

# How to Build Trust (Communication Styles) June 15, 2026

# Today's Agenda

- ❑ Welcome, connection and context (9:00)
- ❑ Our experiences with trust-building (9:10)
- ❑ 5 Ways of Being and 5 Communication Styles to Build Trust (9:20)
- ❑ The 5 Styles of Communication in Action (9:30)
- ❑ Your Turn (9:45)
- ❑ Bringing this Back to Your Team (9:55)
- ❑ After party (more Q&A) (10:00)

# Goals for Our Trust-Building Work

- Learn how what we DO and what we SAY can build or undermine trust
- Understand our own trust-building strengths and growth areas
- Learn how to use active listening and empathy to understand the trust-building preferences of others
- Develop practical trust-building skills and actions we can use everyday

## 5 Communication Styles to Build Trust (What I SAY)



**FUTURE STYLE**  
Sounds like: "In 10 years time..."



**INCLUSIVE STYLE**  
Sounds like: "What do you think?"



**DATA STYLE**  
Sounds like: "The research shows that..."



**PERSONAL STYLE**  
"My best friend always tells me..."



**ACTION STYLE**  
Sounds like: "Please have this to me by Friday at 3pm."

## 5 Ways of Being to Build Trust (What I DO)



**GENEROSITY**  
I give freely of my time and resources.



**TRUSTWORTHINESS**  
I can be counted on to keep confidences.



**RELATABILITY**  
I'm aware, vulnerable and in tune with people and places.



**CREDIBILITY**  
I have relevant knowledge or lived experience to share.



**RELIABILITY**  
I do what I say I'm going to do.

# Change Moves at the Speed of Trust

off the mark.com by Mark Parisi

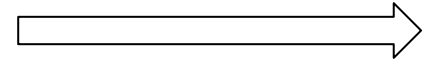


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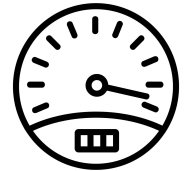
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Change



Trust



# Silent reflection

Think of a trusted person in your life (family member, coach, mentor, friend, guardian, colleague, boss, etc.)

What did they do to build trust with you?

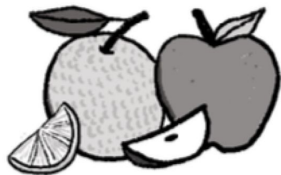
## 5 Ways of Being to Build Trust (What I DO)



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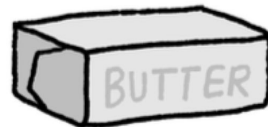
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# Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

**Future (Vision):** Paints a compelling, inspirational picture of possibility. Oriented toward big ideas and long-term goals.

**Strength:** Use it to motivate, align around a North Star, or create energy for change.

**Shadow:** Can feel vague, unrealistic, or ungrounded if not backed by a plan or credibility.



## **FUTURE STYLE**

Sounds like: "In 10 years time..."

# Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

**Data:** Grounded in facts, logic, structure, and metrics. Necessary when more certainty needed.

**Strength:** Use it to build credibility, support recommendations, or explain complex issues with clarity.

**Shadow:** Can feel cold, technical, or disconnected from people if not paired with context or connection. Can seem manipulative or biased if methods or assumptions aren't transparent or agreed.



## **DATA STYLE**

Sounds like: "The research shows that..."

# Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

## **Personal (Relatable Storytelling):**

Uses story, emotion, and personal experience to create connection. Makes abstract ideas feel real, human, and relevant.

**Strength:** Use it to build trust, connect across roles or silos, and make the message stick.

**Shadow:** Can feel unprofessional or off-topic if not well-framed or aligned to the moment.



**PERSONAL STYLE**  
"My best friend always  
tells me..."

# Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

**Action (Directive):** Clear and decisive, focused on results. Moves quickly from idea to execution. Speaks in next steps, outcomes, and accountability.

**Strength:** Use it when there's urgency, ambiguity, or a need to make decisions and drive momentum.

**Shadow:** Can come across as pushy, impatient, or dismissive of input.



## **ACTION STYLE**

Sounds like: "Please have this to me by Friday at 3pm."

# Understanding Each Trust-building Communication Style

**Inclusive (Collaborative):** Engages others, listens, builds consensus. Fosters connection and belonging. Uses questions and open frames.

