

FACILITATION SKILLS

Powerful Facilitator Phrases to Use in Online Meetings

Adapted from Bill Murphy Jr., 10 Magic Phrases to Put on a Cheat Sheet Next to Your Computer so People Will Like You More on Zoom Calls and Other Video Meetings

Most of us around the world are doing work online and we lose the subtleties of face-to-face communication. Here are a few phrases to be sure to use in online meetings. They will ensure more trust, safety and helpful communication in our meetings.



**MAY I BE HONEST? /
ALLOW ME TO BE UPFRONT /
CAN I SHARE SOMETHING THAT'S
A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE?**

These phrases set expectations, signal honesty, and imply that you don't want to waste anyone else's time. This helps prepare people's minds for what comes next.



SAY MORE ABOUT THAT.

This is a non-judgmental, opening reaction to a comment needs more information. Generally, people appreciate knowing that you want to hear more. Do not use this phrase when someone has spoken at length.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK? /
WHAT'S COMING UP FOR
YOU AROUND THIS TOPIC?**

You'll be positively surprised when you ask this and it will build much better understanding in the room. It also applies in almost every life situation-- not just online meetings, but even casual interactions among strangers.

**HOW CAN I HELP? /
WHAT KIND OF HELP DO YOU
NEED RIGHT NOW?**

This is a beautiful message of empathy which will generally inspire gratitude from those receiving it. It is much better than "Let me know if I can help." Instead, make suggestions about how you can help. This will help them realize what kind of help they may need.



**PLEASE / THANK YOU /
I REALLY LIKE THAT.**

These words generally result in positive reactions. Words of affirmation are so needed right now. Try not to overuse the phrase "I really like that".



**YOU'RE WELCOME /
THANKS FOR NOTICING.**

It's a positive reflection on both you and them to say these words. Try it out and notice when it seems to make a difference. Also, say them with a lot of spirit to let the person know you really mean it.



**I'M SORRY, I INTERRUPTED YOU.
PLEASE GO AHEAD /
OOPS, YOU GO FIRST.**

Most of us dominate conversations if we are not aware. Say this phrase and then keep quiet. It sometimes takes those who have quiet patterns a moment to realize there really is a space for them to talk.



**VERY SPECIFIC WAYS OF
COMPLIMENTING PEOPLE IS
LIFE AFFIRMING.**

Whatever it is, find something positive, specific and truthful to say about people. E.g., "You listen respectfully and this creates safety"; and, "Your teaching is lively and focused." Prefacing this with, "I've noticed that you ..." makes clear this isn't a one-time observation.



**I WONDER HOW WE CAN FIX THIS.
LET'S TRY AND SOLVE THIS ONE
TOGETHER.**

There's rarely reason to assign blame. Skillful leaders assemble a committed team to do the work collaboratively. They use the team's competencies. With this phrase, the emphasis is on "we" and "fix".



**I DON'T KNOW - WHO HERE
KNOWS SOMETHING
ABOUT THIS?**

You want people to make decisions based on data to the maximum extent possible. No one knows everything. It brings you closer to others if they know you're not "all knowing" and have gaps in your knowledge. It is good to acknowledge our interdependence and reliance on each other.

