



## Five Tools for Happier Growth Conversations

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Thanks! Share 5 tools...

leaders encounter all the time; especially tricky for new leaders

high growth companies, these tools will help you mentor & develop your team

done poorly, or not done at all: drama & confusion

**what is next for me?**

**when can I get a promotion?**

most new mgrs: afraid of doing it wrong, promises can't keep, person will leave

collaborate duration work together, create growth & loyalty

you can use these **before** they ask about promotions...

first, a bit about me.



things I've done: coach & VPE

look for tools that create the most leverage

here's what we're going to cover

# 1. Listen with curiosity

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A photograph of a small, brown and white dog, possibly a Jack Russell Terrier, looking directly at the camera with large, alert ears. It is holding its right paw up to its left ear, as if listening intently or scratching. The dog is wearing a black collar.

# 1. Listen with curiosity

first tool: ask open ended questions about where they want to go in their career

few people listen with true curiosity

trap we are all tempted to fall into: pleasing, not blocking

do neither, start w/ listening & being curious

**enjoy?**  
**struggle with?**  
**currently learning?**  
**like to be in 5 years?**  
**who do you most admire? why?**



these are some of my favorite questions

not "this promotion" but "your career"

coach: understand their goals → motivation (CEO?)

I now have a better understanding of what this person wants...

## **2. Explain how the world works**

Your job is to explain how things work at your company. Not a debate, just an explanation. A lot of people just don't know this stuff... first, show of hands...

**Q: I've been here for a  
year now, when do I  
get a promotion?**

First, ask for a show of hands....

**Q: I've been here  
longer than \_\_\_\_ who  
just got promoted,  
when is it my turn?**

**Q: \_\_\_\_ has a more  
senior title, but less  
experience than me.**

**(not asking):  
Why didn't I get  
another promotion?  
Should I stay here?**

are these things you've heard, or that you worry about?

let's answer some of those questions...



first image in Google search for career ladder  
many people think this is how promotions happen  
small steps, linear  
promotion <> time passing, seniority



# **Promotion: recognition of someone creating more business value**

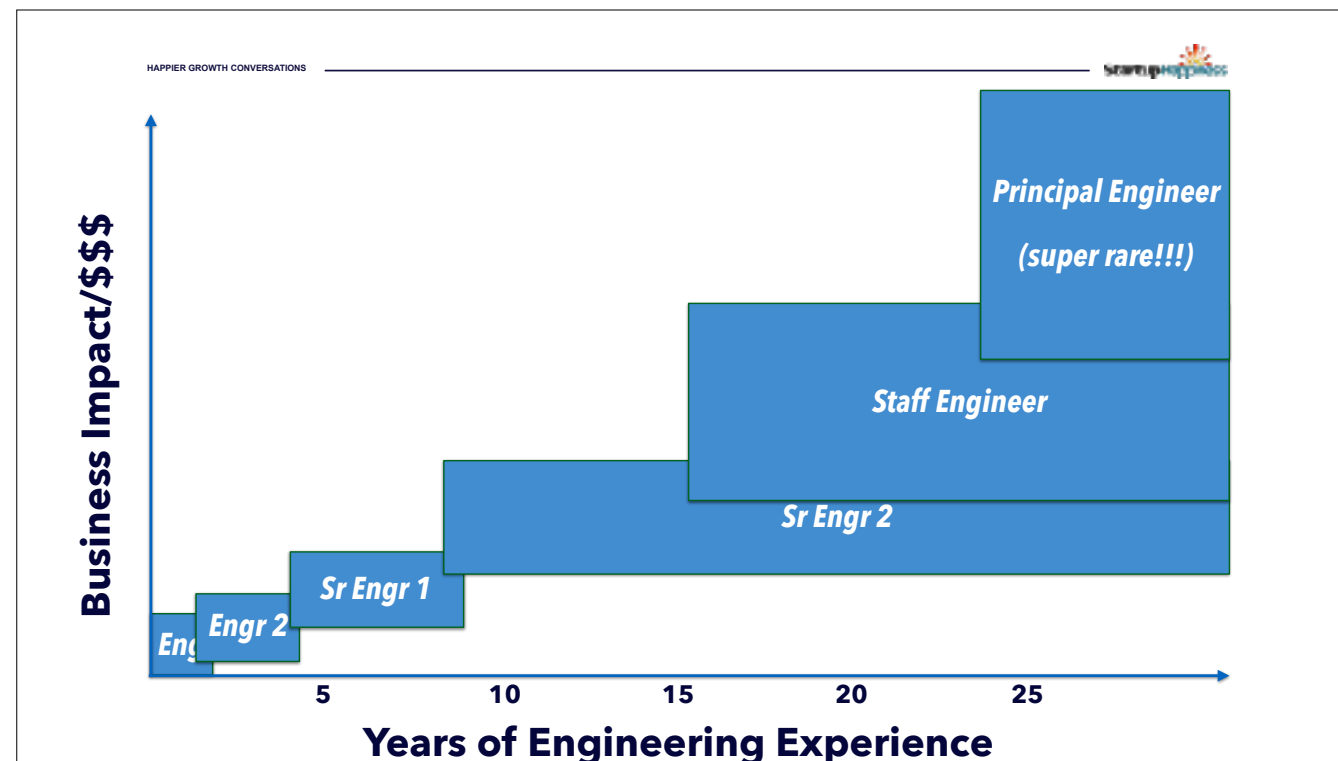
promotion == recognition of skills & behaviors

