

Key Phrases for Creative Leaders & Teams

The language we use reflects our mindset and reinforces the potential within our interactions to co-create and align around solutions as a team. Below are key phrases to use to help reinforce your creative potential and the potential around you.

We can if...

Primes the group to look for answers – leading to possibilities in a future we can change, rather than a past we can't. (Similarly, if someone says, "We don't know how to do it" always add "Yet" to keep the group with a growth mindset focus rather than a fixed mindset focus. Then move onto "We can if!")

Substitute "But" for "And"

Leads to a generative conversation, rather than one blocked for other agendas.

How fascinating! or That's cool!

Respond with wonder. It creates openness by suspending/deferring judgment. It moves us forward despite shocking moments, mistakes, ambiguity, or things we fear. It praises action rather than deriding mistakes.

Tell me more!?, What else!?, and Why!?

Leads to new learning and interesting insights by seeking the deeper story of the person we are listening to. Their use promotes empathy.

That makes me think of...

Is a great way to interject when you have an idea or something to contribute without hijacking or redirecting the conversation away from continuing to build together.

How can we... or In what ways can we...accomplish X despite Y?

Leads the group to better solutions by asking better questions that include the ambition and the constraint. It ensures we start divergently when seeking solutions.

What I like about that...

An affirmative judgment statement ensures evaluation begins effectively while maintaining creative momentum.

I'd like to propose an experiment...

Is a great way to bring an idea forward while cutting down fear and judgment because experiments are not final. It also requires thoughtfulness to suggest how to execute the idea.

Thank you.

When receiving feedback, it is powerful to only respond with "Thank you." It makes it possible to take away new learning from feedback rather than being inclined to defend the idea. It also shows appreciation for the feedback as a gift.

What if?

When someone fails to provide purposeful feedback or responds negatively to your idea or suggestion, respond with multiple "What if's?" to redirect to a possible future and the potential around you.