

Build Trust on Your Team with the Positivity Check-in

Everybody works on teams, and team success depends on two things: your ability to get results (productivity) and the quality of relationships among team members (positivity). Most teams spend the majority of their time focusing on what they are trying to achieve, the kind of progress they are making, and who needs to do what next. What they invest less time in is intentionally building and sustaining relationships. It's relationships, however, that will make or break team success.

The Positivity Check-in is a simple, effective practice any team can use to tune-in to how people are doing and deepen connections. It builds trust, openness, and a caring, inclusive culture – qualities that help get any team through the tough times.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

- Ask everyone to share, in 1 minute each, a response to a specific, focused question or prompt. A great one is “What is happening in your world personally and professionally?”
- As each person shares, everyone else simply listens. No questions, no challenges, no comments. The goal is to be curious and open.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER QUESTIONS YOU CAN USE?

Change it up! Try using different prompts for your check-ins, to keep it interesting and deepen connection. Here are some questions you might try:

- What's one thing coming up in your life that you are excited or happy about?
- What's one strange thing you noticed last week?
- What made you laugh out loud recently?
- What is something you read recently that really made you pause and think?
- Who is one of your personal leadership heroes, and why?

Try using metaphors for fun and information (A picture = 1000 words).

- If your mood today were a... climate/shape/weather pattern/color/cuisine..., what would it be and why?
- If you were to compare our team to a type of vehicle, what vehicle best represents how things have been going lately?

Build Trust on Your Team with the Positivity Check-in

continued

NOTICE AND REFLECT

Once everyone has checked in, take a few minutes to reflect as a team. You might ask:

- What did we discover or learn about our team/each other from the check-in?
- How does what we discovered impact our work together?
- How did our check-in shift our energy as a team?

WHAT ABOUT AN EXAMPLE?

I was working with a senior leadership team in a tech firm. They'd been working together every day for years. The firm was facing a lot of market pressure. We started a strategy offsite with the Positivity Check-in. I asked each person to share one thing that was happening in their world, both professionally and personally. The CEO shared that one of his parents had been struggling with health issues and he had been back and forth to the hospital in the last week. The CIO revealed that he and his wife were having tough times with their teens. The Director of Marketing was celebrating a family reunion in two weeks, with a son home from military service.

After everyone checked in, I asked the team what they noticed about the conversation. They were astonished that they had little idea about the challenges their colleagues were dealing with outside of work, or about the joys in their lives. The energy in the room had shifted completely – the conversations revealed the team's capacity for empathy and reminded them that one of their strengths as a team was the way they cared for each other as individuals. Their personal willingness to be a little vulnerable in a one-minute check-in set a positive tone for the rest of the offsite, and reminded them of who they can be when they slow down to connect.

Build Trust on Your Team with the Positivity Check-in

continued

**“IT SOUNDS LIKE THIS WILL TAKE A LOT OF TIME,
AND OUR MEETINGS ARE TOO LONG AS IT IS.”**

Yes, it's true, adding the Positivity Check-in to your meetings will take up some time. My mantra when working with teams however, is “Go slow to go fast.” Slowing down, taking the time to invest intentionally in your relationships, bears fruit in the future. The trust you are building up and the knowledge you have about each other's preferences, thought patterns, stressors, strengths, and work styles will reduce friction and increase your speed to results and impact.

We'd love to know if you find this resource helpful, and hear how you are using it.
Please share your experience, questions, or insights. Thanks!
valerie@doublehelixlearning.com

