

INSPIRING LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS

PEOPLE FIRST



INNOVATIVE
CONNECTIONS



THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONS

The journey you are about to embark upon will **illuminate the power of conversations**.

Consider the conversations in your meeting rooms, at your kitchen table, on your neighborhood walk or at your favorite coffee shop. These rich conversations are generated by different perspectives, curiosity, and questions that matter. They become our catalyst for sharing our collective personal experiences that shape our future while supporting our human nature to stay in relationship with one another.

This trust activity ignites meaningful conversations. Capture the richness of sharing perspectives and insights as you explore these conversations inside your organizations and throughout your community. Challenge yourself to use these conversations to propel your growth as an individual, leader, and/or leadership team.

Rules for these conversations? There are none. This concept is built on the assumption that people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. The answers are within each of us.

This activity is intended to widen your lens with additional perspective. As you talk with others or think about your experiences, capture your thoughts and reflections in the

space provided. Feel free to circle, highlight, or underline anything you are curious about or those words which resonate with you.

Next, find a partner, teammate, colleague, family member, friend, or leader to share your thoughts with and discuss your key takeaways. If possible, move the conversations to small groups/teams and then on to larger groups/teams. The format provides a consistent process for expanding your conversations and capturing what is on everyone's mind.

Enjoy!

As you engage in your conversations, please remember to:

- Listen deeply.
- Speak from your voice.
- Take a risk.
- Put it out there.
- Encourage contributions.
- Connect diverse perspectives.
- Listen together for patterns and insights.
- Capture the conversation with words, illustrations, symbols, or any other device possible.





PEOPLE FIRST

People First is about creating a work environment that is fulfilling for the people who work with and for you. **It implies thinking about your co-workers, your customers, your family/friends and creating a culture that values them.**

You would be hard pressed to find organizational core values that did not include attributes demonstrating how an organization intends to value people, but how an organization acts and lives to those values makes the difference. Whether it be through compassion, honesty, transparency, respect, and so on, **how we care for people matters.**

Fundamentally, we know putting people first creates tremendous opportunities.

In our organizations, we are able to realize significant outcomes by taking care of people first. Those people then take care of our customers and communities, ultimately providing organizational sustainability, market presence, and environmental health.

People first is not just about demonstrating care and compassion. It is woven into the fabric of our work culture. It happens when organizations provide meaningful work for their team members, when leadership places equal value on ALL roles, when we respect work life challenges and we offer opportunities for growth and development. It also occurs when we provide open and honest feedback, and make difficult decisions through the lens of empathy.

“Wholeness is a place where I am able to show up as a full human being (and bring) all of my gifts to the table to be a part of this organization. That leads to a great feeling of inclusiveness because what it allows me then to do is to bring this real, authentic self to the table and to really love the work that I do.”

*~ Kimo Kippen, former CLO Hilton
and VP of Learning at Marriott*

Putting people first requires no reason, no return on investment, no payback, not even a thank you. It comes from a heart of service to others. It can simply be an act that makes another person feel important and special: a kind word, a small gift left on a desk, a call just to check in and see how they are. It can be anonymous or known. It just has to be genuine.

What would happen if we applied a People First attitude to our every day, in any circumstance, in both our personal and our professional lives?

REFLECT

What does putting people first look like for you? For your organization? For your family and/or close circle of friends?

What are you noticing and/or experiencing with a “People First” mindset?




People First is a relentless attitude combined with consistent behaviors. It requires us to:

- Show up with a genuine interest in those around us
- Care about others and be empathetic
- Shine a light on the possibilities and support others in creating new opportunities
- Be authentic
- Flex and adjust our approach
- Be present with others—no wandering, multitasking, phones, rehearsed rebuttal, fake smiles, interruptions, sidebar conversations, and no judgment

When we are on the receiving end of someone who puts people first, we can feel it. There is respectful eye contact, an openness from their body language, warmth, a caring approach, good questions, vulnerability, a magnetic presence, motivating and maybe even inspiring at times when things get difficult.

Observe those around you. Who shows up with a presence that is respectful, open, warm, caring, curious, vulnerable, magnetic, motivating and inspiring? These individuals are probably steeped in their core values and operate from a “People First” place.