broader scope of influence

ability to create more business value



this is what most people think career ladder looks like



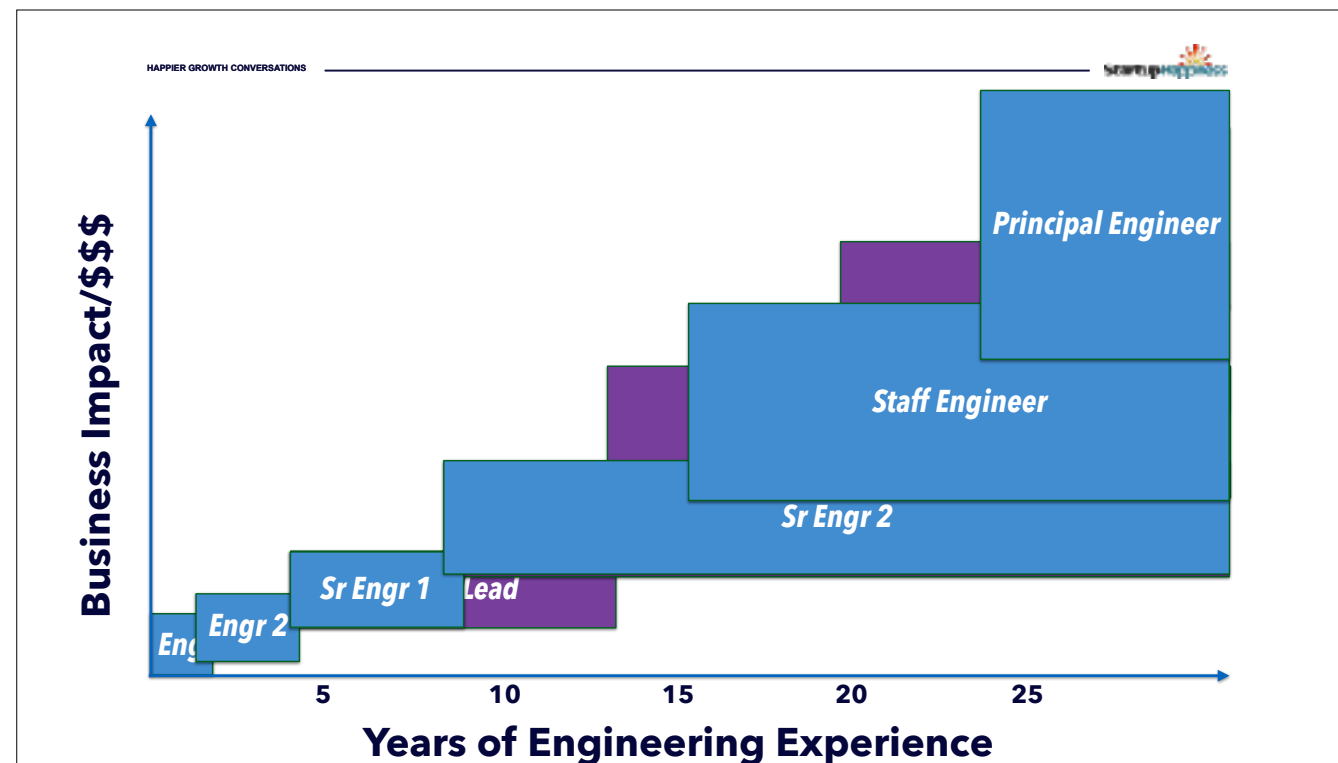
what a real career ladder looks like (might have more or less steps)...

