

COFFEE CONVERSATIONS FRAMEWORK

The 4C Model™ for Intentional Relationship Building

💡 **KC's Nugget:** "A coffee conversation isn't about the coffee. It's about showing someone they matter enough to **stop, sit, and be fully present.**" — KC Capers

THE CHALLENGE

- You've identified your 15 strategic relationships. You've scheduled the meeting. Now you're sitting across from them, and you freeze. **What do you say?**
- This is **touchpoint paralysis**; the number one reason leaders fail to build the relationships they know matter most.

THE SOLUTION

- The **4C Coffee Conversation Model™** transforms **awkward networking** into an **authentic connection** by guiding you through **four phases** that prioritize **giving value before asking for anything.**

<p>✗ NETWORKING Asks: "What can I get?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Collects contacts→ Follows up when needed→ Surface-level exchanges	<p>✓ RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP Asks: "What can I give?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Cultivates connections→ Follows through always→ Substantive investment
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THE 4C COFFEE CONVERSATION MODEL™

Four Phases. One Authentic Conversation. Lasting Impact.



1. CONNECT

Goal: Signal that this conversation is different; you're fully present, not transactional.

💡 "People don't remember what you said. They remember how you made them feel."

2. CURIOUS

Goal: Understand their priorities, challenges, and aspirations. Listen more than you speak.

💡 "The quality of your questions reveals the quality of your interest."

3. CONTRIBUTE

Goal: Give something of value—insight, resource, or perspective—before asking for anything.

💡 "Givers gain. But only if you give without keeping score."

4. CONTINUE

Goal: Ensure this conversation leads to another. Relationships require repeated interactions.

💡 "A conversation without a next step is just a pleasant memory. Make it a building block."

THE GOLDEN RULE

Listen 70%. Speak 30%.

The best questions build the deepest relationships.

THE 3-DEEP RULE

Don't stop at the first answer.

Ask "What else?" or "Tell me more" at least 3 times.

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BEFORE THE CONVERSATION: PREPARATION

💡 **KC's Nugget:** "Preparation is **not** about having **all the answers**. It's about having the **right questions**."

5-MINUTE PREP CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	Which dimension is this person? (↑ Upward / ↔ Lateral / ↓ Downward)
<input type="checkbox"/>	What do I know about their current priorities or challenges?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What value can I offer? (Resource, insight, connection, support)
<input type="checkbox"/>	What personal details did they share previously that I can follow up on?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What 2-3 CURIOUS questions will I ask?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have I silenced my phone and cleared distractions?

⚠️ CONVERSATION KILLERS — Avoid These at All Costs

- ✗ Checking your phone or glancing at notifications
- ✗ Asking for something before **offering value**
- ✗ Talking more than listening (violating the 70/30 rule)
- ✗ **Interrupting** or **finishing** their sentences
- ✗ Making it about you when they're sharing something personal
- ✗ Ending without establishing a next touchpoint

💡 "You can't build a bridge while burning one. Every word either opens a door or closes it."

✓ CONVERSATION RECOVERY — When It Goes Sideways

- **If you talked too much:** "I've been doing most of the talking. I want to hear your perspective."
- **If they seem distracted:** "I can tell you've got a lot going on. Should we reschedule?"
- **If you asked too early:** "Let me step back. I want to understand your situation better first."
- **If running out of time:** "I'm mindful of your time. Can we schedule a follow-up?"

💡 "The best leaders don't avoid awkward moments—they recover with grace."

NOTES-REFLECTIONS-TAKEAWAYS:

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↑ UPWARD CONVERSATIONS

Connecting with Leaders & Mentors

Your Goal: Learn, gain perspective, and demonstrate value. Show you're worth their investment.

1. CONNECT — Opening Prompts

- "Thank you for making time. I know your calendar is demanding, I don't take this for granted."
- "I've been thinking about [their recent decision] and wanted to learn your perspective."
- "Before we start, I want to say I've learned a lot from watching how you [specific quality]."

2. CURIOUS — Deepening Questions

- "What's occupying most of your thinking right now?"
- "What do you wish more people understood about your role or challenges?"
- "What's a lesson you learned the hard way that you wish someone had told you?"
- "When you think about the next 12 months, what excites you? What concerns you?"
- "How do you decide what to say yes to and what to decline?"

3. CONTRIBUTE — Value-Giving Statements

- "I came across [resource] that aligns with your priorities. I'd be happy to send it."
- "I wanted to share an observation from the front lines that might inform your thinking..."
- "I know someone who faced a similar challenge. Would a connection be helpful?"
- "If there's ever a project needing detail work, I'd welcome the opportunity to contribute."

4. CONTINUE — Closing & Next Step

- "This was incredibly valuable. Would you be open to reconnecting in [timeframe]?"
- "Is there anything I can do to support your priorities before we meet again?"
- "I'll follow up with [specific action] by [date]. Thank you for your time and wisdom."

