

co·wonders



**coffee**  
**with cracks**

## coffee with cracks

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\*crack [in Spanish]: a person who excels extraordinarily at something (synonyms: genius, star), definition by Diccionario de la lengua española of Real Academia Española

### What is it about:

- reflection over the human connections in your surroundings
- identifying people with whom you are longing to communicate

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**source:** “What makes a great communicator” by Javier Cebreiros

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**domains:** ideas for communication, environment of communicator, impact of surroundings on communication

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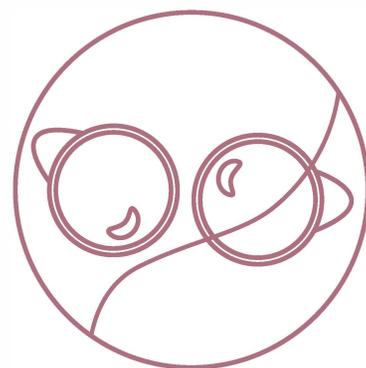
### approach description:

“Remember about having coffee with cracks” - this is the learning that stayed with me after the workshop with Javier Cebreiros. In between lines, Javier used the Spanish expression: “crack” - a word describing people who are excellent in something, who are stars or geniuses.

It all began with the idea that the people around you influence how you communicate. "In what way?" - you may wonder. This perspective on communication provides the answer.

Javier develops a communication model based on the maxim that “*to be a better communicator, you have to work to be a better person*” and he has successfully applied and shared it in many organisations, universities, countries and groups. In his communication's field work, Javier often gets the question: “What makes a great communicator?”

He shares 3 ideas as an answer, emphasising that he does not want to convince his listeners of anything, only share what he is convinced about.



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3 ideas for great communication by Javier Cebreiros:

- **the importance of surroundings:** great communicators surround themselves with great people. Javier recalls the quote by Jim Rohn “*You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.*” And there are people in our lives who add to it and the ones who take away. The people who take away are divided into two types: some of them do it just one time (just in a particular moment), and for some of them - taking away is a choice. What are the strategies to deal with the people whose decision is to take away from our lives?
  - **Strategy 1: empathy** - you can use empathy as a tool to understand their choice and what is behind their criticism, judgements, or complaints.
  - **Strategy 2: leave the relationship** - you can reduce contact to the maximum with people who take away. Using this strategy does not equal that a person we cut off is a bad human. It just means they are not nurturing for us, but maybe yes for someone else. Though, this strategy will not work with everyone, so check the next strategies.
  - **Strategy 3: reduce contact** - meet with the “take away” type of people less often than you used to.
  - **Strategy 4: surround yourself with your “cracks”** - with people who make you grow, shine and are the stars in your life. Surround yourself with people who will help or whose presence will help you to carry the burden of relations with people who decided to take away.
- **passion** of the communicator about the topic they communicate about. Passion is what defines us, what we like and what gives us meaning. And what is important: everyone has a passion. Everyone has something to talk about which makes their eyes shine.
- **making decisions on what to communicate:** you can decide to communicate with yourself using the encouraging language (“you can do it”) or using the inner critic (“you are the worst at doing it”). Internal communication with yourself is crucial, as there is no great external communication without great internal communication.

Great communicators do not work on improving their communication. They work on improving who they are, and later they communicate about it. The key is to be, not to look like.

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## aim of use:

The activity can serve as a space for reflection about the relationships in our life which makes us grow, which are nurturing for us and of which we would like to take care of, so that we can grow as humans and how growing as humans can lead to boosting our communication skills.

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## educational method:

### • Step 1: Introduction to grid

Introduce the aim of the activity and briefly also the approach description. Present the grid previously drawn on the flipchart (you will find the grid in the handout).

Invite participants for a reflection over the people they have in their surroundings. Let them know that they will not need to display the outcomes of this activity to anyone.

Ask to name 5-10 people with whom they interact for the most of the time in their life (to give it a time frame, invite them to think about people in the last 6 months or last year).

After having it clear who those people are, invite participants to fill in the grid, by adding names or initials of people on the grid keeping in mind one line indicating the attitudes of the people and the other their skills.

### • Step 2: Reflection over the grid

Follow up by inviting the participants to reflect individually on the following questions (allow sharing if there is a need and willingness to do so):

- How much time did you spend with people who made you grow?
- How can you enlarge your circle of “cracks” (people in the top right corner of the grid)?
- If you could identify one person that you would like to have in your “cracks” circle and invite them for a coffee - who would it be?
- Who had the nurturing impact on your life and with whom would you like to have a coffee to make you grow as a person?

As the next step of working with the grip you can invite participants to reflect where they would place on the grid all the people with whom they have contact in everyday life, and potentially identify the ones who they already have as “cracks” and with whom they would like to have a coffee.

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- **Step 3: Debriefing**

Invite participants to reflect over the following questions:

- How do you feel?
- Was there anything surprising in the process?
- How does the statement “to be a better communicator, you have to work to be a better person” resonates with you?
- What are your thoughts about Jim Roh’s quote: “*You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with*”?
- What do you take with you from this session?

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## read more:

- **Video:** TedTalk by Javier Cebreiros “What makes a great communicator?” [in Spanish]
- **Website:** official website of Javier Cebreiros
- **Book:** Javier Cebreiros, *Olvida Tu Lenguaje Corporal* (2015) [in Spanish]

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## handout:



communication canvas



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