Further you go to the right, the longer and taller the steps are...

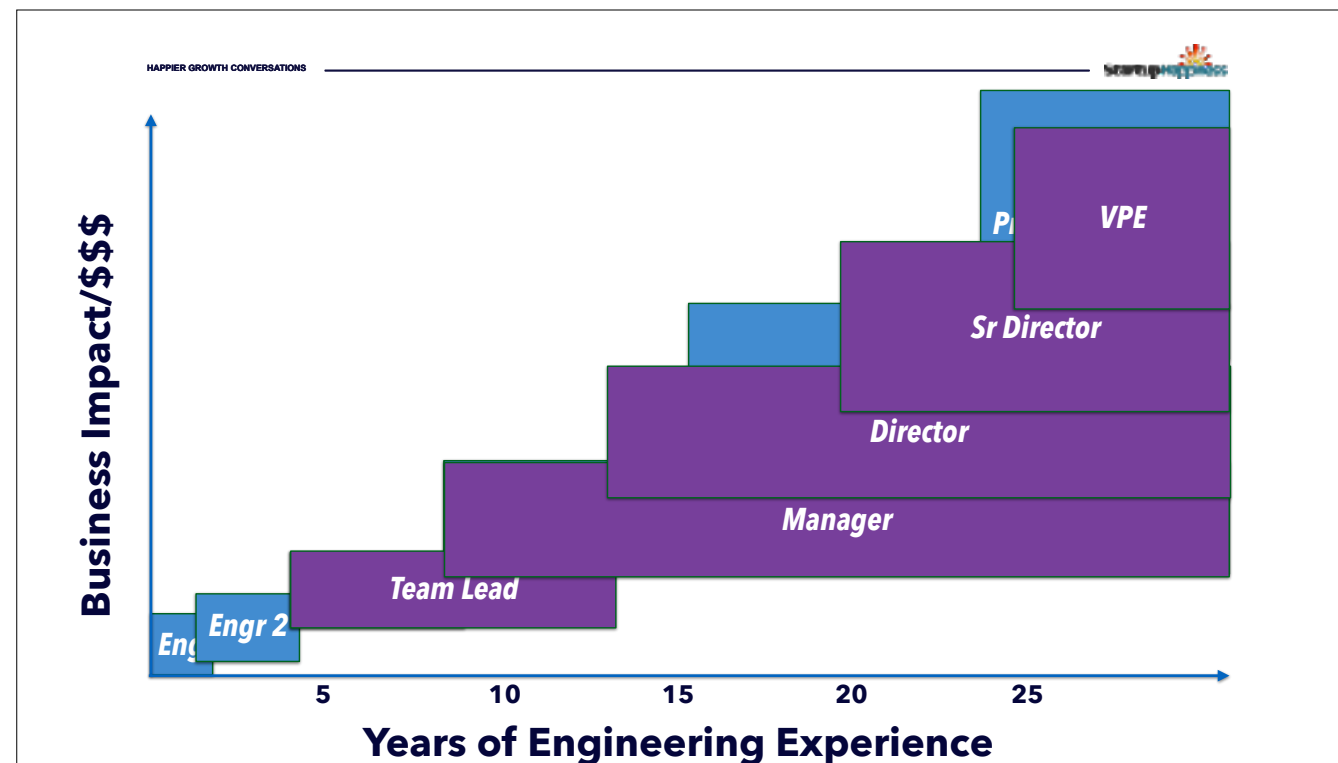
Longer distances mean managers have to help break things into smaller steps

Notice that some people top out in their role and stop growing...

