

CRAIG GROESCHEL

LEADERSHIP PODCAST



118: Q&A WITH VANESSA VAN EDWARDS: HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHARISMA

EPISODE NOTES

Thank you for joining the *Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast*! Today's guest, Vanessa Van Edwards, is a bestselling author, the founder of Science of People, and a two-time Global Leadership Summit speaker. In this interview she shares the keys to communicating with influence and charisma in every interaction.

Charisma is contagious.

Have you ever noticed that one person in a bad mood can infect an entire room?

Seeing that happen caused Vanessa to ask, "If one person in a bad mood can infect a room, could one person in a good mood affect a room, too?"

This led her to a study that showed charismatic people are more contagious. Charismatic people have that special something that gives them influence and authority in their interactions. They *can* change the feel of a room and can even affect others through phone calls, video calls, and podcasts.

Her research showed that developing your charisma can actually make you more influential.

An important note: Being more charismatic doesn't always mean being more positive. If you're faking positivity, you're going to come off as inauthentic to your team. Instead, look to bring the relief emotion.

If your team is feeling challenged and stressed, they might need you to bring unity. Try saying, "Hey, I know it's hard right now. I woke up stressed too, but we will get through this as a team."

*"Being more charismatic doesn't always mean being more positive."
—Vanessa Van Edwards*

Some advice for working with introverts.

If you work with introverts, you have to honor how they communicate. If you're going to have a brainstorm session or icebreaker at a meeting, send it to them a few days ahead of time.

This gives your introverts time to prepare their answer so they don't feel put on the spot.

Become charismatic by asking better questions.

The questions we ask are critical for moving our relationships through the three levels of connection:

Level one: General traits. You know what they do, where they're from, how many kids they have, etc.

Level two: Personal concerns. You know what they worry about and what they value.

Level three: Self-narrative. You know the story they tell themselves about themselves.

Good questions have to be timed right to help you deepen a relationship.

If you only know general traits about someone, don't ask them a level-three question. You need to ask level-two questions first.

When you're on level one, ask about what motivates someone, what they're excited about, or what they're passionate about right now.

If you already know someone pretty well, but want to get to level three, ask them questions like, "What forces have shaped your personality?" When you ask questions like this, you begin to see what has shaped them.

"Good questions have to be timed right." —Vanessa Van Edwards

A filter for creating meaningful content.

After seeing her first big book deal fail, Vanessa began applying a filter of "meaning" to every piece of content she creates.

Her filter asks, "Is this content **helping someone, making them laugh, or giving them an ah-hah moment?**"

If it doesn't do one of those three things, it's not getting posted.

If you want people to listen, talk about painkillers, not vitamins.

If you want people to listen, you need to speak about a *need*. Ask yourself if your content is a metaphorical vitamin or a painkiller.

Vitamins are good for us, and we know people should take them, but they aren't critical or urgent. Painkillers solve the immediate problems your audience is focused on right now.

If you're giving people vitamins, they're likely to tune you out. If you speak in painkillers, people will lean in.

So how do you find painkillers?

Find out what is causing your audience pain or frustration. Once you know what's hurting them, you'll know what painkiller you need to give them.

How to check in with your team.

Sometimes it's hard to accurately diagnose the state of your team members. Here are two very practical questions you should be able to answer about the people you lead:

1. What does a really good day at work look like, and when was the last time you had one?
2. What does a really bad day at work look like, and when was the last time you had one?

If you know the answers to these two questions, you'll be able to identify how a team member is doing and you'll see warning signs if they start to enter a rough season.

Another way to check in with your team is to ask what they're worried about.

If you know what your people are worried about, that will help you get to the root cause of a problem and diagnose how your team is really doing.

The power of wordsmithing as a leader.

It's important when choosing your words as a leader to not lead with a negative.

So rather than asking, "How do we avoid burnout?" Ask "How can we accomplish more while staying healthy?"

How to upgrade your nonverbal gestures.

You might think nonverbal communication starts with eye contact, but research shows that people look at your hands before they look at your eyes.

So when joining a zoom call or walking into a room, start by waving your hand and saying, "Hey everyone!" This will immediately deactivate everyone's amygdala, which processes fear.

Next, you want to have broad posture. The distance between your earlobe and your shoulder is the biggest indicator people watch to see if you're relaxed, or stressed. So when joining a call or walking into a meeting, broaden your posture and lower your shoulders.

"The distance between your earlobe and your shoulder is the biggest indicator people watch to see if you're relaxed." —Vanessa Van Edwards

If you communicate from stage, one common pitfall is holding something in your hands.

If you hold something, you are going to feel anchored and not use as many gestures. This is dangerous because we need gestures for comprehension.

"We need gestures for comprehension." —Vanessa Van Edwards

How to fight your public-speaking nerves.

One strategy Vanessa uses to beat the nerves that come with public speaking is to "blueprint out" her nonverbal communication. This allows her to focus on her blueprint, rather than whatever thoughts are swirling around in her head.

This blueprint should be hyper-detailed. Include how fast you walk on stage, exactly what point you're walking to, and each specific gesture you'll use during your intro.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are exercises you can do to grow as a leader—ask yourself and your team these questions:

1. On a scale of 1-10, how charismatic would you say you are? What is one change you could make to become more charismatic?

2. Using Vanessa's three levels of connection, what level are you on with each of your team members? What could you do to move deeper in those relationships?

3. What is the biggest pain your team is facing today? What is a 'painkiller' you could give them to help solve that problem?

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Building and maintaining momentum can be extremely difficult. Learn how to create a lasting impact in Craig's book [Lead Like It Matters: 7 Leadership Principles for a Church That Lasts](#).

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