

When authority is limited, how you relate becomes part of how you deliver.

1. RELATIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS YOUR DELIVERY ADVANTAGE

Not soft skills. Delivery skills. Be intentional in developing your ability to manage personal impact, maintain trust, navigate conflict and realign teams under pressure.

2. THE 4 HABITS® OF ALL SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

These behaviours are learnable, and with practice, they become more reliable under pressure:

Habit 1 BE CURIOUS, not Critical

Get better at recognising when a difference in personality or working style is being misread as bad intent, staying curious about it instead of jumping to judgement, and adjusting your approach for better communication.

Habit 2 BE CAREFUL, not Crushing

Get better at handling conflict and disagreement in ways that protect psychological safety and minimise relational damage.

Habit 3 ASK, don't Assume

Get better at noticing your own assumptions and biases, and building alignment through asking questions to discover what really matters to people.

Habit 4 CONNECT, before you Correct

Get better at making people feel genuinely valued, not just recognised, in order to build commitment and make room for necessary candour.

3. MANAGE THE EMOTIONAL BANK ACCOUNT (EBA), ON PURPOSE

Every interaction is a deposit or a withdrawal. You judge yourself by intention, but others experience you through behaviour – so the EBA reflects your impact, not your intent. Trust isn't just how the relationship feels, it changes how efficiently it works.

4. LASER®: A REPEATABLE WAY THROUGH DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Listen deeply *Am I listening to this person, or listening through my interpretation of them?*

Ask for clarity *This is what I hear you saying is the concern, did I get that right?*

Speak gently *Power under control: clarity and care.*

Explore changes *What's the ask? What does success require from both of us now?*

Restore warmth *Don't solve the task and leave relational debris behind.*

5. INFLUENCE IS NOT CHARISMA

It is relational capability that can be practised. Compliance is not commitment, and candour protects the project: the test isn't whether they feel safe agreeing with you, it's whether they feel safe enough to tell you what you don't want to hear.

KEEP IT GOING

The Human Skills Network for Project Professionals continues the conversation, and the Foundation Certificate in Relational Intelligence takes it further, self-paced, 10 PDUs.

