

# Transcript | How to Be an Impeccable Conversationalist

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00:00:03.910 --> 00:00:23.030

Amelia Paltridge: Hello, everyone. Hello, good afternoon. If you are in the UK, maybe good morning elsewhere. I know we have a lot of people joining from all around the world today, so it is lovely to have you here. And welcome to this panel on how to be an impeccable conversationalist.

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00:00:23.030 --> 00:00:40.450

Amelia Paltridge: My name is Amelia Paltridge, I'm the Community Manager here at Apolitical, and it would be really great to hear from all of you today, so do post in the chat where you're joining us from, what organization you work for, what you do. It's lovely just to see who is in the room with us today.

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00:00:40.640 --> 00:00:56.549

Amelia Paltridge: So today, we're going to be covering how conversation shapes influence, trust, and connection at work. We'll look at what makes people want to listen, how to communicate clearly across differences, and what habits help you speak up, listen well, and be remembered.

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00:00:56.640 --> 00:01:11.270

Amelia Paltridge: For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, welcome! Apolitical is the world's largest community for government, used by over a quarter of a million public servants and policymakers from more than 170 countries.

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00:01:11.270 --> 00:01:21.340

Amelia Paltridge: Our mission is to make governments smarter, and we do this by equipping public servants like you worldwide with the knowledge and skills that they need to lead the change.

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00:01:21.650 --> 00:01:29.589

Amelia Paltridge: Wonderful, thank you so much for all the introductions already coming through. It is great to see you all. We've got some Canadians in the house.

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00:01:29.720 --> 00:01:34.720

Amelia Paltridge: Hello, hello, Abbotsford, also UK Civil Service joining.

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00:01:34.970 --> 00:01:42.429

Amelia Paltridge: Wonderful. Lots of Canadians and UK in the house today, Nova Scotia, Wales as well.

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00:01:43.130 --> 00:01:50.370

Amelia Paltridge: Surrey, London... Wonderful. Peterborough, Edmonton...

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00:01:50.760 --> 00:02:01.720

Amelia Paltridge: loads and loads, I can barely keep up, but please do keep those coming for everyone joining. I just asked everyone to intro themselves in the chat where they're joining us from today,

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00:02:01.720 --> 00:02:22.600

Amelia Paltridge: I'm joining from London currently, which cannot seem to make its mind up with the weather, but some lovely rainbows as a result, so can't complain. We are going to be jumping into the panel very shortly, but just before we do, I would like to extend an invitation to you all to join Apolitical's career development community.

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00:02:22.600 --> 00:02:40.639

Amelia Paltridge: This is a space for public servants to share questions, insights, and resources on all aspects of career development in the public service, including how to communicate, as we'll be discussing today. So, if you'd like to continue the conversation after today's event, then that is the perfect place to do it.

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00:02:40.640 --> 00:02:51.430

Amelia Paltridge: A link should pop up at the bottom of your screen now, and if you click on it, it should take you to the community page. And my colleague will also post that link in the chat.

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00:02:51.730 --> 00:03:07.899

Amelia Paltridge: I'm gonna get a few technical notes out of the way before jumping into the exciting part of today's conversation, where you'll hear less from me and more from our wonderful speakers. This event is recorded for on-demand viewing on the apolitical website, so please do not record it yourself.

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00:03:07.900 --> 00:03:18.309

Amelia Paltridge: Contact details for privacy concerns are in the apolitical homepage footer. Closed captions are available and can be toggled on or off in your screen settings.

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00:03:18.690 --> 00:03:29.509

Amelia Paltridge: Before we introduce our speakers, we are going to run a few quick polls now, just to get a sense of where you are coming from for today's conversation.

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00:03:29.640 --> 00:03:45.429

Amelia Paltridge: So these are gonna show up for you. If you're having trouble seeing them or voting, feel free to just pop your comment in the chat for your answers. I'll read them out. The first poll, how often do you feel your ideas are heard in meetings?

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00:03:45.710 --> 00:03:57.610

Amelia Paltridge: How often do you feel your ideas are heard in meetings? And the possible answers are always, I feel listened to and valued. Often, but not always acted on. Sometimes, it depends on the group.

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00:03:57.690 --> 00:04:10.049

Amelia Paltridge: Rarely, I struggle to get my point across, and never I feel invisible in discussions. And please be as honest as possible, these are anonymous as well, so it's just to get a sense of how you are all feeling.

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00:04:10.700 --> 00:04:14.829

Amelia Paltridge: And as we can see the poll there that's popped up.

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00:04:14.840 --> 00:04:22.059

Amelia Paltridge: Most... I'd say about half of you there, over half, are sitting at the sometimes, it depends on the group.

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00:04:22.060 --> 00:04:46.050

Amelia Paltridge: side of things, so I'm sure we'll touch upon that later on how to deal with different groups and getting your ideas heard across when you're dealing in different environments, and often, but not always acted upon, so maybe touching upon the kind of impact

side of things, how to have a bit more impact in your conversation. We can get into that later. Thank you for voting on that. The second one that will pop up for you today

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00:04:46.590 --> 00:04:50.470

Amelia Paltridge: What's harder for you, speaking up or listening well?

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00:04:51.030 --> 00:04:55.090

Amelia Paltridge: What's harder for you, speaking up or listening well?

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00:04:56.140 --> 00:04:59.900

Amelia Paltridge: The answers you can give for speaking up, I often hold back.

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00:05:00.220 --> 00:05:11.000

Amelia Paltridge: Listening well, I lose focus, or interrupt. Both, it depends on the context. Neither, I'm confident in both, or I'm not sure, I haven't thought about it.

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00:05:12.170 --> 00:05:28.320

Amelia Paltridge: So I'll give you a moment just to pop your answers in there. Thank you, everyone. And in the lead, we have speaking up. I often hold back. I think that's something that I definitely, can relate to there, the speaking up.

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00:05:28.320 --> 00:05:42.749

Amelia Paltridge: knowing when to air, what you're thinking about, when's the right time, how it's going to be received, all of that going on in your brain can make it feel a little easier to hold back than speak up. We'll get into some tips for that later.

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00:05:42.780 --> 00:05:47.019

Amelia Paltridge: And the next poll that will be popping up for you.

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00:05:47.590 --> 00:05:51.600

Amelia Paltridge: Have you ever received feedback about your communication skills?

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00:05:51.890 --> 00:05:58.220

Amelia Paltridge: Any feedback about your communication skills? The answers you can give are yes, and it was very helpful.

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00:05:58.420 --> 00:06:00.659

Amelia Paltridge: Yes, but it wasn't constructive.

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00:06:00.840 --> 00:06:02.650

Amelia Paltridge: No, but I'd welcome it.

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00:06:02.800 --> 00:06:04.970

Amelia Paltridge: No, and I've never asked for it.

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00:06:05.380 --> 00:06:08.010

Amelia Paltridge: Not sure, I might have indirectly.

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00:06:08.890 --> 00:06:13.780

Amelia Paltridge: Let's take a moment just to reflect on whether you've received feedback about your communication skills.

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00:06:17.060 --> 00:06:21.659

Amelia Paltridge: Wonderful, thank you for answering that, and...

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00:06:21.760 --> 00:06:44.799

Amelia Paltridge: almost did a bit of a tie. We've got yes, and it was very helpful, and no, but I'd welcome it. So clearly, that feedback point, is of value to a lot of you here today, and maybe we'll talk a bit more about how to get that feedback, later on. Thank you so much for answering, those questions for us. It's really lovely.

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00:06:44.800 --> 00:06:58.499

Amelia Paltridge: For you guys to have a moment to reflect on how you feel about the topic before we jump in, and also for our speakers to get a sense of how you all feel about conversation in general, so they can help you get the most out of today's learning experience.

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00:06:58.750 --> 00:07:13.540

Amelia Paltridge: I'm now going to introduce our wonderful speakers. We are fortunate to have three brilliant guests joining us today. Susan Johnson, Patricia Baldez, and Nigel Smith. You should be able to see on your screens.

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00:07:13.930 --> 00:07:27.799

Amelia Paltridge: Susan Johnston is Talent Manager at Canada's Free Agents Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. She is a public servant with over 20 years of experience advancing engagement, governance, and cross-sector partnerships.

