

### THE BIG IDEA

Most people are terrified of saying too much in a business conversation. But according to 15 years of Harvard research, the real danger quietly killing your connections is saying too little. Leslie John calls it **TLI, Too Little Information**, and it is happening inside your first five minutes right now, whether you realize it or not.

### THE GOLDEN RULE

#### **Revealing is a skill, not a risk.**

The goal is never maximum disclosure, it is strategic disclosure: knowing your purpose, reading the room, going first when it matters, and matching the level of vulnerability the moment actually requires.

### THE FRAMEWORK • TLI VS THE 1ST 5 MINUTES

| LEVEL 1 • SETUP                                                                                                                   | LEVEL 2 • DEEPER                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>OQ</b><br>Observational Intelligence. Noticing something real in the room and saying it, instead of defaulting to the weather. | <b>TLI Awareness</b><br>Catching the moment you are about to hold back and choosing to share instead.     |
| <b>LTP</b><br>Lead Talking Point. A genuine, human opener you offer first, before your title or your company name.                | <b>Reciprocity</b><br>The dance of disclosure. You share, they meet you, they share, you meet them back.  |
| <b>2QM</b><br>Two Question Minimum. The first question is polite. The second question is where you actually show up.              | <b>Locked-In Listening</b><br>Full attention that signals it is safe to go deeper, not just good manners. |

■ **CONCEPT DEEP DIVES**

**01 TLI AWARENESS ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU SAY**

It is not about slipping up or saying the wrong thing. It is not a single mistake you can point to after the fact. TLI is what happens when you default to silence, when you play it safe, when you choose the surface over depth without ever realizing you made a choice at all. Every business conversation is a string of these micro-decisions, and most people are running on autopilot.

**ELITE MOVE:**

Before your next meeting, ask yourself one question: what am I about to hold back? Name the thing you are tempted to leave out, whether it is an OQ observation or a genuine LTP, and say it anyway.

*"I noticed you've got a marathon medal on your shelf. How'd that go?"*

**02 RECIPROCITY IS A DANCE, NOT A MONOLOGUE**

It is not about who tells the better story. It is not a performance where one person shares and the other just nods along. Reciprocity means you share, they meet you, they share back, and you meet them again. The moment it becomes lopsided, the connection stalls out on the dance floor alone.

**ELITE MOVE:**

After you drop your LTP, resist the urge to keep talking. Ask a question, then go quiet, and let the other person step into the space you just created for them.

*"That's my Saturday. What does yours look like?"*

**03 LOCKED-IN LISTENING IS A TRUST SIGNAL**

It is not just good manners. It is not something you perform politely while you are actually planning your next sentence. Locked-in listening is the nonverbal green light that tells the other person it is safe to keep going, to go one layer deeper than they planned to.

**ELITE MOVE:**

Put the phone away, plant your feet, and hold eye contact through their entire answer before you respond. Let a beat of silence pass before your 2QM follow-up lands.

