



REMOTE LEADERSHIP UNLOCKED

BOOK CLUB – Session 1: Build Real Connections

Session 1: Build Real Connections

SESSION GUIDE (60 Minutes)

For the Facilitator/Organizer:

Technical Setup:

- Test breakout room functionality before the session
- Have screen sharing capability ready
- Create 2-3 breakout rooms (maximum 4 people per room)
- Keep the main session recording off to encourage open discussion

Materials to Have Ready:

- Book chapter reference points
- Link to Individual Relationship Assessment tool ([unlocked.click](#))
- Timer for breakout sessions

SESSION AGENDA

OPENING: Setting the Foundation (10 minutes)

Say to Group: "Today we're exploring Chapter 2's core premise: building genuine relationships with remote team members isn't about being nice—it's about creating the trust infrastructure that enables everything else in remote leadership. Without this foundation, even the best systems and strategies will fail."

Opening Discussion:

Ask: "Let's do a quick round. In one minute each, share: What's one specific challenge you face building authentic relationships with remote team members?"

Allow each person one minute. This creates psychological safety and surfaces common themes.



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SMALL GROUP DEEP DIVE (25 minutes)

Breakout Room Instructions:

Say: "You'll have 25 minutes in breakout rooms. Assign someone to watch time and bring discussion back after 20 minutes for a brief summary. Focus on practical application, not just theory."

Discussion Questions for Breakout Rooms:

Question 1 (8 minutes): "Look at the HURIER framework on page 26 (Hearing, Understanding, Remembering, Interpreting, Evaluating, Responding). Be honest: Which step do you struggle with most in remote conversations? Share a specific example if you're comfortable."

Question 2 (8 minutes): "Elena's weekend work situation on pages 22-24 shows how easy it is to miss struggling team members. When has something similar happened on your team—someone struggling alone while you assumed everything was fine? What warning signs did you miss?"

Question 3 (4 minutes): "Pick one team member you want to build a stronger relationship with. Using page 33's communication preference discovery questions, what would you ask them this week to better understand how they prefer to communicate?"

Question 4 (5 minutes): "From your discussion, what's one insight each person will take back to the larger group?"



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LARGE GROUP DEBRIEF (20 minutes)

Discussion Flow:

Ask: "What patterns did you notice in your small groups about relationship-building challenges? What themes came up in multiple breakout rooms?"

Listen for common threads: time constraints, lack of structure, assuming silence means satisfaction, one-size-fits-all communication approaches.

Ask: "From Chapter 2's five connection systems (pages 25-42)—Active Listening, Weekly Check-ins, Explicit Empathy, Communication Adaptation, and Trust-Building Transparency—which one would create the biggest positive impact on your team right now?"

Have participants briefly explain their choice. Look for variety in responses.

Practical Application:

Do: Have someone share screen showing the Individual Relationship Assessment tool (pages 43-44)

Ask: "Look at this assessment tool, but don't share scores publicly. Just to yourself: How many of your team members would you honestly rate below 3 on relationship strength? If it's more than one, you're not alone—this is why we're here."

Ask: "What would need to change in your schedule or approach to invest more intentionally in individual relationships?"



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WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT (5 minutes)

Action Planning:

Say: "Learning without application is just entertainment. Between now and our next session, commit to trying ONE of these relationship-building experiments:"

1. **Restructure one weekly one-on-one** using the person-first approach on page 29 (spend first 10 minutes on "How are you doing as a person this week?")
2. **Ask one team member about communication preferences** using the discovery questions on page 33
3. **Practice appropriate transparency** by sharing one current challenge you're facing and asking for their perspective (page 37)

Say: "These aren't big commitments—they're small experiments. The goal is progress, not perfection."

Support System:

Do: Drop the link to the Individual Relationship Assessment tool in the chat

Say: "Use our [insert your Slack/Teams channel name] to share updates, even small wins. When we see others trying new approaches, it encourages our own growth. Post questions, challenges, or victories—this peer support is why book clubs work better than reading alone."

Next Session Preview:

Say: "Next session we'll tackle Chapter 3: Make Teamwork Normal. You'll discover why Jordan's client call disaster wasn't really about a mute button—it was about missing team systems for psychological safety and collaboration."



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POST-SESSION FOLLOW-UP

For the Facilitator:

- Send a brief summary to the group within 24 hours
- Include links to mentioned resources
- Remind everyone about the next reading assignment
- Monitor your communication channel for questions or updates

Encourage Participants To:

- Share experiences with their chosen experiment in your communication channel
- Support each other's growth efforts
- Ask questions as they arise
- Use the Individual Relationship Assessment tool if they want to track progress

REMEMBER

The goal isn't to become a perfect manager overnight. Remote leadership transformation happens through consistent small improvements over time. By committing to this book club journey together, you're already demonstrating the kind of intentional relationship investment that makes remote teams thrive.

Your team members are waiting for you to create the connection infrastructure that makes honest communication possible. Start with one conversation, one relationship, one small step forward.

Next Reading Assignment: Chapter 3 - Make Teamwork Normal (pages 45-74)