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00:07:27.850 --> 00:07:47.359

Amelia Paltridge: Patricia Baldez is General Coordinator of the AI Innovation Lab at ENAP, leading data-driven public policy solutions. She holds postgraduate degrees in public administration, AI, and data analysis, and was named one of APolitical's 100 Most Influential People in AI for Government in 2024.

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00:07:47.470 --> 00:07:56.960

Amelia Paltridge: And finally, Nigel Smith is a learning strategist here at Apolitical, and former Director of Content at FutureLearn, where he led online learning development and growth.

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00:07:56.980 --> 00:08:10.330

Amelia Paltridge: He previously spent over a decade at the BBC delivering digital transformation across major platforms. You can read the full bios by visiting the Resources tab at the bottom of your Zoom screen and heading to the Speakers section.

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00:08:10.810 --> 00:08:23.509

Amelia Paltridge: Before we launch into today's panel with some questions, and then later on the Q&A, where you guys get to ask some questions as well, I thought we'd start with a quick icebreaker question, just to get us warmed up.

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00:08:23.510 --> 00:08:31.669

Amelia Paltridge: So, Susan, Patricia, and Nigel, what's your preference when speaking with someone new? Small talk or big talk?

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00:08:31.670 --> 00:08:37.510

Amelia Paltridge: I'll give you a moment to think, and everyone else, I pose the same question to you, and I'd love to...

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00:08:37.659 --> 00:08:45.700

Amelia Paltridge: see your answers in the chat. Patricia, can I come to you first? What's your take, your preference?

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00:08:47.020 --> 00:08:50.550

Patrícia Baldez: Yes, Amelia. Nice to meet you, meet you all.

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00:08:50.660 --> 00:08:53.089

Patrícia Baldez: And I guess it's big talk.

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00:08:53.200 --> 00:09:11.570

Patrícia Baldez: I don't like small talk, I don't like elevator talks. And just to break the ice even more, I'm gonna tell you that one of the communication things that I have at this point, already, during the big talk, it's, I have the language barrier here. I'm the only not native English speaker.

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00:09:11.570 --> 00:09:16.729

Patrícia Baldez: And I didn't see anybody from Brazil here as well, so I think this is something...

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00:09:16.730 --> 00:09:19.500

Patrícia Baldez: Huge, and that's the way that I like to start.

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00:09:19.610 --> 00:09:20.620

Patrícia Baldez: big talk.

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00:09:22.380 --> 00:09:24.180

Amelia Paltridge: Big talk. I love that.

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00:09:24.320 --> 00:09:32.799

Amelia Paltridge: And Patricia, you are not alone as well. Lots of big talk in the chat as well. Nigel...

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00:09:33.960 --> 00:09:50.230

Nigel Smith: Yeah, hi, Amelia, hello everybody, great to be here. Well, I would... most people in the chat seem to have said... started with small talk, and I would say small talk. I think because when speaking to a person for the first time.

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00:09:50.270 --> 00:09:56.649

Nigel Smith: I personally find it just simply easier, you know? If we can sort of latch onto something.

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00:09:56.800 --> 00:10:10.120

Nigel Smith: get onto, hopefully, some sort of shared interest, no matter how minute. That, to me, is a great way to sort of start a conversation, and then potentially, you know, start a relationship.

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00:10:11.740 --> 00:10:13.820

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you, Nigel. And Susan?

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00:10:14.710 --> 00:10:28.219

Susan Johnston: Well, I would say big talk in general, because it creates an opening to really latch onto what matters to someone at the moment. But I think it's also because I grew up that, believing that

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00:10:28.220 --> 00:10:37.569

Susan Johnston: small talk was sports talk, and I'm hopeless at Major League Sports. So it... realizing the, I can't...

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00:10:37.980 --> 00:10:44.580

Susan Johnston: discuss that well, realizing I had to find something I could, and where I would feel confident.

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00:10:44.630 --> 00:11:00.519

Susan Johnston: If I were making small talk with any of you right now, I'd point out that today's the day we run out of coffee in our house. So I'm taking a risk being here with you, but otherwise, I would go to big talk of what really matters. There you go. I'll stop there.

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00:11:01.670 --> 00:11:19.269

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you so much, all three of you, for those answers. And it's nice to see the answers in the chat as well, some of your explanations behind small talk versus big talk. Maybe it varies depending on the day, and the people that you're talking to.

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00:11:19.460 --> 00:11:31.100

Amelia Paltridge: running out of coffee is not small talk. There we go. I think also, as a... as a Brit myself, I feel myself referring to the weather, which I realize I did at the very start of this.

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00:11:31.130 --> 00:11:48.580

Amelia Paltridge: Of this event, so there we go. Small talk, clearly. Wonderful, thank you so much for those answers. I reckon it's time we jump into the panel section of today's event. Nigel, I'd love to come to you first.

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00:11:48.920 --> 00:12:01.110

Amelia Paltridge: So conversation, I think, can feel like a throwaway term, but what does it actually mean, and where can conversation show up in our day-to-day, what can it achieve, and why do we want to make it a skill?

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00:12:01.620 --> 00:12:08.810

Nigel Smith: Yeah, well, it's a great question to start with. I think, in terms of just what does it mean briefly,

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00:12:09.210 --> 00:12:14.429

Nigel Smith: I think what's important to think about a conversation is it has to be something that is too...

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00:12:14.550 --> 00:12:18.520

Nigel Smith: way. You know, talking to somebody, or talking at somebody.

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00:12:18.710 --> 00:12:21.550

Nigel Smith: is not a conversation, even if

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00:12:21.750 --> 00:12:27.149

Nigel Smith: there's a group of three people having it. If it's just one person just dictating what is going on.

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00:12:27.250 --> 00:12:41.750

Nigel Smith: That is not a conversation. So others need to contribute, and the onus might be on the person who's ostensibly leading the conversation to make it essential that others do, do contribute.

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00:12:42.620 --> 00:12:45.720

Nigel Smith: And I think even if it is...

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00:12:46.100 --> 00:12:50.570

Nigel Smith: isn't about a serious topic, you know, even if we are talking about what, you know, small talk.

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00:12:50.850 --> 00:12:53.469

Nigel Smith: I think the best conversations have to feel...

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00:12:53.660 --> 00:13:00.049

Nigel Smith: meaningful. So, if Susan and I were going to chat about her lack of coffee today.

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00:13:00.620 --> 00:13:07.570

Nigel Smith: I suspect, within that sort of minute or two, I would have learned something, quite a lot, about Susan, just in that

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00:13:07.570 --> 00:13:21.990

Nigel Smith: couple of, of minutes. So I think that's a really important thing about, about what's conversation. There is something about, sort of, learning about... about people, and building, you know, sort of, kind of foundations.

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00:13:22.460 --> 00:13:37.379

Nigel Smith: I guess. And I think, why is it important to be a skill? I suspect most people who are joining the call today, their work, I suspect, a lot of it is based on, you know, building and developing good relationships.

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00:13:37.890 --> 00:13:39.270

Nigel Smith: And often.

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00:13:39.590 --> 00:13:57.359

Nigel Smith: conversations are a really... that's often where... where relationships, start. So that's why I think it's sort of... it's essential to work, and maybe sort of a topic that we can come

back to, but I think it's really useful in the workplace and in people's work, to think about, sort of, soft power.

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00:13:57.430 --> 00:14:08.900

Nigel Smith: what are the sort of soft power that I, as an individual, can sort of build and grow through personal, relationships? And then...

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00:14:09.510 --> 00:14:14.629

Nigel Smith: When we maybe talked about influencing, or some of these challenges that came up in the,

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00:14:14.680 --> 00:14:33.319

Nigel Smith: in your little surveys earlier, you know, how do you then sort of spend, you know, that power that you've earned? And I think that's why I think conversations are a, being good at conversations, learning about people, building relationships, that's why I think it's a skill, particularly, that is, is something to concentrate on.

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00:14:34.890 --> 00:14:51.829

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, definitely, Nigel, thank you. I think, yeah, using it as a way to build a kind of solid foundation for, sort of, going forward in those relationships, is really, really valuable. Patricia, I'd like to come to you next.

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00:14:51.960 --> 00:15:00.139

Amelia Paltridge: You have a wonderful view on the heart of all good conversation. Could you tell us a bit about that, please?

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00:15:02.780 --> 00:15:16.809

Patrícia Baldez: When I was invited to come here, I started to think about conversation, and why do I... why I was invited, and why do I love to chat? Why do I love people? Why do I like to build and learn and understand people on the conversation going?

