

3 Secrets to **ENGAGING YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM** in Stormy & Uncertain Times

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Top 5 Healthcare Speaker





If you're like
me, you want
the secrets now!
Let's go...here
they are.

SECRET #1:

Go from Engagement Dread™ to the Engagement Thread™

Unfortunately, a lot of leaders are being pulled in many directions and suffer from Engagement Dread. That's when you worry that engaging employees is an all-consuming activity and it's something else you must add to your already busy day. Today, our first secret is to go from Engagement Dread to the Engagement Thread.

Now you might think a thread is so thin you can easily break it so how can that be helpful. But think about the power of a thread when you sew on a button or picture that hundred-year-old quilt that your grandmother put together with little tiny stitches that's still in great shape. It's the repetition of the thread that makes it strong.

The same thing holds true for the Engagement Thread. The idea is to use repetition to **weave engagement into what you are already doing** – especially during stormy & uncertain times. There are two questions you can ask to make engagement part of your everyday routine.





First, ask...

What beliefs and mindsets might get in the way of the actions and outcomes that we're proposing?

Let's say the way your team is working has changed due to the pandemic and you have a new policy about working from home. Your organization has outlined some guidelines that your team can modify to fit their specific needs. Typically, we dive right into what folks need to DO to implement the change. This might include clearly defining expectations, outlining policies and talking about communication.

That's a good start but don't miss out on what drives the actions and outcomes. Make sure that you weave the Engagement Thread into the process. It's time to ask...

What beliefs and mindsets might get in the way of folks adapting to work from home set up?

Just imagine if you had that conversation up front, instead of after the initiative doesn't work. I assume that the people on your team have the ability to work from home, I bet they have the tools they need as well. So that leaves us with motivation.

That's why asking this question now is important. Beliefs and mindsets are drivers or obstacles to motivation. Once you identify the beliefs and mindsets that are obstacles, the real problem solving begins.





Employee
Engagement



Satisfied,
Energized,
Productive



Professional
Paradise

The second question to ask is

“How will this (fill in the blank with proposed change) affect people’s ability to be satisfied, energized & productive?”

We want employees to be able to create their own Professional Paradise – AKA connect to what makes them feel satisfied, energized & productive – regardless of what is happening around them. That’s why this question is important to weave into your regular conversations.

If changes are on the horizon, you can’t always do away with the change itself, but you can help people manage their response to it. So, let’s say, the organization is doing something related to time off or benefits, and it’s not what people want to hear.

