



## How Disconnected Conversations Can Kill Consulting

### Here's an Example of a Disconnected Conversation

A couple of weeks ago, a friend of mine and I were talking about a particular consulting project. We just weren't connecting in our conversation somehow — I kept repeating my points and he kept repeating his. It felt like we were disagreeing somehow, but neither of us were actually saying that we disagreed with the other. Still, we felt increasingly frustrated.

He kept asserting that the client's CEO needed to show stronger leadership, including by being more participative.

I kept agreeing. I suggested one-on-one with his managers, ensuring time in staff meetings to hear from each manager, and using a technique for consensus when making decisions.

My friend didn't seem convinced — and seemed even more frustrated. He asserted that the CEO needs to read "Servant Leadership" by Robert Greenleaf. I agreed.

My friend asserted that the CEO needs to do a better job of bringing out the best in his people. I agreed.

### Results Versus Methods — We Should Talk About Both

Finally, it hit me — my friend was talking about overall outcomes, and I was talking about activities to achieve those outcomes. Although we both wanted the same thing, we were focusing on different aspects of that result.

I find this type of disconnected conversation occurs more than we realize, especially about grand topics, such as leadership, accountability, transparency and performance.

It's most powerful and poignant to talk about outcomes. It can be boring and even tedious to talk about methods to achieve those outcomes.

But we owe it to our clients and ourselves to go beyond preaching at them about outcomes. That can get that from reading a book. We owe it to them to produce some relevant and realistic ideas about how to achieve those outcomes.