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00:15:16.990 --> 00:15:35.819

Patrícia Baldez: And that's because I think that conversations about enchant and persuade. You have to make people want to listen to you, and you have to be able to listen to somebody else that's in front of you. Otherwise, it's not conversation, it's just a discourse. I'm just talking about myself, and I'm not listening.

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00:15:36.170 --> 00:15:46.770

Patrícia Baldez: So the first part is to enchant, to make people be here with you, be connected with you, to make them feel something, not just listen, not just learning, but feel.

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00:15:47.110 --> 00:16:05.540

Patrícia Baldez: And talking about being a public servant, most of the time that we are doing a conversation, we have a proposal. We need to do something after that. It's not just about chat. After this time here, we have to learn something. If we're building up a political, something, anything.

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00:16:05.540 --> 00:16:08.360

Patrícia Baldez: a document, anything. You have to...

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00:16:08.410 --> 00:16:18.879

Patrícia Baldez: negotiate, and you have to persuade, and you have to build something together. So, that's the way I think about conversation, and that's why it makes me so...

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00:16:19.100 --> 00:16:20.490

Patrícia Baldez: Warm inside.

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00:16:21.750 --> 00:16:39.149

Amelia Paltridge: I love that. Yeah, Amanda's also said enchant, love that. Definitely. And I think links to what Nigel was saying as well, it's... both of you have sort of talked about the idea of almost future-proofing. You're... you're thinking about what the next steps are going to be and how that conversation is going to help get the best out of that.

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00:16:39.390 --> 00:16:40.900

Amelia Paltridge: Susan.

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00:16:41.130 --> 00:16:42.630

Amelia Paltridge: One for you now.

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00:16:42.750 --> 00:16:53.639

Amelia Paltridge: Why is being interested in others such a powerful starting point for meaningful conversations? And could you maybe share a bit about the role that listening plays in that?

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00:16:54.540 --> 00:17:06.600

Susan Johnston: Happy to. I think part of it is you never know where you're going to be able to go, or to find out what matters for someone, or what's...

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00:17:06.630 --> 00:17:17.460

Susan Johnston: exciting for them. It's a... listening with curiosity creates a space where your conversation, you can go beyond.

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00:17:18.010 --> 00:17:29.779

Susan Johnston: Otto Sharma refers to the four levels of listening, and there's the listening for what you're already expecting people are going to say, you can kind of tick, tick, tick, and it looks like... it feels like you're listening just to hear it.

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00:17:29.940 --> 00:17:37.299

Susan Johnston: It, you know, you can listen to... for things you haven't heard before, so you're listening for new facts.

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00:17:37.520 --> 00:17:46.950

Susan Johnston: Or you can listen to get to a place where your conversation is generative, and you're in a new space, and a new...

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00:17:47.260 --> 00:18:05.039

Susan Johnston: you're exploring new part... possibilities with the person or the other people. Something I will take a note on here, because I think it... I saw it a couple of times in the chat. I'm neurodivergent too, you know, and it's the moment of saying, conversation can be exhausting.

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00:18:05.040 --> 00:18:09.769

Susan Johnston: So it's creating a space, for yourself.

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00:18:09.780 --> 00:18:19.589

Susan Johnston: So that you can manage your energy, and offering that to the other person as well. And so that you're setting up the conversation so that...

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00:18:19.640 --> 00:18:23.809

Susan Johnston: Curiosity gives people a place to... to speak from joy.

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00:18:23.920 --> 00:18:30.409

Susan Johnston: To speak about what's really interesting to them, and to be who they are.

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00:18:30.530 --> 00:18:50.529

Susan Johnston: And I think going into that space of saying, I want to know, Patricia, Nigel, Amelia, like, who you are and what you're about as you are. So I'll stop there, but it... it opens the possibilities for that generativity.

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00:18:51.520 --> 00:18:56.100

Amelia Paltridge: I love that. Thank you. Yeah

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00:18:56.530 --> 00:19:00.230

Amelia Paltridge: 100%, and I think that's something which I've...

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00:19:00.610 --> 00:19:17.579

Amelia Paltridge: I found it such a valuable thing, but maybe in professional settings as well, you're suddenly, sometimes, maybe up against a barrier where do you need to be a professional self in the conversation, and does that look any different? And actually realizing that, no, it doesn't need to look different.

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00:19:17.580 --> 00:19:22.339

Amelia Paltridge: You can just bring a lot of those skills, which you've just talked about, and... and...

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00:19:22.650 --> 00:19:31.679

Amelia Paltridge: become that sort of same person in those conversations, regardless of the setting. Thank you, Susan. I'm gonna stick with you.

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00:19:31.760 --> 00:19:46.720

Amelia Paltridge: For a second, and just talk a bit about using conversation strategically, when you're trying to get buy-in or influence a decision. And I guess we can think a bit about that in a professional setting as well.

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00:19:46.930 --> 00:19:47.860

Amelia Paltridge: about...

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00:19:48.060 --> 00:19:59.319

Amelia Paltridge: kind of listening, meaningful intentions in conversations, but when you're trying to get buy-in or influence a decision, it might add a little edge to it, and how can you use conversation strategically for that?

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00:20:00.040 --> 00:20:05.699

Susan Johnston: I think I would start... it can... it's almost a trope now, but listening to understand.

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00:20:05.800 --> 00:20:11.509

Susan Johnston: And the queue a colleague had given me at one point was, tell me more.

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00:20:11.510 --> 00:20:26.190

Susan Johnston: And I'm using conversation there to try to understand what the other person or other people value, what matters to them, what they need. And it creates a space relationally to understand

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00:20:26.190 --> 00:20:32.569

Susan Johnston: What they feel certain about, what they might not feel certain about, and that comes up if we're disagreeing.

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00:20:32.570 --> 00:20:40.979

Susan Johnston: sometimes I want to create... could call it create uncertainty, but create space for more possibilities.

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00:20:41.210 --> 00:20:47.400

Susan Johnston: And that's particularly if there's a conflict of offering room to

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00:20:47.500 --> 00:21:02.489

Susan Johnston: to think about more options. Sometimes in design, we would talk about it as the five whys of, you know, tell me more, and tell me more. And I don't mean it as interrogation, but I mean it as...

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00:21:02.750 --> 00:21:10.520

Susan Johnston: Go with the person to walk alongside them to... to really hear

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00:21:10.520 --> 00:21:27.979

Susan Johnston: what matters, at which point you're going to have a sense of where there is room for alignment. Sometimes you can't do that, you just have to say, I need to talk to you about a thing that really matters to me, and I want or I need you to do the thing, because...

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00:21:28.280 --> 00:21:36.849

Susan Johnston: But then, if you can do that honestly, and truthfully, and clearly, like, giving... offering room to understand.

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00:21:37.210 --> 00:21:39.509

Susan Johnston: can be helpful. I'll stop there for now.

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00:21:40.350 --> 00:21:49.299

Amelia Paltridge: I... I love that answer, definitely. Going with the person, I think, is so important, and I mean, we're in a... we're in an event right now all about...

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00:21:49.420 --> 00:21:53.310

Amelia Paltridge: Conversation and how to improve that skill, and a lot of people

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00:21:53.470 --> 00:22:03.800

Amelia Paltridge: that you're talking to may not also be super confident with conversations, so you've got to take that into account as well when talking to them, and they might have tried to explain something.

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00:22:03.950 --> 00:22:15.400

Amelia Paltridge: And it didn't come across very well. It's all about just teasing that and not immediately, jumping up with a front, Susan. I think that was a really, really good takeaway, thank you. Patricia, yes?

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00:22:15.400 --> 00:22:30.549



Patrícia Baldez: converge with Susan. I don't know if in English you say that, you have the saying, but remember as you used to say, we've come with two ears and one mouth for a reason. So, if we listen more, it's gonna be better when it's time to build something together.

135

00:22:30.550 --> 00:22:37.020

Patrícia Baldez: So we try to listen, to really listen, not to just wait for something that we would like to listen, but

136

00:22:37.200 --> 00:22:41.049

Patrícia Baldez: Actually, be there, and give this moment to the person to...

137

00:22:41.200 --> 00:22:54.910

Patrícia Baldez: to be with you. And I was thinking, listen to Susan and remembering, last week was exams week for my kids, and I gave them a tip that I would like to bring here, too. When you're doing your exam.

