



Rethinking UNDERSTANDING

*Each of us is here
for a brief
sojourn; for what
purpose he
knows not,
though he
sometimes thinks
he senses it. But
without deeper
reflection one
knows from daily
life that one
exists for other
people.*

- Albert Einstein

What is it?

Understanding has both cognitive and emotional dimensions. It encompasses clarity, transmitting information, sense-making and persuading but it also – perhaps most importantly in our current context – stretches to include enlightenment; a transformation of our minds and hearts based on an encounter with another's.

Why does it matter?

Understanding is the basis of relationship, trust and community. In our businesses, it is fundamental to wellbeing, inclusion and engagement of our people.

What does it take?

Understanding requires us to truly listen. To dismantle obstacles and create space. To ask the incisive question, to hold the discomfort without seeking to gild it with positivity, to create safe spaces for people, to include. We need to be able to get out of the way, to quieten our egos and our desire to be right, and to be willing to challenge our own biases and assumptions.

I Things to Try and Questions to Ponder

- Ease up on the content generated by you. Are there things that you could delay or simplify to create space for other voices?
- What platforms do you have that you could invite other voices into? Could you create some?
- Can you create time to connect with team members, with no agenda?
- Could you run a 'day in the life' slot in a regular meeting?
- Practice holding someone's discomfort – just saying, 'I'm sorry, that must be tough' – the next time you're tempted to make things better.
- Say, "could you tell me more about that?", "what else do you think, or feel or want to say?"
- PUT DOWN YOUR PHONE! Give the gift of eye contact and true attention.
- Read Nancy Kline's *Time To Think* and work active listening in to your daily practice.
- Change up your reading and listening – are there new books, articles and podcasts that can ignite your curiosity and challenge your assumptions?