

**The Connection Exercise:** Leaders build positive and trusting relationships throughout their organisations. Positive relationships are the result of time and effort spent building trust and mutual understanding. This exercise is designed to help.

Lines	Strength of Connection	Definition - use these pointers to guide how many lines you award each relationship
0	Ghost – 'oh, I think I know who you mean'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have no connection with this person.</li> <li>• We do not communicate</li> <li>• I don't know whether we share values</li> <li>• I do not know if I can trust this person</li> <li>• I may have some functional understanding of their role</li> </ul>
1	Person – 'just someone at work'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a low level of connection with this person</li> <li>• If I speak with this person there is a level of uncertainty of formality to our conversation</li> <li>• I might feel uncomfortable raising challenging issues</li> <li>• I have some level of trust – this person is not an internal competitor or trying to undermine me.</li> <li>• I could probably talk about their role, what they do and what they are working on for a minute</li> </ul>
2	Colleague – 'yes, we work together'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a moderate level of connection with this person</li> <li>• If we speak with each other, it feels comfortable</li> <li>• I would raise difficult or challenging issues, but am not certain the conversation would be easy</li> <li>• Our values probably align although we have not explored this much</li> <li>• I have an average level of trust – this person generally has my back and would probably support me if asked</li> <li>• I could talk about their role and could list their top three priorities</li> </ul>
3	Coven – 'we are close and we are in this together'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a very strong connection</li> <li>• When we speak it is safe and perhaps energising</li> <li>• We talk about emotions and feelings and would often have a sense of what the other is thinking</li> <li>• I can raise challenging issues and without any feeling of risk</li> <li>• Our values are totally aligned –</li> <li>• I trust this person, they have my back and they go out of their way to support me</li> <li>• I have a very strong understanding of their role, the challenges they face, and their priorities</li> </ul>

Place a stickperson representing yourself at the centre of a circle of the other people you are considering in this exercise. This could be your direct reports, your peers, your stakeholders or even your customers. Then draw between zero and three lines to represent from your perspective the strength of your relationship with that person.