138

00:22:54.940 --> 00:23:07.859

Patrícia Baldez: If you don't know any question, any answer, just jump it, and go to the next one. Jump it, and go to the next one. Most of the time, the last question maybe is gonna answer the first one. So just go, keep going.

139

00:23:07.860 --> 00:23:16.800

Patrícia Baldez: Keep making new questions, keep going on this conversation. And it's strategically, maybe you're not even thinking about something anymore, and then.

140

00:23:17.020 --> 00:23:26.469

Patrícia Baldez: That's what I needed to hear. That's... that's the clink that's here when we converge our interesting together, and then we can build something from there.

141

00:23:28.390 --> 00:23:29.200

Amelia Paltridge: Loved it.

142

00:23:29.840 --> 00:23:33.110

Amelia Paltridge: Oh, two... two ears, one month.

143

00:23:33.750 --> 00:23:45.359

Amelia Paltridge: Simple. Perfect. Just sums... sums it up wonderfully. Patricia, I'm gonna... I'm gonna stick with you, just to follow on a bit from that.

144

00:23:45.510 --> 00:23:52.860

Amelia Paltridge: In public service work, we've sort of touched upon this, How conversations and...

145

00:23:53.530 --> 00:24:09.260

Amelia Paltridge: wanting to have an impact in your work and everything in the public service. Clarity and trust are so, so important. What helps your message really land in a conversation, and what do you think makes your fellow conversation havers listen to you?

146

00:24:12.300 --> 00:24:19.430

Patrícia Baldez: I guess clarity comes from sample language. When we talk about innovation, I guess it's the key.

147

00:24:19.540 --> 00:24:30.599

Patrícia Baldez: You don't have to be... to appear super smart, and I know everything, and you don't have to be this person. You have to be simple and clear, and go straight to the point.

148

00:24:30.710 --> 00:24:34.100

Patrícia Baldez: And... And...

149

00:24:34.570 --> 00:24:45.120

Patrícia Baldez: To understand who you are talking to before you get there, so you can make the language as simple and as use it to the audience.

150

00:24:46.540 --> 00:24:54.969

Patrícia Baldez: I'm working nowadays with AI, so as you can imagine, all the time I'm called to be talking to many kind of publics.

151

00:24:55.150 --> 00:25:11.710

Patrícia Baldez: And are people that are really specific on AI, technical of AI, so it's a different kind of language that you're gonna be there addressing there. And the other, I'm on a school. Sometimes people just want to know, what's AI? I almost said that, a bad word. What's AI?

152

00:25:11.710 --> 00:25:18.920

Patrícia Baldez: So, you got, you gotta make it clear to this public as well, so you can, build something.

153

00:25:19.260 --> 00:25:31.170

Patrícia Baldez: And I guess to really know what you're gonna talk about, really understand what you're gonna talk about, to study a little bit in advance. So if people are really listening to you, they want to

154

00:25:31.570 --> 00:25:40.990

Patrícia Baldez: to be enchanted. They want to understand, and they want to drink a little bit of what you... your expectation, and...

155

00:25:41.770 --> 00:25:51.570

Patrícia Baldez: I'm sorry, I guess that's it. Simple language, and to understand your audience, and what they want to get from you.

156

00:25:52.420 --> 00:26:07.399

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, definitely. I sometimes think I struggle with that, of keeping it simple, because I feel like I need to include all the information that they might possibly help them understand, and actually, the simpler, the better. Susan, I know

157

00:26:07.400 --> 00:26:12.839

Amelia Paltridge: you had a thought as well, following on from some stuff Patricia has said, so...

158

00:26:12.960 --> 00:26:14.600

Amelia Paltridge: I'll just pass over to you for a sec.

159

00:26:14.730 --> 00:26:25.720

Susan Johnston: Sure, it's that moment of, what do we say to our kids, and how do we learn? And when we talk about going through, exams, one of the things that comes up for me when I'm talking

160

00:26:25.720 --> 00:26:36.180

Susan Johnston: or when I'm in a difficult situation is the fear of sounding stupid. Either about the content that I'm speaking about, and I think Patricia's point about

161

00:26:36.180 --> 00:26:53.310

Susan Johnston: preparation, I know, does a lot for my nerves, and I'm also frequently working in languages that aren't my mother tongue, where I know I sound stupid all the time. And part of it is, you know what, we're all human, and it's...

162

00:26:53.310 --> 00:27:05.610

Susan Johnston: it's a common assumption, you know, that will get in the way of people conversing, and I think my... my advice there is not to worry about it. If you're being true to yourself.

163

00:27:05.710 --> 00:27:21.390

Susan Johnston: Even if you sound clumsy, I think I sound very clumsy now, as an example. Don't worry about what the inner self-judge or the devil on the shoulder is saying. Just go for it. Okay, I'll stop there.

164

00:27:23.000 --> 00:27:27.359

Amelia Paltridge: No, it is, it's... I think that's such an important one,

165

00:27:27.480 --> 00:27:37.929

Amelia Paltridge: those... those invisible barriers, I guess, that you set for yourself as well, but also you may have felt growing up, in environments that...

166

00:27:37.930 --> 00:27:55.789

Amelia Paltridge: you've learned, whether it's kind of culture or language, or neurodivergence, which Susan and Patricia, you've both touched upon. Patricia, you weren't alone, in English not being, your first language as well. There were people in the chat saying they had the same, so I... I wonder if you could maybe touch a bit upon the

167

00:27:56.250 --> 00:28:02.429

Amelia Paltridge: That is a barrier, but also those barriers that you have in your head, and how do you navigate those with care?

168

00:28:06.440 --> 00:28:21.729

Patrícia Baldez: Yeah, I get really nervous, I'm still nervous. Usually, I told Nigel on other moments, usually I get nervous just to be on the stage. After that, I'm okay. I know what I'm talking about, I just feel free, I just feel an expert.

169

00:28:21.730 --> 00:28:28.560

Patrícia Baldez: But as Susan said, as English is not my mother tongue, I'm still feeling quite stupid and nervous right now.

170

00:28:28.920 --> 00:28:35.550

Patrícia Baldez: But I lived in Canada, Susan. I lived in Toronto for a year, so I know I can understand, and it's...

171

00:28:36.050 --> 00:28:42.230

Patrícia Baldez: the example that I give is just sometimes the barriers are just imaginary. It's just because you are the...

172

00:28:42.230 --> 00:28:59.159

Patrícia Baldez: Most of the time, we are our worst judges. It's not every... anybody else is judging you, just you are doing it for yourself. And I guess this is a barrier for communication, when you judge yourself very hard. Especially for women, I guess, if I can.

173

00:28:59.160 --> 00:29:00.020

Patrícia Baldez: And...

174

00:29:00.020 --> 00:29:11.370

Patrícia Baldez: I point out something. I guess we all the time need to have to be the best just to be here, and we don't need that. We are going to build together that conversation.

175

00:29:11.490 --> 00:29:12.370

Patrícia Baldez: to it.

176

00:29:13.960 --> 00:29:26.489

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, I love that. And I... I know I can speak for everyone watching you guys and listening to you guys talking away today, that those... those barriers for you guys, are definitely

177

00:29:26.490 --> 00:29:38.940

Amelia Paltridge: non-existent for us in how we're witnessing how you're talking and how you're communicating with us. You are all wonderful to listen to, and so many thoughtful things for us to take away already.

178

00:29:38.940 --> 00:29:42.090

Amelia Paltridge: So thank you for that.

179

00:29:42.310 --> 00:29:45.039

Amelia Paltridge: I think we have time for...

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00:29:45.290 --> 00:29:48.380

Amelia Paltridge: one or two more panel questions. So, Nigel.

181

00:29:48.500 --> 00:30:08.439

Amelia Paltridge: I want to ask you, again, sort of talking a bit about concerns, we often fear networking, as a term, when I hear that, I go, oh gosh, or those high-stakes conversations when you're going into it knowing it's high stakes, especially in professional environments. What helps you move through that fear?

182

00:30:10.920 --> 00:30:23.309

Nigel Smith: Physical and producers have touched on this already quite a bit, in terms of just the sort of psychological preparation that is just so useful to do to...

183

00:30:24.050 --> 00:30:28.590

Nigel Smith: Make yourself feel that, actually, the barriers that you're seeing are, kind of.

184

00:30:29.400 --> 00:30:36.179

Nigel Smith: your own, rather than actually realistic. So networking, that idea.