THE BOTTOM LINE: Those above you have doors you cannot open alone. Earn their investment through preparation, humility, and follow-through.

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↔ LATERAL CONVERSATIONS

Partnering with Peers & Colleagues

Your Goal: Build trust, share burdens, and sharpen each other. Be the colleague you wish you had.

1. CONNECT — Opening Prompts

- "I've been meaning to connect beyond our usual project updates. How are you really doing?"
- "We work together all the time, but I don't know much about your world outside [project]."
- "No agenda today—I just wanted to check in and see how you're holding up."

2. CURIOUS — Deepening Questions

- "What's the hardest thing on your plate right now that no one else sees?"
- "What's working well for you lately that I should learn from?"
- "If you could change one thing about how we collaborate as peers, what would it be?"
- "Who's been in your corner lately? Is there anyone I should connect you with?"
- "What's something you're proud of that didn't get the recognition it deserved?"

3. CONTRIBUTE — Value-Giving Statements

- "I went through something similar last quarter. Here's what I learned that might help..."
- "I have some bandwidth right now—is there anything I can take off your plate?"
- "I want to make sure you get credit for [contribution]. Mind if I mention it in [meeting]?"
- "I noticed you handled [situation] really well. How did you approach it?"

4. CONTINUE — Closing & Next Step

- "Let's not wait for a project to bring us together again. Can we make this a monthly rhythm?"
- "I've got your back. If you ever need someone to talk through a challenge, I'm here."
- "Who else should we loop in? I think [name] would benefit from this kind of conversation."

THE BOTTOM LINE: Leadership is a team sport. You cannot win alone. The peers who trust you today become the allies who sustain you tomorrow.

NOTES—REFLECTIONS—TAKEAWAYS:

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↓ DOWNWARD CONVERSATIONS

Developing Emerging Leaders

Your Goal: Develop, invest, and unlock potential. Be the leader you wish you had when you were coming up.

1. CONNECT — Opening Prompts

- "I wanted to connect outside our usual 1:1; not about tasks, but about you and your growth."
- "I see something in you, and I want to make sure I'm investing in your development the right way."
- "This conversation is about your future—not your to-do list. Where do you want to start?"

2. CURIOUS — Deepening Questions

- "What's a skill you want to develop that we haven't talked about yet?"
- "What part of your work energizes you most? What drains you?"
- "Where do you see yourself in 2-3 years, and how can I help you get there?"
- "What's holding you back? Is it skills, confidence, opportunity, or something else?"
- "If you could shadow anyone in this organization, who would it be and why?"

3. CONTRIBUTE — Value-Giving Statements

- "I see something in you I want to name: [strength]. Here's why it matters."
- "I want to advocate for you in [context]. What should I know about your goals?"
- "Here's a stretch opportunity I think you're ready for. I'll have your back."
- "I made this mistake early in my career. Let me share what I learned."

4. CONTINUE — Closing & Next Step

- "I'm invested in your growth. Let's check in on this in [timeframe]."
- "Between now and then, here's one thing I want you to focus on: [action]."
- "If you hit a wall or need to talk something through, don't wait. My door is open."

THE BOTTOM LINE: Your legacy is not what you build, it's who you build. Invest in people like someone once invested in you.

NOTES—REFLECTIONS—TAKEAWAYS:

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CONVERSATION QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

After each intentional conversation, take 60 seconds to reflect. Honest assessment drives continuous improvement.

REFLECTION QUESTION	YES / NO
Did I listen more than I spoke? (70/30 rule)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Did I offer value before asking for anything?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Did I learn something I couldn't have learned any other way?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Did I establish a clear, specific next touchpoint?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Would they describe this as meaningful (not just an obligation)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Did I follow up on something personal they previously shared?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

KEY INSIGHT CAPTURED: *What did I learn that I need to remember or act on?*

SCORING GUIDE

6 Yes = Exceptional. This conversation built real relational equity.

4-5 Yes = Strong. You're on track. Identify one area to improve.

2-3 Yes = Developing. Review the 4C Model before your next conversation.

0-1 Yes = Critical. This was likely transactional. Reset your approach.

MY COFFEE CONVERSATIONS COMMITMENT

I reject **transactional networking** that collects contacts without building connections.

I commit to **intentional conversations** that prioritize giving over getting.

I will use the **4C Model** to show up **present, curious, generous, and committed to follow-through**.

This is my standard. This is my practice. This is relational leadership.

💡 ***"Intentionality is the difference between leaders who connect and leaders who collect."*** — KC Capers

"Networking fills your contacts. Relationships fill your life.

The difference is a 20-minute conversation where you give more than you take."

— KC Capers