There is a shadow manager track right alongside the IC track

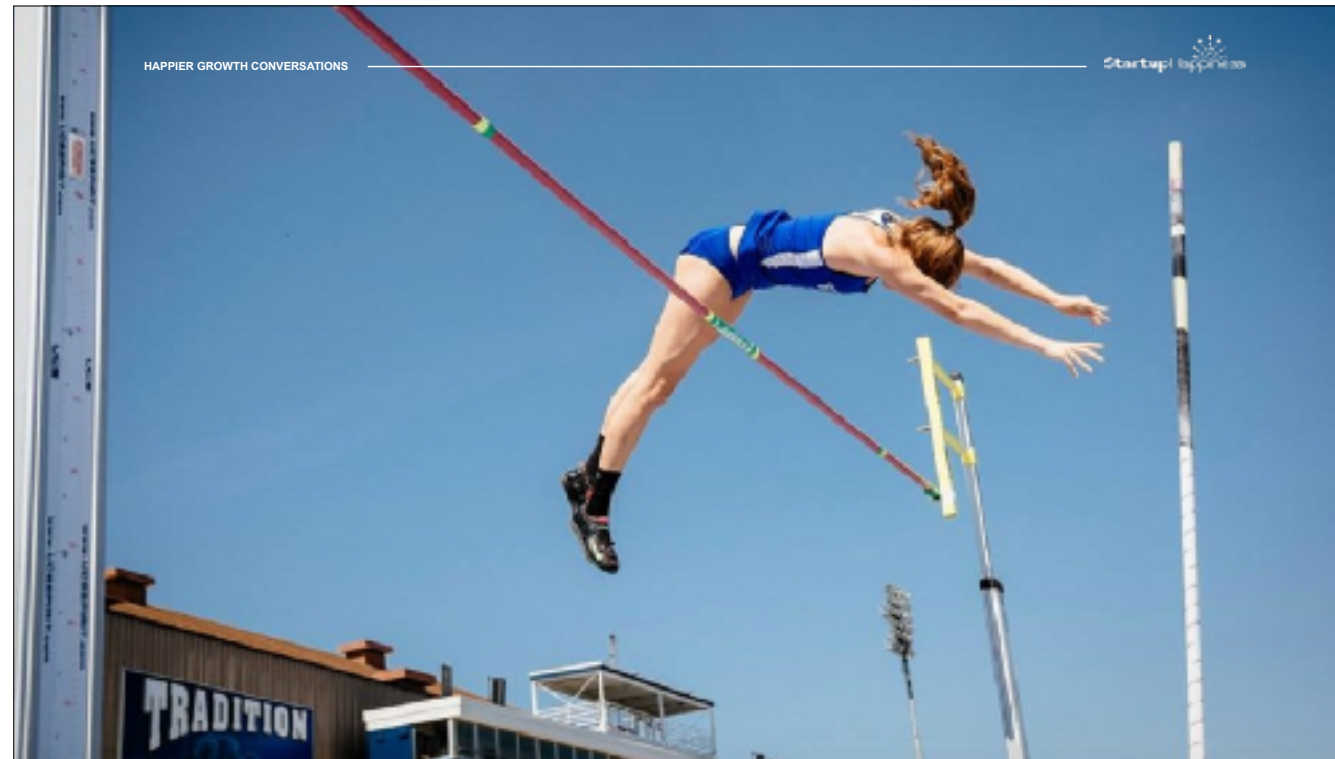


There is a shadow manager track right alongside the IC track



about 2nd or 3rd role, move to team lead, not promotion, lateral move

Notice steps are a bit more even, and the most senior ICs often have higher salaries than the most senior managers, but they are exceptionally talented & rare  
another common point of confusion..



vault past: demonstrate skills/behaviors needed at next level

artifacts of growth: early employee, there before they had a career ladder

let's focus on helping you create more business value

# **Promotion: recognition of someone creating more business value**

just talking about promotions in this way will help  
now we're going to use career ladder to make this concrete

**<https://dresscode.renttherunway.com/blog/ladder>**

### **3. How to use a career ladder**

if a promotion recognizes that you are creating more biz value, a career ladder is a roadmap for how to create that business value

if yr org has career ladder, use it! if not, several good ones online.

this one comes from RentTheRunway, publicly available



[illegible]

top horizontal line is first job, description of skills needed, second, third

we both fill it out, green = super solid, yellow = partway there, red = don't understand, haven't tried, struggling, let's look at example