185

00:30:36.300 --> 00:30:47.270

Nigel Smith: You know, you just hear the word, and you just imagine a room full of strangers who it's sort of your job to go and talk to, and that can be an extremely horrible

186

00:30:47.620 --> 00:30:53.939

Nigel Smith: feeling. I have certainly, felt that. And the way that I have

187

00:30:54.120 --> 00:30:56.310

Nigel Smith: Try to get over that is...

188

00:30:56.580 --> 00:30:59.310

Nigel Smith: And something we talked a little bit about is just this idea of

189

00:30:59.800 --> 00:31:05.819

Nigel Smith: in terms of having good conversations, just being curious is so important. Having...

190

00:31:06.020 --> 00:31:25.410

Nigel Smith: being interested in other people. So rather than this idea of networking being this sort of horrible thing where you feel like, oh gosh, I'm the person who is going to be on the spot, actually see it as an opportunity. It's like, I've got this room of people, of interesting people, who I can learn from.

191

00:31:25.440 --> 00:31:29.940

Nigel Smith: who are going to tell me something new. I'm going to get some fresh

192

00:31:30.190 --> 00:31:37.220

Nigel Smith: perspectives on this. So, sort of, rather than sort of seeing the networking as this sort of horrible something that you have to endure.

193

00:31:37.670 --> 00:31:42.490

Nigel Smith: Try to sort of see it as, like, actually, this is an amazing opportunity

194

00:31:42.620 --> 00:31:47.409

Nigel Smith: for me. And I think in terms of those, high stakes.

195

00:31:48.830 --> 00:31:53.840

Nigel Smith: I've been invited to a high... you know, I've been told it's a high-stakes meeting. It's with a minister, it's whatever.

196

00:31:55.580 --> 00:32:01.519

Nigel Smith: You've been asked to go to that high-stakes meeting, typically because you are the expert.

197

00:32:01.900 --> 00:32:15.089

Nigel Smith: you're... you've been invited to that meeting, because you're the person who has actually got some authority, and that the people who you're going to talk to may not have that knowledge. So there's a... there's a... and power comes into this, perceived.

198

00:32:15.090 --> 00:32:22.359

Nigel Smith: power dynamics and power, imbalances. And I think, again, that sort of psychological

199

00:32:22.500 --> 00:32:26.890

Nigel Smith: Preparation that you can try to do to really

200

00:32:27.010 --> 00:32:38.769

Nigel Smith: see yourself as, I've been invited to this, and seeing those people as equals. And I think that's a really... for me personally, especially, you know, much earlier in my, you know, starting in my career.

201

00:32:38.800 --> 00:32:50.549

Nigel Smith: going into the sort of high stakes, or with influential people, and I sort of had to go, actually, I'm going to see these people as an equal, otherwise, why am I here in,

202

00:32:50.760 --> 00:33:06.409

Nigel Smith: In... in the first place. So I think that's a really important thing. And then just going to Patricia's point, preparation is so important for those types of conversations. So, be confident that you're the, you know, you're there for a reason, and then

203

00:33:06.770 --> 00:33:09.969

Nigel Smith: you know, do the work. Do you have a clear outcome?

204

00:33:10.500 --> 00:33:19.589



Nigel Smith: in mind, you know, why are you in this? Why are you having that conversation? What's the outcome you want to have? And then, again, to Susan's point, like, what are the questions

205

00:33:19.890 --> 00:33:21.490

Nigel Smith: That you can ask.

206

00:33:22.260 --> 00:33:29.080

Nigel Smith: To try to... to get to the... the resolution of the conversation, the way you,

207

00:33:29.080 --> 00:33:42.290

Nigel Smith: the way you want it. I'm just seeing just something that Tiffany has written in the chat, in terms of this sort of struggling with interrupting conversations. But again, there's an element of, in those networking

208

00:33:42.390 --> 00:33:49.930

Nigel Smith: environment, that's how those things work. And again, it's getting over that fear that actually people expect to be

209

00:33:50.280 --> 00:34:03.989

Nigel Smith: interrupted, and people also like talking about themselves. So, if you're giving somebody another opportunity to ask them a question where they can tell you about why... why are they at this conference, what has brought them there.

210

00:34:04.000 --> 00:34:15.029

Nigel Smith: today. And the final thing I'll say on this, just going back to what we were saying at the beginning about what makes a conversation, don't go into a networking situation thinking your job is to speak.

211

00:34:15.320 --> 00:34:18.879

Nigel Smith: For 80, 70% of the time.

212

00:34:18.989 --> 00:34:30.379

Nigel Smith: go in thinking, as I was saying, just, I'm gonna go in, meet somebody, and listen to them, which actually can take the fear out of it, because your job is just to be a really good listener, not to be...

213

00:34:30.540 --> 00:34:34.350

Nigel Smith: an amazing... Communicator, inverted commas.

214

00:34:36.920 --> 00:34:50.349

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you so much, Nigel, for all of those points. I think rounding it back to the listening and the absolute value of that being the one thing that stays true in all of your conversations.

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00:34:50.520 --> 00:34:55.050

Amelia Paltridge: And yes, thank you, Susan, as well.

216

00:34:55.050 --> 00:35:18.420

Amelia Paltridge: For popping that in the chat. We've had a lot of questions being asked, which I'm really excited to pose to our speakers. But before we jump into those, I thought I'd just do a quick fire, for all of the speakers. We've talked a bit about the barriers and dealing with those, and a lot of the mental stuff going on, but I thought it would be nice to round off,

217

00:35:18.420 --> 00:35:24.689

Amelia Paltridge: this part of the event. We're just giving two small habits or tools to the attendees.

218

00:35:24.690 --> 00:35:34.449

Amelia Paltridge: Today that they could return to, to kind of elevate their everyday conversations. So, two small habits or tools that you use or have come across.

219

00:35:34.500 --> 00:35:38.140

Amelia Paltridge: Susan, is there anything that comes to mind for you?

220

00:35:39.030 --> 00:35:56.810

Susan Johnston: Sure, one of the things I'll often do ahead of talking with someone is quite explicitly ask either, is this a good time, or I'd love to talk to you about X. If this were Nigel, it'd be, I'd love to talk to you about walking tours. Are you up for a conversation about this?

221

00:35:57.090 --> 00:36:10.119

Susan Johnston: That's a pretty direct way of doing it, but a softer... some variation of, reading the room, reading the interest. And then, I think my other favorite piece, three words, tell me more.

222

00:36:10.840 --> 00:36:13.959

Susan Johnston: Always gets more.

223

00:36:15.670 --> 00:36:17.139

Susan Johnston: Wonderful, I'll stop there.

224

00:36:17.580 --> 00:36:21.370

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you. Nigel, what are your two?

225

00:36:22.960 --> 00:36:32.290

Nigel Smith: I think asking open questions, and really understanding what an open question is, and the basic, the easiest way, am I asking an open or a closed question, is like.

226

00:36:32.460 --> 00:36:43.060

Nigel Smith: If my... if I'm asking a question that can just be answered yes or no, that is a closed question, and that's the way to end a conversation. Thinking about asking questions that deliberately

227

00:36:43.190 --> 00:36:53.300

Nigel Smith: you're going to get something from the person that you are talking to. So, thinking about open questions. And then I think, you know, talking less and listening more. Don't feel that

228

00:36:53.610 --> 00:36:59.240

Nigel Smith: the onus is on you to do a lot of the talking. It might be to initiate, but actually.

229

00:36:59.440 --> 00:37:03.569

Nigel Smith: And by listening, you'll have richer conversations, I think.

230

00:37:04.340 --> 00:37:07.080

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you, Nigel. And Patricia, finally.

231

00:37:08.510 --> 00:37:28.020

Patrícia Baldez: I'd like to point out something that didn't come here that I think is really important on conversation. That's the non-verbal conversation. And we're talking about... a lot about data and logic, and to be credible, and many things, but biggest part of our conversation, it's emotion. That's why I talked in the beginning, enchant.

232

00:37:28.270 --> 00:37:32.149

Patrícia Baldez: And I'm, rephrasing this.

233

00:37:32.440 --> 00:37:41.589

Patrícia Baldez: Think about your body language. Susan was telling before, I would try not to do this, but sometimes you have to do this, and we have to be there, and we have to...

