

DO GOOD TO LEAD WELL

WITH CRAIG DOWDEN, PHD



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Episode: The Science of Sharing at Work: Leadership Lessons for Better Connection, Trust, and Wellbeing

What You'll Learn

- ✓ The Challenge of Self-Disclosure at Work
- ✓ Positive vs. Negative Sharing: Impacts on Well-Being
- ✓ Understanding Motivations Behind Sharing
- ✓ The Importance of Clear Intentions in Communication
- ✓ Conclusion: Enhancing Connection Through Intentionality

The Challenge of Self-Disclosure at Work (01:23)

Self-disclosure in the workplace is a nuanced challenge for many leaders and employees. Determining how much to share and when is key as the right balance can strengthen relationships and deepen trust, while oversharing or being too guarded can hinder connection. The latest research discussed in the podcast points out that positive self-disclosure can increase emotional well-being and workplace energy, but too much or the wrong kind can have the opposite effect. Importantly, leaders should be cognizant of the environment (virtual or in-person) and the relevance of what they share. Integrating self-disclosure intentionally builds a culture of openness while honoring boundaries.

Actionable Insights

- Assess the relevance of what you share by asking, “Is this helpful for this context?” before disclosing.
- Start small, share positive experiences or lessons learned to build comfort.
- Observe reactions to your self-disclosure and adjust your approach as needed.
- Use self-disclosure as a tool for empathy, connecting over common challenges without making the conversation only about yourself.
- Set professional boundaries: know that not every detail needs to be shared.



Positive vs. Negative Sharing: Impacts on Well-Being (03:15)

The studies highlighted in the episode differentiate between positive and negative sharing, emphasizing their distinct impacts on collective and individual well-being.

Sharing positive experiences drives higher levels of emotional well-being, increased work energy, and perceived connection. In contrast, sharing negative information frequently can diminish well-being, drain energy, and fuel rumination.

Leaders and employees benefit from understanding this dynamic, focusing on positive sharing as a default, and being intentional when negative topics arise.



Actionable Insights

- Make a habit of celebrating small wins or positive moments with your team.
- Limit negative sharing; when needed, frame it around solutions or actionable next steps.
- Practice gratitude by regularly acknowledging successes or resilience in overcoming challenges.
- Notice your emotional state before sharing negativity, and consider whether it's constructive.
- Engage in feedback or difficult conversations with a balanced approach, start and end with positive observations.



Understanding Motivations Behind Sharing (07:30)

Recognizing the motivations behind sharing, whether it's to connect, vent, or seek advice, profoundly affects outcomes. When sharing is intended to foster connection and is mirrored by a supportive response, emotional well-being and energy thrive. Venting, however, tends to lower well-being and elevate rumination, despite commonly held beliefs about its cathartic value. Seeking advice is relatively neutral unless the support does not match the need. Leaders should clarify their own motivation before sharing and, as listeners, strive to discern the sharer's intent.

Actionable Insights

- Before sharing, reflect: "Am I seeking connection, advice, or simply venting?"
- Explicitly communicate your intent to your conversation partner ("I need advice" or "I just need a sounding board").
- Consider pausing before venting; process your feelings on your own first.
- As a listener, ask: "How can I best support you in this conversation?"
- Notice patterns in your sharing, do you default to venting or advice-seeking? Adjust as needed for well-being.

The Importance of Clear Intentions in Communication (12:09)

The research underscores the critical importance of explicitly stating intentions in workplace communication. Frequently, misalignment between what the sharer needs and how the listener responds leads to diminished connection, trust, and satisfaction. By encouraging both parties, sharer and listener, to clarify expectations and needs upfront, organizations foster healthier, more effective communication. Leaders who practice this model set the stage for psychological safety and higher-performing teams.

When intentions are made clear, it paves the way for open dialogue and mutual understanding. This approach enhances collaboration and innovation. In an environment where everyone feels secure to express their views and intentions, creativity flourishes, and productive solutions emerge. As teams become more aligned with shared goals, they are better equipped to navigate challenges and seize opportunities, ultimately driving the organization forward.

Actionable Insights

- Begin sensitive conversations by stating your needs: “I’m hoping for some advice” or “I just need to share and be heard.”
- Encourage teams to ask clarifying questions before responding.
- Hold regular workshops or training on intentional communication.
- Model explicit intention-setting in meetings and one-on-ones.
- Use written communication to reinforce intent (“For your awareness” vs. “Feedback requested”).



LIST OF GOOD INTENTIONS:



Conclusion: Enhancing Connection Through Intentionality (17:04)

Intentionality is the key to meaningful workplace connection. The research demonstrates that when people are deliberate about their motivations and communicative intentions, connection flourishes, especially in face-to-face interactions. Virtual settings may pose challenges, but clear communication bridges the gap. Leaders can elevate their teams by proactively clarifying their own intentions and inviting others to do the same, cultivating a climate of trust, openness, and mutual support.

Actionable Insights

- Foster a habit of starting conversations with intention (“I’m here to listen,” “I’m sharing an idea”).
- Regularly debrief team interactions to reflect on what worked and what didn’t.
- Create environments, virtual or in-person, where intentional communication is rewarded.
- Leverage video calls for important discussions to maximize connection.
- Encourage feedback about how intentions are perceived and work to close any gaps.

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- [Spotify](#)
- [Apple Podcasts](#)

And if you're looking to elevate your entire C-Suite leadership team, learn how Craig Dowden can help your leaders perform at their highest level.

- visit <https://www.craigdowden.com/executive-mastermind>