**Strength:** Use it to build alignment, foster trust, and bring diverse voices into the conversation.

**Shadow:** Can slow things down or appear indecisive if overused.



**INCLUSIVE STYLE**  
Sounds like: "What do you think?"

# Communication Styles Matter: Research Foundations

- 1. Psychological Safety (trust fuels learning, engagement, and performance).** Edmondson, Amy. *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth* (2018).
- 2. Motivational Interviewing & Active Listening (people are more engaged when they feel understood).** Miller, William R. & Rollnick, Stephen. *Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change* (2012)
- 3. Emotional Intelligence (effective leaders adapt to others).** Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). Goleman, Daniel. *Primal Leadership* (2002).
- 4. Conversational Intelligence (the quality of conversations shapes relationships and results).** Glaser, Judith E. *Conversational Intelligence* (2013).
- 5. Appreciative Inquiry (questions shape attention and action).** Cooperrider, David L. & Whitney, Diana. *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (2005).
- 6. Adaptive Leadership (different situations require different leadership responses).** Heifetz, Ronald A., Grashow, Alexander, & Linsky, Marty. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (2009).
- 7. Indigenous Leadership & Deep Listening (relationships precede solutions).** Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (2009). Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (2008).

# The Communication Styles in Practice ... Written and Verbal

# An economy that works. For everyone.

REDF is now Redefine Alliance! New name, same mission.

[Read More](#)



**FUTURE STYLE**

Sounds like: "In  
10 years time..."



# Our Vision

Who We Back   How We Do It   **Impact**

**A movement that's meeting the moment.**

Impact for us isn't confined to a number, but to what that number can represent. It's not 157,100 people employed, it's what those 157,100 people inspire as they step onto their new beginning. Or not just \$3.1 billion in revenue earned, but what that level of market adoption signals for social enterprise. Most of all, it's what becomes possible when we are all defined by the talent we hold, not the barriers we face. It's about accelerating a movement that's meeting the moment.

**157.1K**

people employed

**\$3.1B+**

revenue earned

[OUR INVESTMENTS →](#)

[VIEW OUR IMPACT REPORT →](#)



## DATA STYLE

Sounds like: "The research shows that..."

# Video: Igniting the Flame

Two powerful stories on the power of perseverance and redemption, and the roles that Redefine Alliance and employment social enterprise played.

COMMUNITY STORIES, VIDEO & MEDIA 9.13.22

Get a firsthand look at two powerful stories on the power of perseverance and redemption, and the role Redefine Alliance and employment social enterprise played.

This video feature is narrated by Rob Lowe, and features Brandon Smith, Co-Founder of Forestry and Fire Recruitment Program and Nyeshia Brunson of Civic Works.



### SHARE



### IN THIS POST



THE FORESTRY AND FIRE RECRUITMENT PROGRAM



CIVIC WORKS



**PERSONAL STYLE**  
"My best friend always tells me..."

# Donate

## Help build an economy that works. For everyone.

Something magical happens when a person steps onto their new beginning. Their chest puffs up, their kids look up, and they all see their futures as limitless, not limited.

The enterprises we back are in the "new beginning" business. Our job is to invest in them, support them, and fuel them to help them see their future as limitless, too.

And so far, so good.

These businesses have earned over \$3.1 billion in revenue and employed over 157,000 people from overlooked talent pools all across our country. Your gift can help us get to the next 157,000, and most importantly help us unlock the new beginning for so many.



OUR IMPACT →



## ACTION STYLE

Sounds like: "Please have this to me by Friday at 3pm."

Choose Donation Amount

\$ 200.00

Choose a Frequency

One Time  Monthly

First Name\*

Last Name\*

Email\*

Address

City\*

State\*





Zip\*

Credit Card

Pay

\* This is a required field for all recognized payment.

For any other questions about your donation, please contact us at [development@refinealliance.org](mailto:development@refinealliance.org).

