

## The 10-Minute C-IQ Mini-Lesson

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### SETTING THE CONTEXT



*In October of 2015, I began learning about this amazing new social science called **Conversational Intelligence**<sup>®</sup> that has changed my life. Conversational Intelligence, also known as **C-IQ**, is the brainchild of this amazing lady named Judith E. Glaser.*

*Judith was a world-renown, master-level executive coach who coached Fortune 500 companies for over 40 years. She was also deeply connected to some of today's leading researchers in the field of neuroscience – in neurobiology and neurochemistry. She did an amazing job marrying the best conversation techniques she learned over the years with what neuroscience tells us about how the brain actually works, and particularly how our brains process communication.*

*She packaged this learning in an amazing set of tools she labeled **Conversational Intelligence**<sup>®</sup>, and in a book by the same name. And then she engaged in teaching thousands of coaches around the world on her techniques. I am one of them.*

*So quickly, here are the basics of **Conversational Intelligence**<sup>®</sup> and why I am so excited about this.*

*Consider that all conversations can be broken into three types or categories. For simplicity's sake, Judith calls these: **Level I, Level II & Level III***

#### **Level I: Transactional – ‘Telling and Asking’**

**Level I** conversational dynamics are characterized by **Asking and Telling**.



They are all about passing data back and forth. Judith calls these “*Transactional*.” For example, “*The weather is sunny today,*” “*The sky is blue,*” “*The Kings lost another basketball game last night.*” Passing data back and forth is important. It happens all the time... and is an important part of life.

***There is very little emotional content in most Level I conversations.***

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## Level II: Positional – ‘Advocating and Inquiring’

Level II conversational dynamics are **Advocate and Inquire** and are called ‘Positional.’ They are all about one person trying to influence one or others to a particular point of view. And vice versa.



For example, suppose you and I are engaged in a conversation about painting the walls in a room. *“I like red, you prefer blue.”* So, I want to influence you that red is for sure the best color, but you’re not buying it. You might be thinking, *“Red, that’s stupid, why red? Blue is obviously a better color for THIS room.”* Again, Level II Conversations happen all the time. We frequently find ourselves desiring to influence each other to our points of view. Our whole political system is geared around Level II Conversations. Level II Conversations can generate positive or negative emotion depending on other factors.

## Level III: Transformational – ‘Sharing and Discovering’



Judith sometimes says, this level, which is when we move into **Caring, Courage and Candor**, is the level where transformation and Co-creation take place.

This level is about sharing what’s in your heart and discovering what is in their hearts, and **without judgment**. You share your concerns, your fears or anxieties, your hopes, your desires, your dreams, etc. You share transparently out of a desire simply **to be known**, not necessarily to influence someone to your point of view. And you ask open-ended discovery questions of the other(s) to know them better.

Discovery questions are questions that you don’t know the answers to. They typically begin with **who, what, when, where, and how**. You are asking from a place of genuine curiosity **to know** the people you engage with – and to allow them to know you.

You want to know the other person. What are their concerns, fears, anxieties, hopes, desires, dreams, goals, etc.? For example, *“Help me understand?”* is a general Level III question. Level III Conversations when done well, **build trust and connection** between two brains. They tell the other’s brain that you are a **friend and not a foe**.

## What Happens When We Get Stuck in a Level?

All three of these conversation types are good and necessary for healthy communications. What happens to all of us though is we sometimes get stuck in conversational syndromes that are common to Level I and Level II conversational dynamics.

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*For example, one of the most common Level I syndromes happens during this scenario...*

### **Tell-Sell-Yell Syndrome**

We are conveying to another some information we deem important. And for whatever reason, they do not quite understand us. They are not getting it. And this frustrates us. So we start to **escalate** from **telling them, to selling them** on why what we are saying is good. And if they still don't get it, **we may start yelling**. Judith calls this the '**tell-sell-yell syndrome.**' And when we move from tell to sell to yell, our brain signals to their brain, *I am a foe*. I am **not a friend**, and distrust sets in.