234

00:37:41.660 --> 00:37:49.009

Patrícia Baldez: Even now that we talk a lot about, with streams, we have to think about looking at the eye.

235

00:37:49.010 --> 00:38:04.700

Patrícia Baldez: And not on your own body language, like smiling, that I like to do a lot, and to be looking at a person, but try to see the other body language as well. Sometimes you say something, and the person, straightforward, say, do something like this.

236

00:38:04.790 --> 00:38:11.599

Patrícia Baldez: So, they got closet, they didn't like it. Maybe it's not time to keep going this way.

237

00:38:11.600 --> 00:38:25.199

Patrícia Baldez: something else, and you try to make the... the climb on their own softer, because it's gonna... when you... you have to have some energy there, but it's not... it cannot be really, really renergic, so that we...

238

00:38:25.200 --> 00:38:26.210

Patrícia Baldez: layout.

239

00:38:26.420 --> 00:38:39.520

Patrícia Baldez: we make the logic go away from the brain. So try to... try to be your full-body conversation, too. Try to do your full-body conversation as well, and listen to the body of the other person that is in front of you.

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00:38:41.490 --> 00:38:51.090

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you, I love that, definitely. I think for myself as well, one thing that's really helped is sometimes I actually just hide my... I remove my video.

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00:38:51.090 --> 00:39:03.010

Amelia Paltridge: from video calls, because we're so used to, even in selfie mode, on a FaceTime, or on these video calls, you just end up looking at yourself and going, oh, what am I doing? Do I look normal? And actually just hiding that means

242

00:39:03.010 --> 00:39:09.070

Amelia Paltridge: You have no choice but to look at the other people, and then you're just feeding off of, what they're giving you.

243

00:39:09.120 --> 00:39:29.030

Amelia Paltridge: Wonderful, thank you so much, panelists, for answering my questions today. In a second, we are going to move on to our Q&A with questions being asked from our audience. We've had a lot already, so feel free to keep submitting them. I'll try and get through as many as possible.

244

00:39:29.030 --> 00:39:45.979

Amelia Paltridge: So, thank you. There is a Q&A tab as well. This just helps us fill them a bit, a bit quicker, so they don't get lost in the chat. So use that if you can, at the bottom of your Zoom screen. And also feel free to go through and upvote any questions you see and resonate with.

245

00:39:46.300 --> 00:40:11.250

Amelia Paltridge: Just before we dive into your questions, I want to let you know that we've also sourced a follow-on resource to today's topic that we think you will find pretty useful. Susan has previously written a super helpful article for AP Political on the art of active listening, which we've been touching upon a bit in this conversation, and it just expands on some of the things we've covered today. So if you'd like to receive a link to Susan's article.

246

00:40:11.250 --> 00:40:26.030

Amelia Paltridge: you can go to the Career Development Community after the event and leave a comment on the post pinned at the top of the page, and then we'll send it straight to your inbox later this week. So my colleague has just posted a link to that thread in the chat.

247

00:40:26.030 --> 00:40:37.180

Amelia Paltridge: Okay, it is now time to jump into your wonderful questions that you have all been submitting, based off of the chat today.

248

00:40:37.180 --> 00:40:50.449

Amelia Paltridge: I'd like to jump into one which I know I sometimes find a little bit tricky, which we talked a bit in a networking setting, but I think it would be great to talk about this just in general as conversations. How do you start

249

00:40:50.450 --> 00:41:01.970

Amelia Paltridge: conversations. I find it difficult to begin conversations unrelated to projects or current work without my questions sounding, like an interrogation or the interest not being genuine.

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00:41:01.970 --> 00:41:11.470

Amelia Paltridge: So, Nigel, I might come to you first, as you talked a bit about starting conversations in a networking sense, but maybe just in a more general sense as well.

251

00:41:11.910 --> 00:41:14.489

Nigel Smith: Yeah, it's a really hard question.

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00:41:14.840 --> 00:41:20.640

Nigel Smith: I think it goes back to that being...

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00:41:20.890 --> 00:41:25.959

Nigel Smith: curious. I think there's also something that Susan talked about, about

254

00:41:26.320 --> 00:41:39.419

Nigel Smith: getting a sense of who... if you have the luxury, it's quite straightforward to do, to actually find out who are the people you are having to talk to. So if it's at a meeting, or you've been invited into a thing, what are those things?

255

00:41:39.480 --> 00:41:58.019

Nigel Smith: You know, and what are those things that you have got in common, or that piqued your curiosity? And I think it's all about finding that one little, tiny little detail that you can ask about, and say, I noticed you did that, or I saw that you posted on your LinkedIn about... about that, or just...

256

00:41:58.160 --> 00:41:59.700

Nigel Smith: One little thread.

257

00:42:00.130 --> 00:42:17.029

Nigel Smith: could be the smallest little thread that you can pull at and start to, you know, engage. And, you know, we've had this sort of a bit of chat at the beginning about, you know, what's the difference between small talk and big talk, and is one, you know, better than the other?

258

00:42:17.570 --> 00:42:25.450

Nigel Smith: And something like that could be... it's certainly, I would say, define it as... as small talk, but it's sort of, like, small talk for me, I think, is, like, the key

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00:42:25.750 --> 00:42:27.919

Nigel Smith: That can open the door to, sort of.

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00:42:28.450 --> 00:42:41.740

Nigel Smith: big talk, and I think as long as it feels relevant to the person, and to the point I made earlier, people do like talking about themselves, and what their own interest is in, and what they'll do. So if you can find the thing

261

00:42:42.560 --> 00:42:59.539

Nigel Smith: that might be that thing that they want to talk to... talk about, that is, I think, can be quite a useful way to sort of start a, start a conversation. But if it's, if you're totally out in the blue, you know, you're in those sort of, networking environments.

262

00:43:00.100 --> 00:43:11.099

Nigel Smith: it's thinking about what are those sort of universal questions, you know, like I said, you know, why are you here at this event? What did you think of the last talk at the conference? You know, easiest, low-barrier.

263

00:43:11.520 --> 00:43:22.289

Nigel Smith: type of questions that potentially anybody, can answer. I mean, there's Iggy, I've seen it in the chapters here. Find something that connects you to the person will make the conversation interesting.

264

00:43:22.890 --> 00:43:26.879

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, definitely. Thank you.

265

00:43:27.650 --> 00:43:43.869

Amelia Paltridge: Susan, I'd like to come to you for this question, which is, any tips for staying focused? Even with the best intentions in conversations or group discussions, my mind will just decide to wander off on its own tangent for a bit, and then I miss things. I know that's happened...

266

00:43:43.870 --> 00:43:50.430

Amelia Paltridge: many... maybe too many times for me. Susan, what are your... what are your thoughts, and any tips on that?

267

00:43:50.890 --> 00:44:06.380

Susan Johnston: That's funny, because you're asking me that question as I was thinking about adding a piece to the chat, building on what Nigel was saying. A couple of different things I do for myself. I have to remove distractions.

268

00:44:06.420 --> 00:44:17.170

Susan Johnston: Because if there is a thing, another thing to read, or a thing to fidget with, I will. So, block number one is make it easy for myself to be present.

269

00:44:17.480 --> 00:44:19.570

Susan Johnston: Number two is.

270

00:44:19.870 --> 00:44:29.249

Susan Johnston: keep, something on hand to stay focused, so that I remember that I speak to what I want to speak to.

271



00:44:29.250 --> 00:44:43.539

Susan Johnston: The other thing that a colleague gave me, and I'm going to say this particularly for the neurodivergent friends in the room, is if you need to stay present and on a screen, you might need to find something to do with your hands.

272

00:44:43.560 --> 00:44:54.750

Susan Johnston: I know a champion knitter who knits, I kid you not, art that gets exhibited, because you can't... like, I'm not knitting right now, I can't knit, but you might not know that I sketch.

273

00:44:54.890 --> 00:45:10.480

Susan Johnston: or paint while I'm being present, or doodle. And it's... it's in order to stay present. I facilitate for fun, so sketchnoting. As I'm making notes, I draw them with my hand.

274

00:45:10.490 --> 00:45:20.969

Susan Johnston: Because it gives my hand and my brain a place to put the extra energy, and it makes sure that I'm staying really present with what I'm doing.

275

00:45:21.070 --> 00:45:35.900

Susan Johnston: I think the last piece I'll add to that, it's partly why I offer to facilitate, or take notes, or in a more structured situation, to do some kind of synthesis, because it helps me stay focused.