**Other ways to give**

Wire Donations and Checks +

Donor Advised Funds +

Stock Gifts +

Individual Retirement Account +

Employer Matching +

# Contact

"\*" indicates required fields

I would like to:

Send a general inquiry

Email \*

Name \*

Organization

Message

I'd like to receive Redefine Alliance's email newsletter

## San Francisco Office

785 Market Street

Suite 1200

San Francisco, CA 94103

**Mailing Address:**

150 Sutter Street #267

San Francisco, CA 94104-9991

T [\(415\) 561-6677](tel:(415)561-6677)

*\*If mailing via FedEx/UPS, please use office address.*

## Los Angeles Office

801 S. Grand Avenue

Suite #725

Los Angeles, CA 90017

T [\(415\) 561-6677](tel:(415)561-6677)



**INCLUSIVE STYLE**  
Sounds like: "What do  
you think?"

Featured Enterprises

## When ESEs thrive, society thrives

When these businesses succeed, doors are opened to stability, economic mobility, and possibility. [View our portfolio.](#)

The carousel features three panels, each with a background image of a person and overlaid text. The first panel shows a man in a white shirt and a tan cap. The second panel shows a woman in profile, looking towards the right. The third panel shows a man in a blue shirt smiling. At the bottom of the carousel are left and right arrow icons.

Enterprise Name	Location	Key Metric	Description of Metric
Neighborhood Industries	CALIFORNIA	35%	Increase in revenue earned and reinvested in people and jobs
Hopeworks	NEW JERSEY	90%	12-month retention rate in their jobs
Project Return	ECOSYSTEM: APPALACHIA, TENNESSEE	35%	Increase in revenue earned and reinvested in people and jobs

# What styles do you see here?

# How the Communication Styles Show Up in Conversation

## 5 Communication Styles to Build Trust (What I SAY)

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BY HALLIE DAYMAN & DAVE VIOTTI



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1. Identify your **GLOWS**: strengths in your current role ("My GLOWS are ...")
2. Identify your **GROWS**: growth areas ("My GROWS are ...")

# The questions we ask often reveal our preferred ways of understanding ...



# Role Play: Tell Me About Your Organization



# Role Play: Tell me about your ESE ...

Prepare a point about your ESE for each style:

- ❑ **Personal** (eg, how you came to this work)
- ❑ **Future** (eg, the impact you want to make)
- ❑ **Data** (eg, # of participants in your program)
- ❑ **Action** (eg, the specifics of your program)

For **Inclusive**, think of what your listener may want to know and questions to ask them:

- ❑ **Inclusive** (“What would you like to know about our program?” “What are your priorities?”) + just listening actively



# Breakout: Talk about your ESE

- ❑ Tell your partner(s) about your ESE in one minute
- ❑ Focus on one communication style (extra credit if you add in another style)
- ❑ At the end, go around and share one thing you heard from the others stories and they style they used (e.g., “I like how you used data to tell us that you have 50 participants in your program”)

# Practical ways to get better at each communication style

- **Future** (read an article on future trends and tell someone)
- **Data** (find a fact about your work and share it with someone)
- **Action** (write very short emails with numbers or bullet points)
- **Personal** (tell a story about your day at dinner)
- **Inclusion** (pause to ask someone what they think)

# Tool #1: Planning for Trust

- **Whom** do you need to build trust with?
- What's your desired outcome? (**your win**)
- What do they need? What motivates them? (**their win**)
- What trust-building communication styles might engage them? (what's your **hunch**)
- Prepare at least one talking point for each communication style (e.g., for inclusion, list what you think they might need and a question you want to ask them).

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# Tool #2:

## SMALLIFY TRUST-BUILDING STYLES ASSESSMENT

### The Five Trust-Building (Communication) Styles

Read the five trust-building styles below. Which one do you tend to default to (or prefer) in your current role when communicating with others? Which styles are you really good at? Which styles would you like to get better at?

#### 1. The Data Style (Reasoning)

Logical, factual, objective

You use this style to provide analysis, data, or expertise in support of a position.

#### A preferred style if you:

Tend to be analytical  
Prefer to use facts and logic  
Are focused and concise  
Enjoy a good debate

#### Sounds like:

"The research shows that ..."  
"These are the facts ..."

#### 2. The Action Style (Directing)

Expert, authoritative, clear

You use this style to make clear statements, give orders or provide directions.

#### A preferred style if you:

Tend to be action-oriented  
Focus on getting the job done  
Like directing people  
Prefer getting to the point

#### Sounds like:

"Please do the following ..."  
"This needs to be done by ..."

