an hour scheduled for this and I know how much you have on your plate, and I've distilled my pitch into ten minutes at the end, if you have questions, you want to continue the conversation, I welcome it. If you have other priorities, you'll have our information. You can follow up when it's convenient. Now Mike pushed back. He said, Sam, I can't explain this app in ten minutes. I said, Mike, if you take more than ten minutes, he is going to be actively resenting you for taking him away from these other priorities. So I said, you've got to. Furthermore, when we take less time than people expect, guess what? They trust we will always be a good use of our time. They will always take our phone call, they'll always ask on a meeting, because they trust that we will cut to the chase and be a good use of their time.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:41:52]:



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We have a mutual friend in common.

Sam Horn [00:41:55]:

Don'T we, in Joe McCormack with the brief lab? Yes, we do.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:42:02]:

And it makes complete sense. People at first are really frightened at the idea of this, but keeping its headline.

Sam Horn [00:42:11]:

So let me tell you a quick story about Joe is that Joe came to work with me in Reston, Virginia, and as you know, he had a corporate narrative boutique consultancy at that point and he wanted a book deal. And I thought, Joe, well, we're going to do this real quick, people. Put a vertical line down the center. Over on the left, put individual. If you're just an individual or a blogger or a speaker or a consultant, you're one of many. It's very hard to sell or scale a business when you're an individual because you got to be there, right? So over on the right, I said, Joe, we're going to develop an umbrella brand of business equity. So he founded well, now, here's the story. At that point, he worked with a lot of people in the military and he was talking about communication. I said, there's a lot of people out there on corporate narrative and communication, so you're still one of many. So now, I had been married to a Navy captain and I knew that when you present to a four star admiral or general, what's that called? It's called a brief. You brief the executive and the clock is ticking the second you start talking. So I said Malcolm Gladwell and blink. The grit is dan, pink and drive. Is that when you can own one word in the public's consciousness, you'll go to the head of the class, Angela Duckworth, with grit. So. I said so. You know what? We're going to call your book Brief, because, boom, you're going to own that word in the public's consciousness and you're not going to stop there because if you're just an author with a book called Brief, you're just a speaker with a book called Brief, you still don't own it. You're going to be the founder and the CEO of the brief lab. So those are all one syllable words. Now you own that space. Now you are a founder and a CEO. Now you have no competition because you're one of a kind instead of one of many. And now you know the rest of that story is that we got a book deal for Joe in 48 hours. We put together a four page pitch to him. I knew Matt Holt at Wiley Publishers and because he was able, we were able to go from a one of many consultancy to a one of a kind business entity that had equity. It catapulted his career and he's been serving people and making a difference for people around the world ever since.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:44:58]:

That's superb. And as you know, he's been on this podcast as well. And quite often with my clients, I provide additional blended learning resources as well as recommendations of



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books, of which your book will be going on that and I'm sure that your podcast, when it's a podcast, will be shared with clients as well as part of their resources along with Joe's. And because they're different things, because we help each other, we lift each other up.

Sam Horn [00:45:34]:

See? Kudos to you, Susan and Nick. I think Arthur Schweitzer said that in Influencing people, example is not the main thing, it's the only thing. And think of the Rising Tide example you're setting of supporting colleagues. You're not competing with other people who speak on leadership, write about it. Communication, it's like, no. Are these people bringing something to the table? Do we share the same values? Are we committed to making a difference? Then giving them a Rising Tide platform on your podcast and recommending them says a lot about you because it means you're secure in what you do, and you are champions for other people. One of the many reasons why we respect the work you do.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:46:32]:

Thank you. Now, before we go, this has just been brilliant, Nick. I hope I'm not jumping over you. What are your three tips to share with the audience? I can prompt you if need be.

Sam Horn [00:46:50]:

Okay, well, three tips, and number one is that let's go back to the piece of paper. Let's shape behavior on the right instead of shame it on the left. Do we have time for a 62nd example of that?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:47:04]:

Oh, absolutely.

Sam Horn [00:47:07]:

I was visiting my son and his one year old son. We're getting caught up in a living room, and his son Hero Walk, crawls across the floor, hauls himself up on a guitar, stand in the corner, and he starts pounding on the strings. Now, over on the left, andrew could have yanked the guitar way and made him feel bad. He could have said, Stop pounding on the guitar. He could have said no. All of which would have made Hero feel bad. Guess what he did? He said one word, gentle. And I saw Hero's face transform in front of me, and he reached back to the guitar with Strum strum. And he made music because Andrew shaped his behavior instead of shamed it. He was a coach instead of a critic. Hero, learn from that situation instead of lose face. And my dad used to say we can't make people do better by making him feel bad. And he showed him how to do it better instead of making him feel bad. So that's one tip. All right, we got another one. Okay, number two. Over on the right, put find solutions. Over on the left, put find fault. Is that say we're in the middle of a meeting and something's gone



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wrong, and people are finger pointing, fault finding and so forth. Be a physical pattern interrupt. Do you play sports by any chance? Okay, Nick, what sports? And, Nick's, what sports do you play?