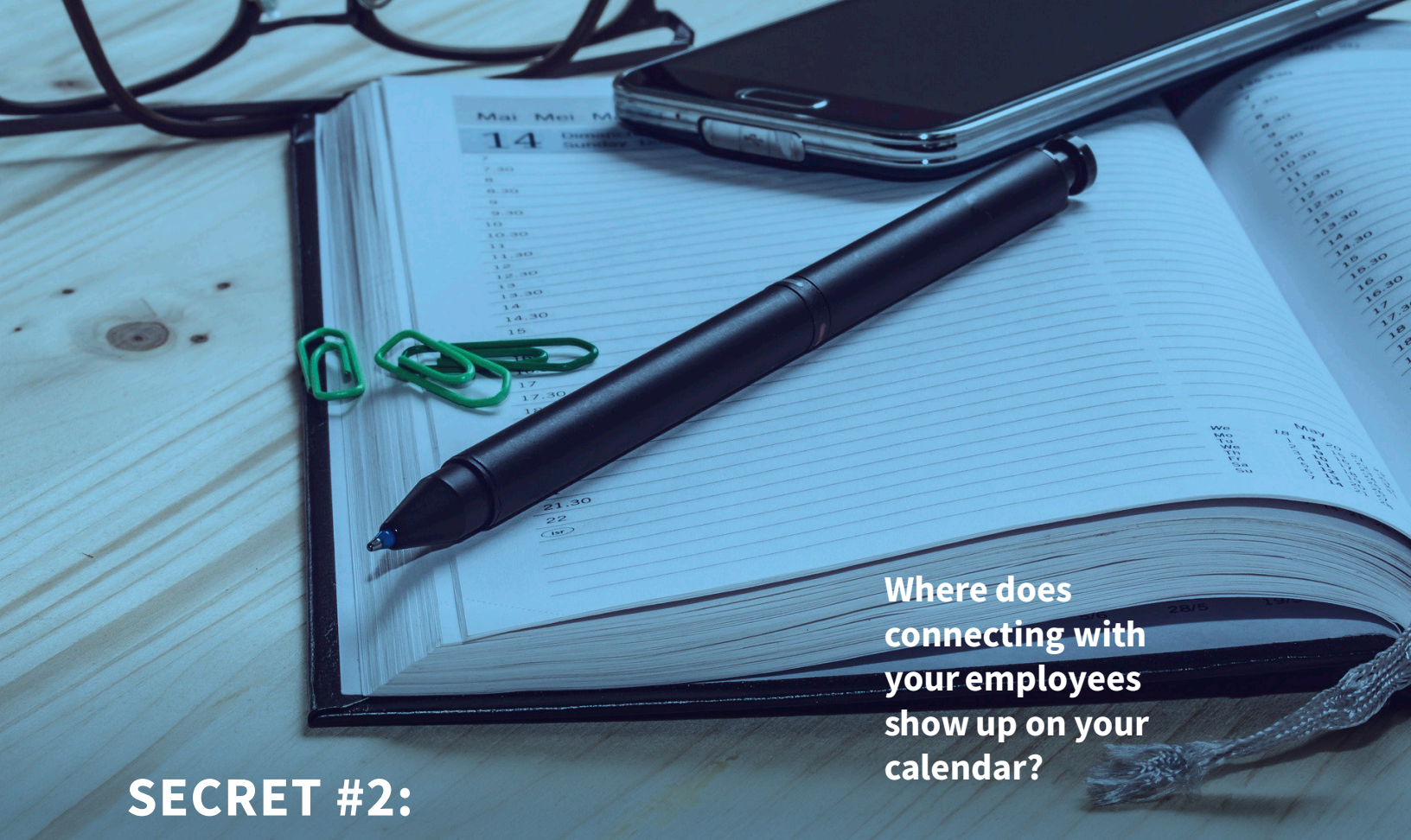
Weave the Engagement Thread and ask,

“How’s this policy change going to impact people’s ability to be satisfied, energized, and productive?”

In your planning meeting, ask if these changes are going to affect team member’s ability to be engaged. If so, what can we do about that up front? How can we try and help support people as they’re going through this change? Why not have the conversation sooner rather than later since you’re going to deal with concerns anyway.

Taking the time to weave the Engagement Thread into regular meetings and conversations takes the sting out of change and decreases the time you spend reacting to problems and concerns. This leads us to the next secret...





Where does
connecting with
your employees
show up on your
calendar?

SECRET #2:

Go from “I’ll do it soon” to “It’s on my calendar”

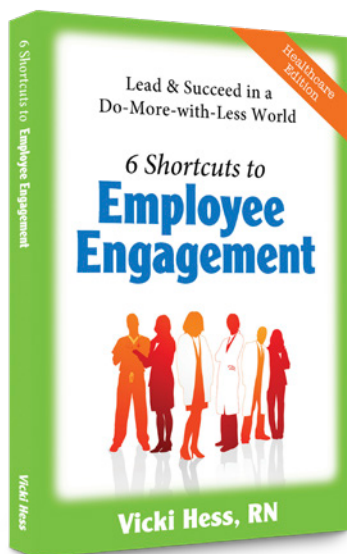
Leaders often tell me; “I don’t have time to spend on employee engagement. There are too many other things taking up my time.” And my response is *“You’re spending time on engagement whether you realize it or not.”* Usually it happens because we don’t think about beliefs and mindsets or what gets in the way of folks feeling satisfied, energized and productive.

It’s time to get proactive. **Put engagement activities on your calendar.**

I know what you’re thinking. “I DON’T HAVE

TIME!” That’s Engagement Dread creeping up again. The more efficient method is to focus on engagement proactively by scheduling time with employees on your calendar first. It might seem counterintuitive but in the end, it will **SAVE** you time. After you have the employee connection time scheduled, then fill in other activities like responding to email, going to meetings, completing reports, etc.





In *6 Shortcuts to Employee Engagement*, I recommend having a one-on-one meeting with every team member monthly to create positive connections. I know for some of you with a large span of control that quarterly meetings are more realistic. Whatever time frame you choose, put these meetings on the calendar. This may require a change in format – going from in-person to video meetings. That’s okay. The process is still the same.

If you leave it to chance, thinking “I’ll go and round with the team and see who has time to talk”, you’ll end up stuck at your desk. For most of us, answering emails and checking off items on the to-do list are easier than setting up one-on-one meetings with team members and putting ourselves out there with employees. The emails are usually the squeaky wheel that gets our attention, but the payoff isn’t there when it comes to engagement.