A very common example of this is typical sports coaching. The coach teaches the player something. If the player is not getting it, the coach may try selling the player on it the merits of it. If that doesn't work, then the yelling starts, and this likely will trigger the other person's biological center of fear, which leads to distrust. This triggering happens in less than 0.07 seconds. It's that quick. Scientists call this an '**amygdala hijack,**' as the amygdala, this little almond-shaped entity deep in the center of our brain, starts signaling danger.

The amygdala starts generating cortisol, which is the stress hormone. It is what drives our well-known 'fight, flight, or freeze' behavior.

*Another example is the most common Level II syndrome, which happens during this scenario...*

### **Addicted to Being Right**

Level II's common syndrome is what we call '**Addicted to Being Right.**' Imagine this. We frequently tout our positions out like icebergs. We show people just what is above the surface. Example, the wall should be red. Most often we don't volunteer what is under the surface... what Judith calls the **Ladder of Conclusions**, or the processing we experienced internally to form the opinion "*wall should be red.*" And our partner does the same, "*wall should be blue.*" That's the tip of their iceberg.

Because we came to our views honestly we think we are right, and we start to fight for being right. We want our point of view to win the debate. Fighting for being right generates a feel good chemical in our brains called dopamine. It feeds our ego. It feels good to be right, and it's addictive, which is why we often get stuck there instead of honestly trying to understand the other's point of view.

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## Blind Spots

Additionally, because we ALL see the world through rose-colored glasses, all of us at times, think or assume that people see things the way we do –this is one of our most common **blind spots**. We get frustrated with them when they don't think like us or see the world the way we do. We assume we know what is under their surface, but in reality our assumptions are rarely correct. These blind spots result in others' brains thinking that we are foes, not friends. And therefore we can't be trusted.

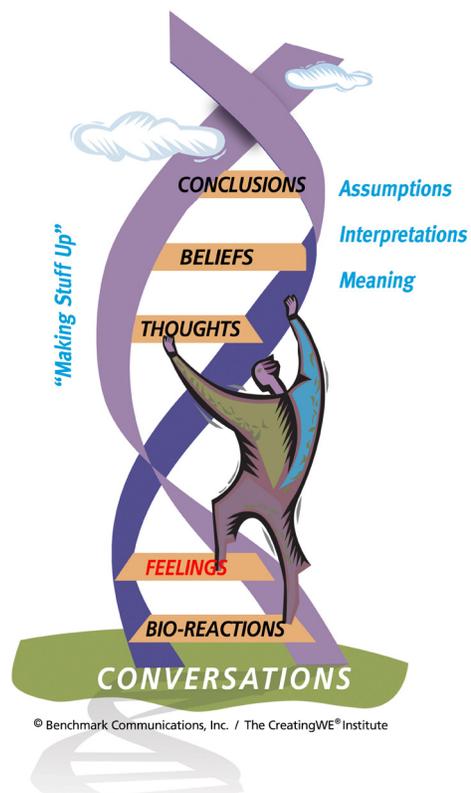
Level I and Level II blind spots can cause a whole lot of conflict and fighting, and by learning the core lessons of C-IQ we can start to avoid or minimize a lot of this. This is very powerful.

## When Bad Things Happen?

When our amygdala gets hijacked, or triggered, and starts generating cortisol, bad things happen. Depending on the strength of the trigger, the amygdala may spray paint our brain with cortisol. Cortisol has an average shelf life of about 26 hours, and even longer if we stew on the issue at stake. This is why when we get triggered we need time to cool down.

**Cortisol** also activates the limbic system, the part of our brain where all of our hard and painful memories are stored. It wakes them up and makes them live again. Which is why, when we trigger our spouses, for example, every infraction we have committed for the past 10 to 20 to 30 plus years gets trotted out. It's like Frankenstein; we bring the 'dead' memories back to life. And we all know how difficult it is to problem -solve when Frankenstein appears on the scene!