#### 3. The Inclusion Style (Collaborating)

Inclusive, cooperative

You use this style to build consensus and gather input before action is taken.

#### A preferred style if you:

Tend to be consensus-oriented  
Seek lots of diverse input  
Find group work energizing  
Avoid conflict when possible

#### Sounds like:

"What do you think of this?"  
"I'd like to get your opinion ..."

#### 4. The Future Style (Visioning)

Inspiring, innovative

You use this style to inspire and guide people toward an ideal or future state.

#### A preferred style if you:

Tend to be future-oriented  
Prefer "big picture" thinking  
Focus on "what could be"  
Get excited by possibilities

#### Sounds like:

"Imagine if we could ..."  
"In 10 years, I believe we'll ..."

#### 5. The Personal Style (Humanizing)

Relatable, heartfelt

You use this style to make something easier for people to relate to at a human level.

#### A preferred style if you:

Find personal stories uplifting  
Tend to be open and vulnerable  
Share success & failure openly  
Value heart-felt, relatable stories

#### Sounds like:

"This is my story ..."  
"This is a story about [name]..."

## Tool #3: An Exercise You Can Do with Your Team

- Have a discussion about when each communication style (action, data, future, inclusion, or personal) is (1) most effective and (2) least effective  
  
(e.g., “The action style is most effective in emergency situations or when you’ve got to get things done to meet a deadline; it’s least effective when you don’t have formal authority, strong relationships or when collaboration and diverse points of view are needed”)
- Share your trust-building strengths and growth areas with your team and (a) what you will commit to the team and (b) what you will need from the team
- What are your team’s strengths? Where are there gaps to fill? What styles are most needed in the current environment? (have a growth mindset about it)

# About Dave Viotti



Dave Viotti is the founder and CEO of SMALLIFY, a global innovation capacity-building community based in Silicon Valley and practiced around the world. Dave has delivered SMALLIFY Labs and workshops to 30,000 leaders in over 1,000 organizations around the world in the corporate, start-up, government, and non-profit sectors.

Dave serves on the faculty of the Executive Leadership Program at U.C. Berkeley's Haas School of Business and the IT Leadership Academy for the State of California. He was on the founding teams for Fuse Corps, the Civic Accelerator at Points of Light, the Collaborative Solutions Lab with the federal government at the Presidio Institute, the Westly Prize for innovation in California, and the IT Leadership Program for the State of Hawai'i. Dave is a Gallup-Certified CliftonStrengths Coach.

GALLUP

## CliftonStrengths® Top 5 for David Viotti

This report presents your five most dominant CliftonStrengths revealed by your responses to the CliftonStrengths assessment. Use this report to learn more about these strengths, how they uniquely show up in your life and how you can use them to fulfill your potential.

### 1. Strategic\*

You create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, you can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

### 2. Positivity\*

You have contagious enthusiasm. You are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

### 3. Ideation\*

You are fascinated by ideas. You are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

### 4. Connectedness\*

You have faith in the links among all things. You believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has meaning.

### 5. Arranger\*

You can organize, but you also have a flexibility that complements this ability. You like to determine how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

■ EXECUTING themes help you make things happen.

■ INFLUENCING themes help you take charge, speak up and make sure others are heard.

■ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING themes help you build strong relationships that hold teams together.

■ STRATEGIC THINKING themes help you absorb and analyze information that informs better decisions.

Career highlights include: U.S. Chief Learning Officer and Corporate Counsel at Sun Microsystems, intellectual property lawyer at Faegre & Benson, Assistant Producer of CNN's Burden of Proof, Executive Director of the Junior Statesmen Foundation, and Henry Luce Scholar at the Legislative Council in Hong Kong. Dave received undergraduate and law degrees from Georgetown University and a master's degree in International Relations from Oxford University as an Allbritton Scholar.

Dave is a long-time practitioner of improv comedy and a devoted chowhound and chef. Dave travels and works around the world (in person or remotely) to support clients and partners who are building positive futures for ALL. A dual Italian and American citizen, Dave's basecamps are Honolulu, Los Angeles, and Modena, Italy.



**THANK YOU!**  
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