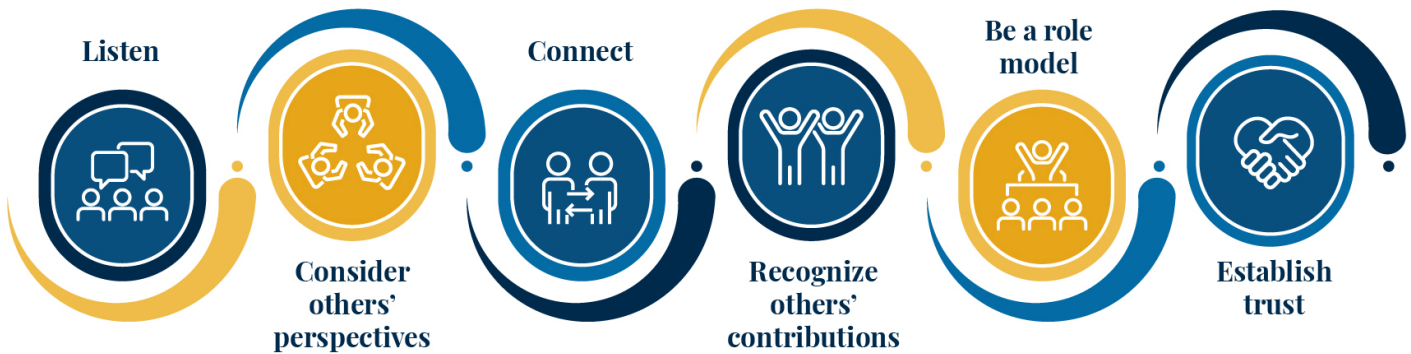
The foundation of People First is love; unconditional love for one another. As leaders the benefits when we put others first are immeasurable, not the least of which is the joy of knowing our teams enjoy being at work, and also enjoy having us as their leaders. Putting People First requires a unique set of skills that are sometimes forgotten when we get busy. By becoming intentional about six critical behaviors of a People First Leader, we set ourselves and our teams

A watercolor illustration of a diverse group of people in various colors (yellow, pink, blue, green, purple, red) standing together. The style is soft and artistic, with overlapping colors and a sense of movement.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

~ Maya Angelou

6 CRITICAL BEHAVIORS FOR A PEOPLE FIRST LEADER



up for success. (And employing these strategies in our personal lives will not hurt either).

Listen. Listen to understand, and for new possibilities and perspectives. Simply by engaging fully in the conversation we show others that they are worth our time.

Consider Others. Who might be underrepresented or adversely impacted by decisions or actions we make or take? Inherently, we filter the world through the lens of our own experiences – our personal biases. This colors the way we interact with others, the decisions we make, the way we work in the world. But, if we open ourselves to others' viewpoints, we can see a multitude of new possibilities opportunities, and we become more sensitive others' feelings.


Connect. Schedule intentional time to connect with others. Be present. Taking the time to connect with others makes it possible for you to really get to know the other person, allowing you to build deeper,

more meaningful relationships. Pick up the phone or get up and walk around to personally connect with your team.

Recognize and Celebrate Others' Contributions. Recognition makes people feel good about themselves, their jobs and the organization. By taking the time to call out a job well done, you show your team that you truly value them and their contribution.

Be a Role Model. Model behaviors that reflect a core belief that people are capable, resourceful and whole. When you are a leader, people look to you to see the standard they will be held to. Your responsibility is to model the values of the organization and to hold yourself and your team accountable for doing the same.

Establish and/or build trust with every conversation. Authenticity builds trust and respect. Being present in every conversation shows that you are available and interested



in what is being said. With every authentic conversation trust builds.

It is important for organizations to support a people first culture as well. Employee engagement is integral to an organization's success, and a people first culture helps build that by providing:

- **Meaningful work.** Employees are willing to work harder and tough it out through difficult transitions if they feel there is meaning to their work and they feel their effort is making an impact.
- **Autonomy.** Once the parameters of the job are set, giving employees autonomy in how to complete their job requirements demonstrates your confidence in them and empowers them to work independently.
- **Flexibility.** Providing flexible hours to fit their life schedules or enabling staff to work off site without compromising quality or productivity offers greater work-life balance, which many workers now seek in their employment options.
- **Opportunity for growth.** Salary and benefits are important, but employees also want an opportunity to grow in their careers. Staying challenged, building new skills, and seeing opportunities for career advancement keep employees excited about their jobs and the organization.
- **A voice.** When leaders listen to their staff, it shows them their viewpoints are valuable and that they have the ability to influence decisions through their feedback.