And additionally, the cortisol starts shutting off pathways to our thinking brain – our prefrontal cortex where we experience problem solving, creativity, empathy, and understanding. This is why it is so challenging for us to problem-solve or have empathy when triggered. This creates a challenging brain environment, not conducive to connection, but geared toward disconnection and distrust.



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## When Good Things Happen?

Level III Conversational dynamics build trust. They generate oxytocin in our brains. Oxytocin is the brain hormone that makes us feel connected to each other. It's the **bonding hormone**. It's what scientists label 'the cuddle hormone.' Oxytocin also gets generated during a warm handshake and an affectionate hug, and during, well, good sex. Oxytocin is good for our brain. The more the better!

***So, tell me, what resonates with you about this? What is this bringing up for you?***

(Pause while the light bulbs come on and you or the people you are sharing this with start going down memory lane deconstructing failed conversations!)

## Making the Invisible Visible

Now here's a cool thing about C-IQ. About understanding these conversation/brain dynamics. You can start to see what has been invisible. This makes **the invisible visible**. Stop and think about that for a second. Judith calls this **developing the third eye**. Imagine you have a third-eye in the middle of your forehead. You can use this to 'see above' conversations and look down and **deconstruct** them. This leads to new awareness. **New awareness is the key to change!**

I call this developing x-ray vision. Here's your chance to be a superhero. You can be like Superman, with x-ray vision seeing inside your head and others' heads. This is also very powerful.

Okay, what can you do when you see yourself or others you are interacting with getting stuck in **Level I or Level II syndromes** and are experiencing **blind spots**, which you just don't see?

## TRUST Creates Connection

The answer is almost always going to be intentionally engage your brain in Level III conversational techniques. Don't react, but instead start asking Level III Discovery questions: intentionally force processing in your brain from your reactive amygdala to your prefrontal cortex. For example, *"Help me understand your perspective?"* And start doing some Level III sharing. For example, if you are feeling anxious, say so, *"I am feeling anxious about blah, blah, blah."*

Brain scientists tell us that the fastest way to start building trust and connection is via Level III **Transparency**, which tells people, **"we are a friend, not a foe."**

So recognize that if you go to tell to sell to yell, you are generating cortisol in someone's brain, and vice-versa, that will generate distrust. And if you are trying to bowl over another person by proving you are right, you will generate cortisol in them, and that also will build distrust.

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When you are in a Level II conversation, practice asking Level III Discovery questions. Find out about the part of the iceberg that is underwater, that you can't see. Judith calls this walking down the Ladder of Conclusions. Assume nothing and be curious, because otherwise, what happens is we 'make stuff up' and that stuff becomes our truth whether it is really true or not. Bad stuff happens when we **make stuff up**.

**Good stuff happens** when we endeavor to understand others by generating genuine curiosity and are willing to be transparent.

One last point on how this is helpful. Learn to **prime conversations** for trust and connection. Suppose this scenario. You would like to engage another in a conversation with a goal to influence them to your point of view. This is Level II. Don't start there. Instead, prime the conversation with Level III Sharing and Discovering. Share bits of your self and inquire about bits of them. Do this genuinely. **Faking it doesn't work**.

This will start to build a trust quotient that will aid the conversation when you then shift to a Level II dynamics. This is NOT about manipulating people. It's about building healthy connections. And when you do share a Level II positions, don't assume people see what you see.

Walk down the ladder with them. Help them understand "*why you think we should paint the wall red.*" This transparency will help build trust. And that's what you want and need to have influence that is healthy. In the end you may not agree, but you will disagree in a friendly way, and it will be unlikely for your conversation to degenerate into a nasty argument.

What I have just shared with you is simple and powerful. You can start implementing it right away. And it will change your life. I guarantee it.

And these are just the basics of **Conversational Intelligence**<sup>®</sup> –these are the **Conversational Essentials**. There is so much more and it's all good!

Learn this and then teach it to those in your spheres of influence. Help Judith, and me and C-IQ Coaches around the world change the world one conversation at a time! No matter what your station in life is, if you learn this, practice it, and then teach it, this will positively affect you and those around you. You will be a person of positive conversational influence.

***All the Best to You!***

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