276

00:45:36.130 --> 00:45:40.020

Susan Johnston: So service will work there. Okay, I'll stop there.

277

00:45:40.920 --> 00:45:52.030

Amelia Paltridge: Both those are wonderful tips, definitely. I don't know if I could fully paint, Susan, while I'm doing other things. That might be a step too far for me. I might give it a go and see.

278

00:45:52.030 --> 00:46:03.799

Amelia Paltridge: Wonderful, thank you. Patricia, I'd like to come to you next, and this is one which had quite a few... I know quite a few people wanted, to touch upon this.

279

00:46:04.130 --> 00:46:27.279

Amelia Paltridge: Tips on being a good conversationist when you might have some colleagues or people you're talking to, that are a lot more dominating in the room, and having to deal with those kind of dominating presences, maybe more confidence, who knows, sometimes a bit more ego in those rooms, or experience, and having to kind of deal with that, imbalance.

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00:46:29.600 --> 00:46:31.690

Patrícia Baldez: Two tips,

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00:46:32.130 --> 00:46:45.399

Patrícia Baldez: These kind of people, they usually like to listen to themselves a lot, so they have to speak. And you don't want to fight. It's not, you know, it's quite impossible that you're gonna win something on that. So let them speak.

282

00:46:45.400 --> 00:47:02.539

Patrícia Baldez: Let them be dominant, and they're gonna show you where the emotion is, so you can keep... and I do as Susan, I keep my notebook here, and just keep notice... taking notes. This is important to him. This is important to her. And then.

283

00:47:03.070 --> 00:47:12.410

Patrícia Baldez: by the end, and you talk, the voice is quite important as well, so you show that you, you know what, I just listened to you, now it's my turn.

284

00:47:12.660 --> 00:47:26.270

Patrícia Baldez: Now go... now you're gonna listen to me. And when you're the last one to talk, it's... it's better than to be the first. Sometimes the one that say, I'm the most important one, so I'm gonna be the first one to speak. That's not quite true.

285

00:47:26.430 --> 00:47:36.919

Patrícia Baldez: So, let them speak, sometimes they have to. And then, by the end, you show that, that you... when, I just...

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00:47:36.920 --> 00:47:48.640

Patrícia Baldez: start to work with AI, and sometimes people really know more than I do, and I just really, really, when I listen to them, I'm learning from them. And then when I...

287

00:47:48.890 --> 00:48:04.040

Patrícia Baldez: We use them as, as, when I rephrase them, and I say, you know what, you're right, la-la-la. And then I say my point of view, it's easier to them to listen to me. She's smart, she agrees with me. And...

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00:48:04.120 --> 00:48:10.990

Patrícia Baldez: She has something else to say. So don't fight with them. Just embrace, and then you give your point of view.

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00:48:12.640 --> 00:48:15.460

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, thank you so much.

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00:48:15.900 --> 00:48:20.189

Amelia Paltridge: Very, very valuable tip there. I'm gonna be remembering that one.

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00:48:21.850 --> 00:48:40.459

Amelia Paltridge: so many wonderful questions. I'm just wary of time. I think we've got time for a few more, to sneak in here. We had quite a few people touch upon the same thing of small talk versus big talk, that icebreaker we had at the start.

292

00:48:40.590 --> 00:48:53.619

Amelia Paltridge: And being worried about oversharing or not sharing enough. How to find that balance in those conversations? Is it to do with the sort of people you're talking to? Is there a rule of thumb you have?

293

00:48:53.620 --> 00:49:05.560

Amelia Paltridge: how to kind of read the room in that sense. Nigel, do you have any thoughts on that? Because I know you talked a bit about starting with that small talk and it being really valuable, but knowing when to dip into both, I think, can be tricky.

294

00:49:06.350 --> 00:49:16.630

Nigel Smith: And I think... yeah, I think what's really important is that... to acknowledge that everybody is... is different. You know, we... there's this phrase, you know, bring your whole self to work, as if that's a good thing.

295

00:49:16.660 --> 00:49:28.380

Nigel Smith: for everybody. You know, people have got... there's a limit of how much people want to bring their personal perspectives or, you know, or experience into sort of a work context, and that can obviously

296

00:49:28.480 --> 00:49:36.719

Nigel Smith: affect what you are comfortable, what people are comfortable, talking about. So I think there's an element of, sort of, gay, you know.

297

00:49:37.070 --> 00:49:52.560

Nigel Smith: I think, you know, this idea of reading the room is... is... is so important. And also, don't assume that everybody will want to talk about your little topic that you think is a great, icebreaker, as... as... as well. So,

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00:49:52.820 --> 00:49:54.559

Nigel Smith: So I think those... those are sort of...

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00:49:54.960 --> 00:49:58.180

Nigel Smith: important things to think about. But also.

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00:49:59.140 --> 00:50:13.199

Nigel Smith: you know, if it's a standing meeting, or it's a... you know, you're talking to people who you work with regularly, also you can be a bit more... just try to be open with them, you know, in the sort of the more casual

301

00:50:13.590 --> 00:50:16.170

Nigel Smith: context of,

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00:50:17.480 --> 00:50:33.079

Nigel Smith: of seeing... of getting a sense of, like, where do they stand? What do they like to talk about? What do they feel... what do people generally feel comfortable about, sort of, in those, those workplace settings, and sort of think about it as a bit of a... a sort of a sliding...

303

00:50:33.200 --> 00:50:35.649

Nigel Smith: Scale, perhaps.

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00:50:36.450 --> 00:50:42.090

Amelia Paltridge: And I guess the tricky thing is then knowing when to politely redirect, maybe if...

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00:50:42.330 --> 00:50:52.869

Amelia Paltridge: It's got a bit too social conversation, and you want to bring it back to work, and knowing the timings, and being able to read the other person as well. What do you think.

306

00:50:52.870 --> 00:51:08.359

Nigel Smith: Yeah, and I think it's... well, it seems to... I saw Susan's comment about what, you know, Patricia was talking about, about how to deal with the very dominant people in a, you know, in a meeting, for instance. And Susan suggested, you know, having a little retort, like, oh, it's clear that you really care about

307

00:51:08.440 --> 00:51:20.830

Nigel Smith: this topic, you know? Having those sort of little questions that you can ask that are not sort of too blunt, that people feel that they're not being kind of talked down to, you know, don't be as blunt as saying, you know.

308

00:51:21.150 --> 00:51:26.439

Nigel Smith: this is the focus of the meeting, not what you want to talk about. But saying.

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00:51:26.870 --> 00:51:28.960

Nigel Smith: You know, well, why don't we move on to...

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00:51:29.240 --> 00:51:37.009

Nigel Smith: X topic, or, you know, those types of questions to sort of help steer, is a useful way to think about it, I think, as well.

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00:51:38.080 --> 00:51:41.710

Amelia Paltridge: Nice, thank you.

312

00:51:42.480 --> 00:51:58.160

Amelia Paltridge: what I would like to touch upon now is, I think, a very relevant one from James, which is, I'm curious to ask, since we have 3 different speakers from 3 different countries and cultures, how do you navigate a conversation with people from different cultures?

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00:51:58.160 --> 00:52:13.620

Amelia Paltridge: Sometimes there are stark differences in culture that might require some study before talking. What tips would you provide us with when we're dealing with people in an international setting? And I know there's been a bit of conversation as well in the chat about this, so...

314

00:52:14.080 --> 00:52:16.929

Amelia Paltridge: Would anyone like particularly to jump in first, Nigel?

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00:52:18.520 --> 00:52:23.339

Nigel Smith: I mean, I think this is a thing where the sort of the being curious is a real...

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00:52:23.490 --> 00:52:25.810

Nigel Smith: benefit. And actually.

317

00:52:26.830 --> 00:52:42.530

Nigel Smith: if, you know, I've worked in, you know, I've been to meetings in other countries, and that's an incredible privilege to work with people who, from, you know, different countries and different backgrounds to use. So I think, actually, rather than sort of think, okay, my job here is just to

318

00:52:42.890 --> 00:52:46.819

Nigel Smith: book to these new people. It's really about asking

319

00:52:47.580 --> 00:52:56.429

Nigel Smith: Using that curiosity and asking questions about, people's own, specificity.