Nick Simon [00:48:40]:

Swimming and rock climbing.

Sam Horn [00:48:42]:

Oh, good. Okay, swimming and rock climbing. Do you ever play basketball or anything, by any chance?

Nick Simon [00:48:48]:

Yeah, in school.

Sam Horn [00:48:49]:

Okay, then you know what an umpire does. If everyone's getting into a fracas and fighting and so forth, what does an umpire do? Right. Time out. I think if we're in a meeting and the blamings begun, if we try and talk over them, they'll just get louder. The voice of reason gets drowned out in the motion. So say time out. And then over on the right, say these four words let's not do this. We could argue for the rest of the day about who dropped the ball on this. It's not going to undo it instead. Or we can say, this won't help. This won't help. Blaming each other, calling each other names isn't going to help instead. And so when things go wrong, instead of finding fault, find solutions by being the pattern interrupt and then moving people to what we can do about it instead of what should have been done about it. Okay, we got one tip for one more. Yeah. Okay, it's over on the left. Let's get rid of the words no can't because no, you can't because can I leave early today because my daughter's got a play at school? Oh, no, you can't. This is our busiest time of year. You know better than to ask, right? Those words no can't because are like a verbal door slamming in someone's face. People will resent us because they will think that we are the one blocking them from what it is they want. Over on the right, put the words yes as soon as yes, you can leave as soon as you get this project done and turned into headquarters. They're waiting for it and need it by end of business. And if you work through lunch and get it done early, you're welcome to go to your daughter's play. Now, by the way, Susan, are you a mom by any chance?

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:50:43]:

Yes, I am. I've got one son.

Sam Horn [00:50:45]:



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Okay, then you know, is that a mother told me this is going to change the way I parent. She said, I have three kids under age of ten. It seems like all I ever do is tell them, no. No, you can't play with your friends because you haven't done your homework. No, you can't watch TV because you haven't done your chores. And then you usually do what's called stacking, which is like, you know the rules around here, that TV doesn't go on and tell them, how many times do I have to tell you? She said, Sam. When I tell them no, they think I'm a big, meaning keeping them from what they want. When I say, yes, you can play with your friends as soon as you finish your homework, do your math, let me look at it. Then you can go out and shoot hoops. Yes, you can watch TV as soon as you do, finish your chores, take out the trash, clean up your room. Then she said, this isn't just semantics, it changes the whole dynamic of the relationship because now look who's responsible for getting what it is they want.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:51:44]:

I wish I'd known that when my son was younger. I haven't damaged him.

Nick Simon [00:51:53]:

It's kind of a negotiation of giving someone motivation to do a kind of chore before they can get a reward out of it as well.

Sam Horn [00:52:04]:

And this works in business, if someone says, once again, people are focused on, can I move forward with this project? Well, no, we can't, because we're still waiting to hear from shipping whether they're going to be able to get it there in time. Yes, we can move this forward as soon as we get in touch with shipping and they confirm the date. Do you see how it puts us on the same side? Instead of side against side.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:52:32]:

Oh, that's so brilliant. And before we finish, I wanted to share with you how powerful something that you put in about a mother and dementia reframing. There were some situations that you shared. One of them was, oh, it's so difficult because they don't understand what I'm saying, and all of those things now, my dad died of Alzheimer earlier this year and I phone up my mum every day. She's a widow and sometimes I think and I always reframe it like you're doing by saying she's lonely. She was married to my father for nearly 64 years. She might not have spoken to anybody else today, although she probably has. I'll be able to share some of my news that might add something to her day and it helped me to really appreciate that what I'm doing is right.

Sam Horn [00:53:38]:



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Susan, thank you for bringing up once again, that I think we have an opportunity and a responsibility on a daily basis to be the quality of person we want to be, even when other people aren't. And as you just said, is that when you put yourself in your mom's shoes and you imagine her grieving and her loss and her loneliness, that it brought forth this empathy in you that helped you connect. Instead of being impatient or frustrated or no, you put yourself in her shoes. And really that is the core of all human communication, is to connect. And it is a result of what you just talked about. Is that genuinely imagining what it is like for the other person? And when we do, we feel a compatibility and a commonality with them that brings us together. Thank you.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:54:38]:

So, Nick, do you have anything to add?

Nick Simon [00:54:41]:

Yeah, I think I do have quite a loaded question. It's a very big question surrounding the kind of idea of avoiding conflict, but if that's okay.

Sam Horn [00:54:56]:

Please.

