COLEMAN
STRATEGY & EXPERIENCE GROUP

Transforming Strategy into Meaningful People Experiences

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Communication That Leads to Action™

Six conversations for teams ready to build an environment where communication leads somewhere.

For leadership teams | Departments | Book circles

Sharon Johnson Coleman

Author & Founder, Coleman Strategy & Experience Group

Discussion questions
Reflection prompts
Team action tools

WELCOME

A Note Before You Begin

Thank you for choosing to read *Communication That Leads to Action™* together.

Reading this book on your own can change how you see your workplace. Reading it as a group can change how your workplace works.

This book was never meant to be a theory. It is a system. And systems are built by people who decide, together, that communication should lead somewhere. That is what these conversations are for.

Some of what you discuss will be easy. Some of it will not. You may name things your team has avoided for a long time. That is not a sign the process is failing. It is a sign the process is working.

My hope is simple. When you finish, I hope your group will not only talk differently. I hope you will follow through differently.

Sharon Johnson Coleman

How to Use This Guide

SIX SESSIONS

One session for each section of the book. Plan 60 to 75 minutes per session, weekly or every other week.

THREE SESSION OPTION

On a tighter timeline? Combine Sessions 1 and 2, 3 and 4, then 5 and 6. Plan 90 minutes each.

END WITH ACTION

Every session closes with a commitment. Record each one on the Team Action Commitments page so nothing disappears.

Each member reads the assigned chapters before the session. One person facilitates, one person keeps notes, and both roles rotate so leadership of the conversation is shared.

QUICK REFERENCE

The System at a Glance

Keep this page open during every session. The environment holds the conversation. The conversation leads to action.

OPEN Voice™ THE ENVIRONMENT

O
Open Expectations
People know where communication goes, who decides, and how they will hear back.

P
Preserved Safety™
People can keep contributing after they say something difficult.

E
Expected Participation
Voice is a responsibility, not a personality trait.

N
Nothing Disappears™
Every concern, idea, or risk moves toward a visible outcome.

SAFE Conversations™ THE CONVERSATION

S
Speak
Name it clearly, directly, and early enough to matter.

A
Acknowledge
Show that what was said registered. Acknowledgment is not agreement.

F
Follow Up
Close the loop so people see what happened next.

E
Evolve
Let what you learned change how you work.

Five Action Paths™ THE ACTION

Decide
Make the call and say so.

Assign
Give it an owner and a timeline.

Test
Try it small and learn.

Escalate
Move it to the people who can act.

Close with Reason
End it and explain why.

Minimum Viable System

You do not have to fix everything at once. Start with the smallest set of practices that gives people visible evidence their communication leads somewhere.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Our Group Agreements

Read these aloud at your first session. Practice the system while you discuss it.

1. **Speak plainly.** Say what you mean, early enough that it can help.
2. **Acknowledge before responding.** Make sure the speaker knows they were heard before you add your view.
3. **Protect each other's voice.** Keep personal stories in the room, and never use what someone shares to embarrass or penalize them.
4. **Participation is expected.** Every perspective is part of the work, including the quieter ones.
5. **Nothing disappears.** If something important surfaces, we decide what happens to it before we leave the room.

The Rhythm of Every Session

10 MINUTES	40 MINUTES	15 MINUTES
Open	**Discuss**	**Act**
Check in. Review last session's commitments. What moved?	Work through the questions. Depth matters more than finishing every one.	Choose an Action Path. Name an owner. Write it down.

FACILITATOR

Keeps time, invites every voice, and protects the agreements. Rotates each session.

NOTE KEEPER

Captures commitments on the Team Action Commitments page and brings them back next time.

Before Session 1, read Creating Space to Speak Safely on the next page together.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Creating Space to Speak Safely

No facilitator can guarantee how every person will respond to what is shared. What a group can do is agree on clear boundaries before the conversation starts. Review this page together at your first session.

Confidentiality	Lessons can leave the room. Names and personal stories cannot. If you want to repeat something you heard, ask the person first. Confidentiality is a group commitment, not a guarantee, so share at the level that feels right for you.
Sharing is voluntary	No one is required to share a personal experience. "I'll pass" is always an acceptable answer. Talk about patterns and situations rather than naming individuals who are not in the room.
When managers and direct reports meet together	Power in the room does not disappear because the topic is openness. Leaders speak last, listen more, and never respond to what is shared with consequences. For the most sensitive sessions, consider pairs, anonymous question cards, or separate peer groups.
When something requires formal action	This group is a learning space, not a reporting channel. Concerns about harassment, discrimination, safety, ethics, or legal matters belong in your organization's formal process. If one surfaces, the facilitator pauses, thanks the person, and helps them reach the right channel. Leaders in the room may have their own duty to report, so name that at the start.

FACILITATOR: HAVE THESE READY BEFORE SESSION 1

HR contact _____

Formal reporting line _____

Employee support resources _____

What the Environment Is Teaching

Read before meeting: Preface, Introduction, What the Environment Teaches, and What Silence Is Actually Saying

THE BIG IDEA

Silence is learned. People watch what happens after someone speaks up, and they adjust. Before we can change how we communicate, we have to see what our environment has been teaching.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about the first time you saw someone raise a concern at work. What happened next, and what did you learn from it?
2. Where does silence show up on our team? In meetings, in email, in one on ones, or in the hallway conversations afterward?
3. What is our silence actually saying? What might people be protecting themselves from?
4. Which lessons does our environment teach that no one ever intended to teach?
5. If a new hire watched us for 30 days, what would they conclude about whether speaking up is worth it?

REFLECT

Name one thing you have stopped saying at work. What would need to be true for you to say it again?

LEAVE WITH AN ACTION

Each person names one place where communication goes quiet on our team. The note keeper collects the list and brings it to Session 2.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Ready to bring Communication That Leads to Action™ into your organization?

Your group has done the reading and started the work. Let's talk about where your team is today and what support would help the change last.

Schedule a conversation

Scan the code to book a time with Sharon about workshops, keynotes, or bringing the full system to your organization.

colemanseg.com/contact

WAYS WE WORK TOGETHER

- One and Two Day Workshops
- Executive Keynotes
- OPEN Voice™ Team Audit
- CTLA Certification, coming 2027

Order more copies for your team at **colemanseg.com/book**

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