When we do these things, we work and innovate collaboratively with a richness that isn't possible without this connection. We create this interconnectedness when we find

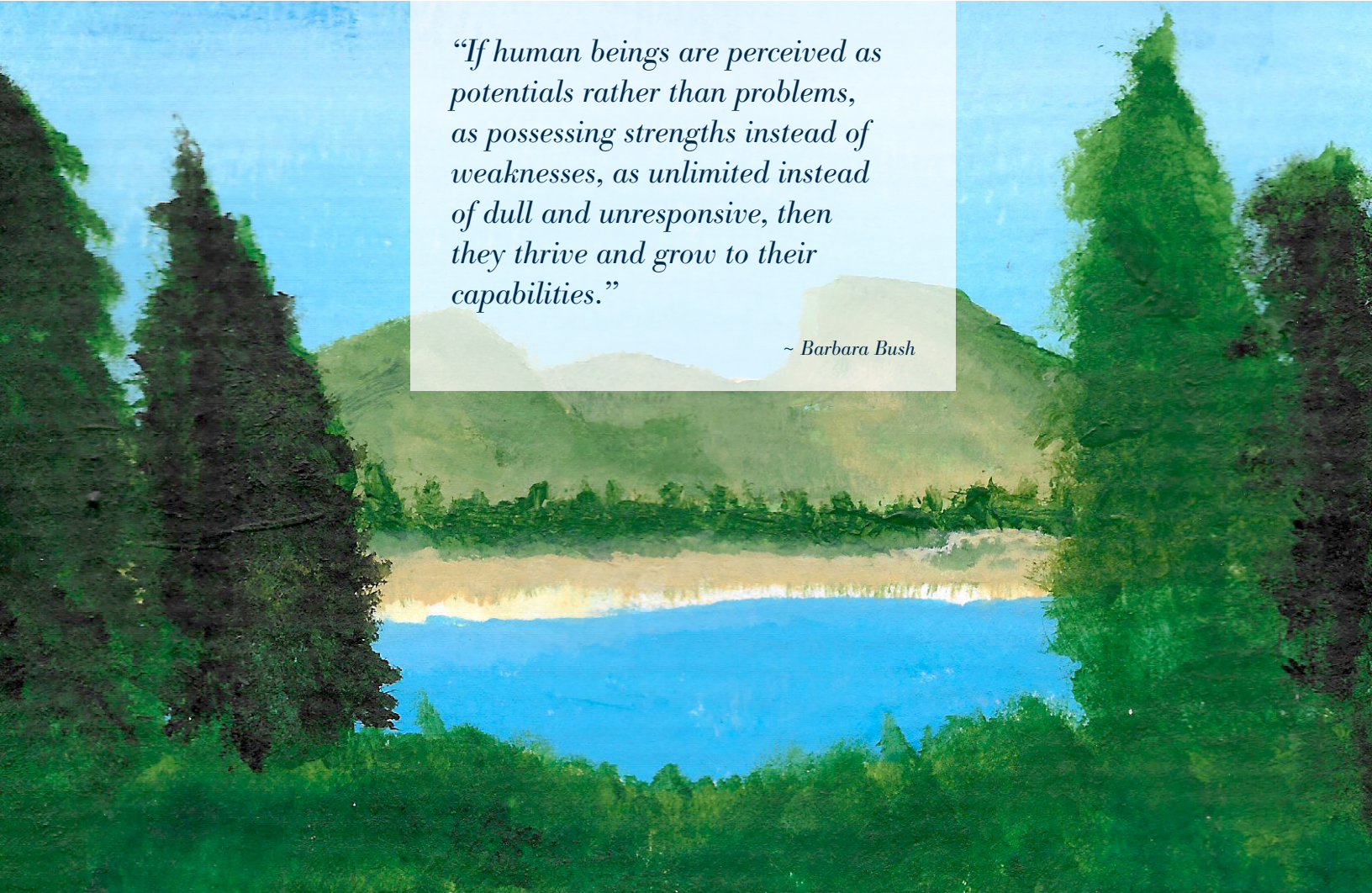
value in each other, and build strong and trusting relationships with each other ~ indeed, when we put People First.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER CONVERSATIONS

Describe any intended and unintended consequences of your actions as a leader over the last three to six months.

Within organizations and communities, how do we want to be as a leadership team?

What's one concrete step we can take to ensure "People First" (e.g. our team, organization, etc.)?



“If human beings are perceived as potentials rather than problems, as possessing strengths instead of weaknesses, as unlimited instead of dull and unresponsive, then they thrive and grow to their capabilities.”


~ Barbara Bush

With a focus on self awareness and behavior, where are your growth opportunities as a “People First” role model? Be specific.

TAKEAWAYS

What new insights did you get from having your conversations?

What is one takeaway you want to remember from your conversations?



“People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

~ John C. Maxwell

NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE YOUR MOVE

If you are experiencing difficulty achieving strategic outcomes, disharmony or fear among employees, poor team dynamics, trouble recruiting the right talent, or other team or organizational issues, we will help you unleash new possibilities and potential that result in sustainable change.

Through our processes and programs, you will find your voice, see your vision, and imagine what the right action for the future could be for you, your team, and your organization.

You will realize profound, sustainable transformation—both individually and organizationally—that starts now, and remains for years to come.



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