

Level Up

G U I D E

SKIP-LEVEL
MEETINGS
W/JOHN BARRETT



SESSION SUMMARY:

Great leadership requires more than making decisions based on secondhand information. If you want to understand what's really happening in your organization, you need to hear directly from the people closest to the work. One of the most effective ways to do that is through skip level meetings. In this video, you'll discover how skip level meetings help you gain honest feedback, strengthen trust, and develop stronger leaders throughout your organization. You'll learn why these conversations are designed to support—not undermine—your direct reports, how to approach them with a coaching mindset, and what to do with the feedback you receive to create lasting improvement. If you're looking for a practical leadership tool that increases transparency and strengthens your organization's effectiveness, this article will show you how to make skip level meetings a valuable part of your leadership strategy. Enjoy!

GROUP QUESTIONS:

- What is your initial reaction to the idea of skip level meetings? Does it feel helpful, threatening, or somewhere in between, and why?
- Why do you think leaders sometimes receive "filtered" feedback from their direct reports? What causes people to hold back the full picture?
- The session emphasized that a mature leader will welcome skip level meetings rather than resist them. What does that kind of maturity look like in practice, and how do we develop it?
- If a leader is resistant to skip level meetings, the suggestion was that insecurity is often the root cause. Do you agree with that assessment? What other reasons might cause resistance?
- How important is it to communicate the "why" before doing something like a skip level meeting? Can you think of a situation where skipping that step caused problems?
- What is the difference between using feedback to shame someone versus using it to coach and develop them? How do we make sure we stay on the right side of that line?
- How can a team build a culture where honest feedback flows freely at every level, not just during formal skip level meetings?
- What would it look like to push this kind of feedback culture down throughout your organization so that leaders at every level are practicing it?

APPLICATION:

This week, identify one relationship in your life, whether at work, or at home, where you may be receiving filtered or incomplete feedback. Take one intentional step to create a safer space for honest communication. That might mean having a transparent conversation about why feedback matters, asking a question you have been avoiding, or simply listening without reacting.