Nick Simon [00:54:57]:

So I was just wondering whether you think avoiding conflict itself is more damaging than actually being overly conflicted in any situation. And I was just wondering how you would consider breaking the ice, those kind of people who find avoiding conflicts more of a thing they do well, thank.

Sam Horn [00:55:24]:

You for bringing that up. My dentist has a sign in his office and he says that these are the five most dangerous words in our language and the sign is maybe it will go away. Right. Often when we avoid conflict, it's because it's going to be uncomfortable or awkward or we don't know what to say, or we don't want to hurt the person's feelings, we don't want to make them mad at us, all of those fears, and yet it will not get better. Avoiding it, it's not going to get resolved. In fact, it probably could fester. It could cause a distance or separation or a needless misunderstanding in the relationship. And if we say these words, in the past, I used to avoid conflict and now I know it will not go away and it will not get better. It will get worse. So I choose and let's not even call it I know the subtitle of the book is a hard conversation. Let's call it an honest conversation. Look at this. We're reframing Susan. It's like if we call it a hard conversation, it's kind of intimidating and scary, right?



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Susan Heaton-Wright [00:56:44]:

Yes.

Sam Horn [00:56:45]:

If we call it an honest conversation is that we come to this person, say, in the past, I would not have mentioned this, and yet I've been thinking about it a lot and what you said really hurt my feelings. Or I feel that we're growing distant and we're not talking about the things that matter. If we honestly talk about what's going on with us, I think more often we set a precedent for the other person to honestly talk about what they're coming from, and now we can come up with something that works for both of us instead of just avoiding it.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:57:25]:

So this has been the most amazing discussion. Would you agree with me on this?

Nick Simon [00:57:32]:

Definitely. I felt very engaged. I love your way, your use of the guest kind of set up question, because it really puts me in the head of what are you about to say question. So that's really engaging.

Sam Horn [00:57:48]:

And Nick, a quick thought about that. Because we're all students of communication, right? One of the beauties of it. We can always get better. You know that. This is Socrates essentially calls this appreciative inquiry, and that if we say two and two is four and three and three is six, we're telling we are not engaging. And look what happens when we turn it into a question. What's two and two? What's three and three? Now we have a dialogue instead of a monologue. And just as you said, and thank you for that, Nick. We are talking with someone instead of to someone. It's all the difference.

Susan Heaton-Wright [00:58:26]:

This has been absolutely superb, and I have no idea of people watching live, but they will be able to watch it in playback and then we create it into a podcast. And I'm absolutely certain that there is going to be a real buzz around this. So thank you so much. But before we go, we must plug your new book, which is called Talking on Eggshells. Please, Sam, share a little bit about it because I don't want you to miss out on this.

Sam Horn [00:59:01]:



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Well, thank you. Here it is. Talking on eggshells. And I grew up in a cold war is that my dad was emotionally distant and my mom was emotionally wounded, and they were both wonderful people and they taught my brother and sister and I to do the right thing. It was just they grew up in the silent generation where you just grew distant. We would go for drives and have dinner tables where a word was not spoken. And then I was in a relationship for a while with a bully with a narcissist, with a controller, and I tiptoed around this individual because I never knew what was going to set him off. He had a hair trigger temper, and if you said or did, quote, unquote, the wrong thing, he would turn on you. So, see, I learned to talk on eggshells in two of the major relationships in my life, and it is why I'm a woman on a mission, is that think of the irony. We learn calculus and we do not learn how to talk with people in our life so that we can have close, warm communications or honest conversations when things go wrong. And if, as a result of this book, people learn what to say when they don't know what to say, if they learn how to have an honest conversation and overcome a lifetime of being conflict averse if they learn how to keep their cool in the heat of the moment or handle challenging situations in the moment instead of thinking of the perfect response on the way home, then that will make my day. Because that is the purpose and the hope and dream of this. And it would mean the world if people read it and find it valuable and are able to put it to good use.

Susan Heaton-Wright [01:00:46]:

Thank you so much, Sam. What a wonderful person you are, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I'm speaking on behalf of Nick, but thank you so much for bringing so much wisdom, so much knowledge to our live stream.

Sam Horn [01:01:08]:

I've enjoyed every minute. And I hope people watch this. And then sometimes what people do is they play this at a staff meeting and they use it as a conversation catalyst. It's like, all right, what's going on with your coworkers? What's going on with your customers? As a leader, what is just one idea that can help you communicate even more respectfully and proactively with your team members? So what I hope is that people not just watch it and say, that was a good program, they think, who can I share this with and discuss it with? So that it's planting seeds for follow up conversations that impact even more people. Brilliant.

Susan Heaton-Wright [01:01:49]:

Thank you very much. So, until next time, this is Nicholas and Susan from Superstar Communicator. Thank you very much for listening. Thank you very much for watching.

Sam Horn [01:02:02]:

Bye bye bye.



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Susan Heaton-Wright [01:02:05]:

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