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00:52:57.410 --> 00:53:14.340

Nigel Smith: So, you know, talking to Patricia and asking about a Brazilian context, for something, and, you know, Susan and I chatted before the, before the, before we joined, you know, the event today, you know, we were talking about, you know, a Canadian, perspective on things, but actually, I think it's sort of being humble.

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00:53:14.510 --> 00:53:18.720

Nigel Smith: And... and... and being curious.

322

00:53:18.880 --> 00:53:25.339

Nigel Smith: and as I said at the beginning, sort of seeing conversations as an opportunity to actually sort of, like, learn and broaden

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00:53:25.530 --> 00:53:27.899

Nigel Smith: Your... your own perspectives.

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00:53:29.380 --> 00:53:35.550

Amelia Paltridge: Thank you. Patricia, do you have any thoughts on that as well? I think it's such an interesting one, and Susan, I'll let her also to you after.

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00:53:36.410 --> 00:53:40.659

Patrícia Baldez: Since we are talking about future, I'm going to bring the last saying from Brazil.

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00:53:40.740 --> 00:53:44.439

Patrícia Baldez: Here we say that interesting people are interested people.

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00:53:44.500 --> 00:53:51.579

Patrícia Baldez: So, everybody want to talk about themselves, I agree with Nigel. So, try to listen to understand. If you cannot.

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00:53:51.640 --> 00:53:59.920

Patrícia Baldez: studied the culture before, because sometimes you have... you have a friend that is German, you have a friend that is Canadian, so you kind of understand that.

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00:53:59.980 --> 00:54:13.929

Patrícia Baldez: But sometimes you don't. It's your first time. So, give open, in the beginning, give open questions, and let the person gives you what they like to talk about, and what they feel free to talk about.

330

00:54:13.990 --> 00:54:32.200

Patrícia Baldez: Maybe in Brazil, we are way too open, so sometimes it's not quite good for some people. You know what? Can you give me some space, please? And Brazil is not unpolite to be too close. But I know in many other countries, it is, so I have... I prefer to be a little bit

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00:54:32.270 --> 00:54:41.029

Patrícia Baldez: give space, and see if the person allow me to get closer and closer. That's the way I like the best, but sometimes people don't.

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00:54:41.110 --> 00:54:47.819

Patrícia Baldez: And on the other hand, don't always think that just because somebody is Brazilian that they love this kind of connection.

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00:54:47.960 --> 00:55:00.009

Patrícia Baldez: For instance, I admire a lot people that are at the end of the meetings, at least, straightforward on the decisions. So, from now on, what we gonna do?

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00:55:00.140 --> 00:55:06.569

Patrícia Baldez: Sometimes in Brazil, you're gonna say, you know what, let's talk about this later, and you don't go straight forward.

335

00:55:06.970 --> 00:55:19.579

Patrícia Baldez: And so don't be, that's great. Don't think that all the Brazilians are the same, all the English people are the same, all the Canadians are the same, we're not the same. You have the future.

336

00:55:19.740 --> 00:55:21.250

Patrícia Baldez: And you have the person.

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00:55:26.090 --> 00:55:28.450

Amelia Paltridge: I like that a lot.

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00:55:28.610 --> 00:55:34.520

Amelia Paltridge: Susan, do you have any thoughts on that? And then I'll... I'll leave everyone. I'm gonna do a quick fire at the end with all three speakers.

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00:55:34.520 --> 00:55:52.289

Susan Johnston: I think the last quick one is leaving room for silence. It's a very important element, certainly, in a number of Indigenous cultures in Canada, and in a number of countries where I've had the privilege of working. There doesn't have to be conversation.

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00:55:52.340 --> 00:56:02.340

Susan Johnston: For it to be important, and you can wait, you know, even 2 or 3 sips of coffee worth of time before jumping in.

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00:56:02.390 --> 00:56:14.609

Susan Johnston: Beyond that, I would... I think what Patricia said about, not assuming all people have the same approach, and Nigel's piece about curiosity,

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00:56:15.160 --> 00:56:18.020

Susan Johnston: they carry me far. Thank you for that.

343

00:56:19.860 --> 00:56:35.780

Amelia Paltridge: Susan, thank you. I'm gonna ask a quick fire, so just, to keep the answers short and sweet while we wrap up, as we've only got a couple minutes left. But, in mind that we're about to close out this conversation.

344

00:56:35.780 --> 00:56:49.489

Amelia Paltridge: What are your tips on just managing to find a close to a conversation, knowing when, and maybe bowing out of conversation respectfully without feeling like you're shoving the other person off? Nigel?

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00:56:49.980 --> 00:56:51.609

Amelia Paltridge: Do you have any tips on that?

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00:56:52.740 --> 00:56:58.430

Nigel Smith: I think this is just quite rudimentary, maybe not particularly useful, but I just think, you know, there's an element of just sort of saying.

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00:56:59.230 --> 00:57:03.390

Nigel Smith: really enjoyed talking to you. That was really, really, you know, really interesting.

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00:57:03.610 --> 00:57:05.839

Nigel Smith: Look for... and a sort of a sense of...

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00:57:06.320 --> 00:57:09.569

Nigel Smith: Let's follow up. Let's stay in touch. That sort of thing.

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00:57:10.630 --> 00:57:12.779

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, nice. Patricia.

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00:57:14.610 --> 00:57:17.429

Patrícia Baldez: I don't know if I understood how to close a conversation.

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00:57:17.740 --> 00:57:21.230

Amelia Paltridge: How to finish, how to say goodbye to a person.

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00:57:21.330 --> 00:57:35.629

Patrícia Baldez: how in Brazil had so many difficulties. But let's see. I guess I agree with Nigel. Keep it open, you know? I have to leave now, but I would love to meet you again.

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00:57:35.760 --> 00:57:37.830

Patrícia Baldez: So everybody feels comfortable.

355

00:57:38.850 --> 00:57:39.790

Amelia Paltridge: Susan?

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00:57:40.390 --> 00:57:48.540

Susan Johnston: I don't offer follow-up, but as variation on thank you. I've really appreciated our conversation, or thank you for your time.

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00:57:49.010 --> 00:58:08.430

Amelia Paltridge: Yeah, thank you for your time is always a lovely one as well, just acknowledging that. Thank you, everyone, for your time, for your conversation. This has been a lovely conversation. We've had some incredible wisdom from each of our speakers, and I'd like to ask you all to join me in giving Susan, Patricia, and Nigel a huge virtual round of applause.

358

00:58:08.550 --> 00:58:33.219

Amelia Paltridge: There we go, the love hearts, the applause, coming in, wave of it. And most importantly, thank you to the wonderful attendees yourselves for investing in learning and being so engaged in this topic, your wonderful questions. I'm sorry I didn't get to all of them today, but that's... if you want to jump into the communities as well, that's a great place to ask questions and get answers from fellow public servants. And the team's going to pull up a quick poll for you to find out how you felt about today.

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00:58:33.220 --> 00:58:43.389

Amelia Paltridge: It's anonymous, and it just helps us to improve events for you as well. So on a scale of 1 to 10, rank your agreement with this statement, this event was a valuable use of my time.

360

00:58:43.720 --> 00:59:04.339

Amelia Paltridge: Before you go, and while you're responding to the poll, I want to share a few more events that you can register to join us at again soon. If you're not available to join live, remember that you can always register for the event in order to get sent the recording to catch up whenever suits you. For those of you in the UK, how to write a standout job application in the UK Civil Service is next Wednesday.

361

00:59:04.340 --> 00:59:14.229

Amelia Paltridge: What exceptional public sector leaders do differently is, in just under two weeks, offers insights into practice and mindsets that can future-proof your leadership capabilities.

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00:59:14.230 --> 00:59:30.499

Amelia Paltridge: And later that week, if you want to take your communication skills even further than today, we'll be exploring how to influence without formal authority, delving into the art of influencing upwards, which I know some of you had some, questions on that we didn't get to, so that would be a good one for you.

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00:59:30.500 --> 00:59:44.809

Amelia Paltridge: Okay, that is all we have time for today. We hope you found it really helpful, and we want to say a huge thank you to our speakers, and to everyone who's made today happen, and to you for taking time out of your super, super busy days

364

00:59:44.810 --> 01:00:02.979

Amelia Paltridge: Please keep an eye out in your email, for one coming your way with today's recording, and don't forget to find my post in the Career Development Community and comment, for today's follow-up resource. We hope to see you at another apolitical event soon. Have a wonderful rest of your day, everyone. Thanks so much!