	THE Business Plan	DE Customer Development	MARK Market	UNIT Operations & Logistics
Engineer I	<p>Product development is core to our business.</p> <p>Focus on building a minimum viable product (MVP) to test our market.</p> <p>Develop a business plan that outlines the product, market, and financial goals.</p>	<p>Identify and validate the target market for the MVP.</p> <p>Conduct market research to understand customer needs and preferences.</p> <p>Build a network of potential customers and partners.</p>	<p>Develop a marketing strategy to reach the target market.</p> <p>Implement a sales strategy to generate revenue.</p> <p>Monitor and analyze market performance.</p>	<p>Develop a production plan to scale the business.</p> <p>Establish a distribution network to get the product to market.</p> <p>Manage financial resources and ensure profitability.</p>
Engineer II	<p>Optimize the product and improve the user experience.</p> <p>Expand the product line to meet customer demand.</p> <p>Develop a strong brand identity and marketing strategy.</p> <p>Build a loyal customer base through excellent service.</p>	<p>Refine the target market and develop a more detailed customer profile.</p> <p>Conduct competitive analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>Develop a go-to-market strategy for the new product line.</p>	<p>Implement a digital marketing strategy to reach a wider audience.</p> <p>Develop a sales team to manage the new product line.</p> <p>Monitor and analyze the performance of the new product line.</p>	<p>Scale up production to meet increased demand.</p> <p>Optimize the supply chain to reduce costs and improve efficiency.</p> <p>Implement a robust financial management system.</p>
Senior Engineer	<p>Lead the product development team and ensure the highest quality.</p> <p>Develop a strong leadership style and inspire the team.</p> <p>Build a strong relationship with the customer and ensure their needs are met.</p>	<p>Develop a strong understanding of the market and customer needs.</p> <p>Lead the market research and competitive analysis.</p> <p>Develop a strong network of industry contacts and partners.</p>	<p>Develop a strong marketing and sales strategy to drive growth.</p> <p>Implement a strong financial management system to ensure profitability.</p> <p>Monitor and analyze the overall performance of the business.</p>	<p>Develop a strong operational and logistics strategy to ensure efficiency.</p> <p>Implement a strong financial management system to ensure profitability.</p> <p>Monitor and analyze the overall performance of the business.</p>

really ready for promotion, or unaware of their blind spots  
but let's check and make sure these really are all green

	Days 1-30	70%	70%	100%
	1-30	70%	70%	100%
Engineer I	<p>Has knowledge of key 2-3 concepts</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>	<p>Develops key understanding of key concepts</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>	<p>Develops key understanding of key concepts</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>	<p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>
Engineer II	<p>Has a solid understanding of key 2-3 concepts</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>	<p>Develops key understanding of key concepts</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>	<p>Develops key understanding of key concepts</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>	<p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p> <p>Has an ongoing or completed project with 2-3 tasks, including 1-2 tasks</p>
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has this person met the criteria for a promotion? **MAYBE**

let's see how important those three things are...

center of gravity

	5-9 50% to 60% of the way	10-14 60% to 70% of the way	15-19 70% to 80% of the way	20-24 80% to 90% of the way
Progress	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.
Engagement	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.
Results	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.	Some knowledge of the role of the business in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community. Some understanding of the business's role in the community.

has this person met the criteria for a promotion? **NO**

worried, might be new, might need to be on a performance plan

look at the three skills you will coach people in the most often

## **4. Most commonly coached skills**

choose one area to work on together...

break it down into smaller skills

going to give you a list of most-coached skills

## **clear verbal & written communication**

these are the three skills you will coach people in the most often

tailored to the audience, presented at the right time

coaching tools: modeling, role play

**clear verbal & written communication**  
**intuiting the perspectives & emotions of others**

won't necessarily be good at this, love programming

neuroscience fact: most people don't learn this until they need to

can you guess what \_\_\_\_\_ was thinking/feeling? why did they respond that way?

**clear verbal & written communication**

**intuiting the perspectives & emotions of others**

**prioritization & time management**



## 5. IC/Manager Sorting Hat

hogwarts sorting hat: sorting people who will be individual contributors (ICs) from managers



which puzzles would you rather solve? puzzles with bits, or puzzles with people?

lens through which you begin to see the world... one becomes primary

[http://www.istockphoto.com/photo/various-size-of-mixed-race-characters-collage-gm517443577-49215872?esource=SEO\\_GIS\\_CDN\\_Redirect](http://www.istockphoto.com/photo/various-size-of-mixed-race-characters-collage-gm517443577-49215872?esource=SEO_GIS_CDN_Redirect)



which books do they most enjoy reading?

if they're not sure, buy them a management book, and offer to discuss!

