



CREATING CLEAR AGREEMENTS

Purpose

To create clarity about what we can count on each other for in a way that builds trust, alignment and mutual accountability.

Why Bother?

So often we talk about what needs to be done. We share wants, perspectives and opinions. We even tell people our expectations or what to do. But we stop there. We don't go all the way and create clarity around who will do what and by when.

Not having clear agreements often leads to major misunderstandings in relationships and is a major reason results get stalled. It takes intention and focus to close the loop and make sure that all parties know what they're agreeing to and who is responsible for what. Clear agreements support people to overtly and consciously make choices about what they say they'll do, increasing their likelihood of engaging more fully and stepping into accountability.

Clear agreements build relationships and result.

How To Use

A powerful, clear agreement has two parts:

- **A clear request:** An effective request is delivered in crystal clear language. A request does not begin with "I need you to" or "I want you to." A request begins with "would you" or "will you" and spells out what you want and by when.
- **A clear response:** The person receiving the request must feel free to respond honestly. A clear response comes in the form of a yes, no and/or counter offer.

TIPS

- Many managers believe they have the "right" to expect things from their people. Even if you have this belief, it works better to create clear agreements so that your business is built upon a foundation of respect, transparency and accountability.
- Sometimes in real life agreements need to be changed or adjusted. So re-promising or renegotiating agreements is part of the process.

WHEN TO USE

- Any time you are delegating or asking someone to do something.
- At the end of meetings when you've identified next steps or next actions.
- At the end of a Breakthrough Conversation.
- When you think someone is expecting you to deliver on something and they haven't necessarily asked you for a Clear Agreement.



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Example Requests

Unclear Requests

“Let’s do _____!”

“You should do _____.”

“You need to do _____.”

“I don’t like it when you do _____.”

Clear Requests

“Will you do _____ (what) by _____ (when)?”

“Would you be willing to do _____ by _____?”

“Will you commit to doing _____ by _____?”

“I want you to _____ by _____...will you do that?”

Example Responses

Unclear Responses

“I don’t know.”

“Maybe.”

“I’ll think about it.”

“Yeah.”

“Uh-huh.”

Clear Responses

“Yes.”

“No.”

“Yes, and I will do it by _____ rather than by the deadline you suggested.”

“I’m not certain. Will you give me one day to consider your request and get back to you by noon tomorrow?”

“No, and I propose I do _____ (any changes they/you want) by _____ (date).”