*"Tell me more about that."*

### 3 ACTION ITEMS

#### 1 Name Your TLI Moment

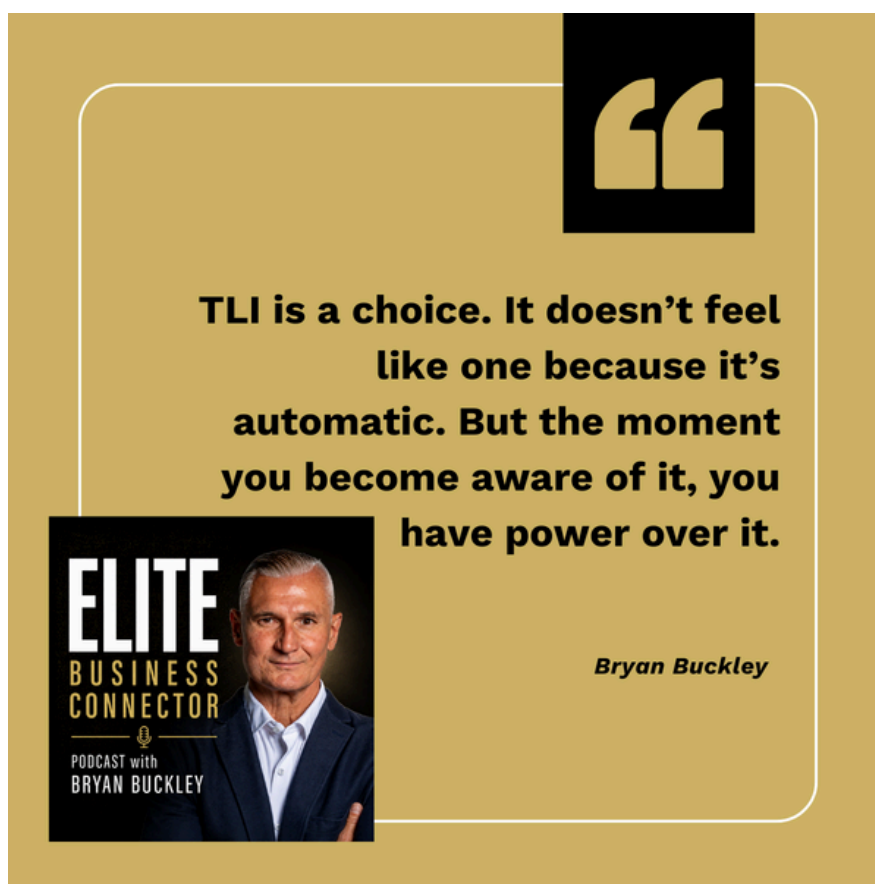
After your next few conversations, ask yourself if there was a spot where you held back and could have gone deeper. Just name it. Awareness is the first step.

#### 2 Drop One Real LTP

In your next conversation, lead with something genuine and human, not your title, not your company. Go first and see what happens.

#### 3 Ask The Second Question

Commit to a real follow-up question in every significant conversation this week. Three words work: "Tell me more."



### CARRY FORWARD QUESTIONS

1. What am I about to leave out of this conversation, and why?
2. Am I inviting the other person to dance, or just performing a monologue?

**BONUS DEEP DIVE · THE SCIENCE**

Bryan mentions Aron's famous 36-question study almost in passing, but the research underneath reciprocal disclosure runs much deeper than one study. Here is what the research actually says about what Bryan taught.

**1 Reciprocal Disclosure Builds Closeness Fast:** Aron and colleagues showed that structured, escalating self-disclosure between strangers produced measurably greater closeness than small talk, in under an hour. It is the science behind why the 2QM works: depth, not duration, builds connection.

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**2 Follow-Up Questions Make You More Likable:** Across three studies of live conversation, people who asked more follow-up questions were consistently rated as more responsive and more likable by their partners. Your second question is not just information gathering, it is a trust signal.

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**3 Disclosure Itself Increases Liking:** A meta-analytic review across decades of research confirmed that people who disclose more intimately are liked more, and that disclosing to someone actually increases how much you like them in return. Reciprocity is not a nicety, it is a mechanism.

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**4 Leaders Who Share First Build Safety That Lasts:** A field study found that leaders who openly shared feedback and criticism they had received built team psychological safety that endured a year later, while leaders who only asked for feedback did not see the same lasting effect. Going first, as a leader, is what makes it stick.

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BY BRYAN BUCKLEY

## THE 1ST 5 MINUTES

Leslie John spent 15 years proving that undersharing, not oversharing, is what quietly kills business conversations. The 1st 5 Minutes gives you the exact framework, OQ, LTP, and 2QM, to put her research into practice before your very next meeting even starts.

[Get the Book → bryanbuckleyspeaks.com](https://bryanbuckleyspeaks.com)



**TURN YOUR 1ST 5 MINUTES INTO YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE — LEVERAGE OR LOSE IT.**

**Bryan Buckley** is the leading authority on the 1st 5 Minutes of a business conversation — 5X author, speaker, corporate trainer, and podcast host. He helps sales professionals and leaders develop, deepen, and master their business communication skills so every conversation counts.

✉ [Bryan@BryanBuckleySpeaks.com](mailto:Bryan@BryanBuckleySpeaks.com) / 630-689-7606

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