(tease: some fake books here)

# **Top 3 Skills They Will Coach**

**clear written & verbal communication**

**intuiting the perspectives & emotions of others**

**prioritization & time management**

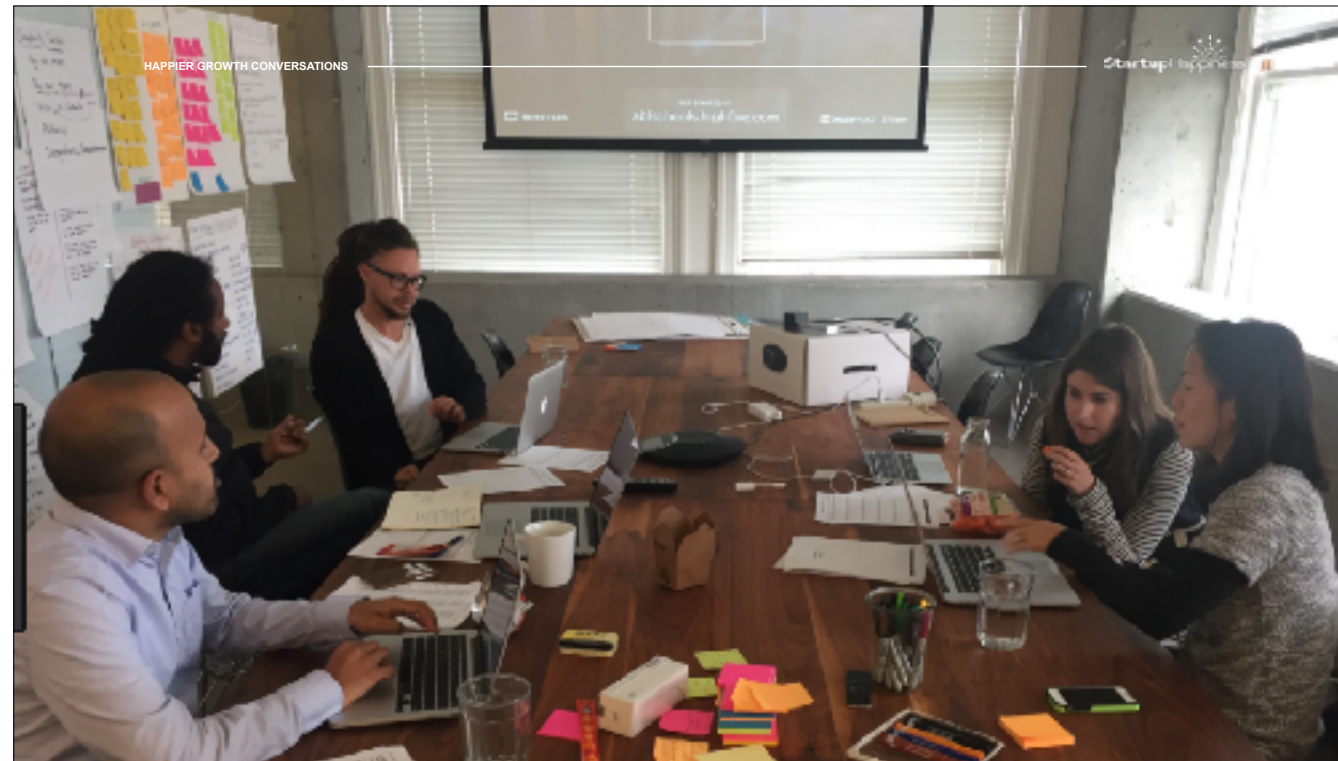
how are they at these top three skills?

they will coach these all the time, so they need to model them



Ask them to describe their colleagues...

does the person talk about their technical skills, or their relating skills, or both?



In the last meeting where someone got upset, can they describe what happened, and figure out what would need to happen for it to go better next time?

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# **career success: your ability to create more business value**

if you remember one thing from my talk, I hope it's this

I've now shows you several tools that will help you act on this knowledge,

I really hope you'll use them with your direct reports; frank conversations, far from being scary, actually drive learning



**download this presentation:**  
**<http://startuphappiness.com>**

if you're interested in downloading... (along with speaker notes)

BTW, all the tools that I shared today are things you can also use on your own career to accelerate your learning and your ability to create more business value



HAPPIER GROWTH CONVERSATIONS

Startup Happiness

# Five Tools for Happier Growth Conversations

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thanks so much for having me! this is my favorite conference, and it's an honor to speak here.