When you start putting regular meetings with employees on your calendar and make a commitment to having them, they get to know you better and it builds trust. You show them that you care enough to take the time to meet with them one-on-one and this contributes to improved engagement. This is especially important in stormy & uncertain times. In the absence of thoughtful connections, team members begin to feel unimportant or ignored.



Not sure what to talk about in one-on-one meetings?

Start with the Satisfaction Snapshot™.

Download it for free by visiting www.6ShortcutsToEngagement.com.

It’s a great conversation starter to find out what’s important to members of your team.





SECRET #3:

Go from “I bet things will get better.” to “We need to talk.”

Accountability seems to be a four-letter word for many managers – especially when there is a lot of disruption and change happening. Depending on your own beliefs and mindsets, giving employees feedback about less than desirable behaviors can be very uncomfortable. For some it feels like conflict. Unfortunately, the Chief Paradise Officer’s (CPOs AKA engaged employees) on your team are counting on you to manage the behavior of the Chain Gang Members (disengaged employees). The CPOs are not happy when others get away with negative actions.

When I ask leaders, “Why do you keep inviting disengaged employees back to work?”, I hear things like:

There’s too much paperwork.

It’s hard to pinpoint attitude issues.

I don’t see the bad behavior.

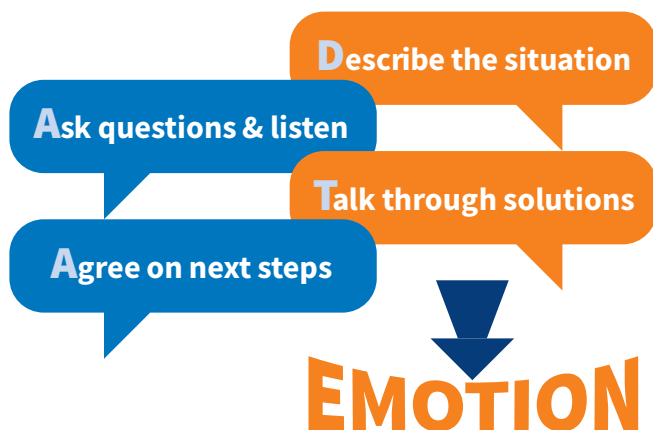
I want to help the person improve.

Hope springs eternal.

I don’t like the uncomfortable conversation.



DATA-Driven Discussion™



I get it. It's so much easier to hope that things will get better. When we give folks a chance, we are rooting for them to improve on their own. We're coaching them and looking for a change in behavior. And then, the negative behavior happens again.

It's time to talk. If you are one of those people who think this type of conversation is uncomfortable, let's take some of the pain away. One way is to take the emotion out of the conversation using the *DATA Driven Discussion™* model.

Practice with a colleague so that you feel more comfortable. Use the process to make the conversation less emotional and more effective. You can do it! The conversations might feel a bit bumpy at first but keep working on it and you'll get better.

Here are the four steps:

Describe the situation

- Simply state what happened in non-judgmental terms.
- "During the zoom meeting, you didn't participate in the discussion and were on your phone."

Ask a question and listen

- It's important to hear the person's perspective before going any further.
- My favorite question is some version of "What's up?"

Talk through solutions

- What behaviors would you like to see next time?
- Listen and let the person respond.

Agree on next steps

- Commitment employee is making
- Support the employee needs to make it happen

**There you have them...the 3 secrets to
engaging your healthcare team.**



“...a primary factor in employee’s satisfaction and loyalty...is the employee’s relationship with his or her immediate supervisor.”

—SUE ELLEN WAGNER, NURSING MANAGEMENT 37, 2006

If you are thinking, “WOW, this is helpful...I wish Vicki could coach me on this”, then you’re in luck. Check out the *Engagement Excelerator Virtual Coaching Program*. I’ll come to your inbox with a 5-minute video on a regular basis and share more shortcuts (and secrets) to engagement.

Just visit
www.EngagementExcelerator.com.



About Vicki Hess, RN, MS, CSP

Top 5 Healthcare Speaker

If you want to

- Improve employee engagement
- Decrease stress & burnout
- Retain valued employees

Let’s start a conversation.

I teach healthcare leaders and staff how to improve and sustain employee engagement.

My views on patient & employee engagement are evidence-based, relatable and real world. Organizations that implement my ideas experience increased productivity, safety, quality, retention, patient satisfaction, creativity and more.

As a nurse, speaker, virtual coach, Certified Trauma Professional and author of 5 books; my goal is to inspire healthcare leaders and staff to take action by sharing ideas that transform the way people work.

Vicki Hess
Engagement Every Step of the Way

**Call 888-797-6700 to
schedule a call today.**