



SEASON 1, EPISODE 10

Communication

by Harrison Wissel-Littmann

DISCUSSION GUIDE

In this episode, Harrison Wissel-Littmann, a TSA alumnus and human factors engineer at Lockheed Martin Skunkworks, explains how TSA helped him develop essential leadership skills—especially communication and empathy. Harrison shares how human factors engineering applies “common sense made official” to design technology and systems that work better for real people, anticipating mistakes and reducing risks. He stresses that strong communication is a technical skill critical to leadership and success in STEM and beyond.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Middle School

1. Harrison talks about frustration with confusing designs like doors you have to push when they look like you should pull. Can you think of a time when you were frustrated by something that wasn't designed clearly? What would you change?
2. He mentions TSA competitions that helped him build skills in many areas. What events do you enjoy that challenge you to solve problems or create something new?
3. Harrison says human error isn't just clumsiness—it can come from distraction or mental overload. Have you ever felt overwhelmed by a project or during a competition? How did you manage it?
4. What does “communication is a technical skill” mean to you? Why do you think reading carefully and asking questions matter in TSA and life?
5. Harrison encourages simplifying and making things accessible for everyone. How could your chapter make meetings or events easier to join or understand for new members?

High School

1. Harrison explains human factors engineering as designing systems that expect people will make mistakes—and prevent those mistakes from causing disasters. How can this idea apply to how your TSA team plans and works together?
2. He says communication isn't just “soft skills” but survival skills. How have you seen good communication improve your teamwork or competitions?
3. Harrison stresses asking “why” when mistakes happen to find the root cause instead of blaming. Can you share a time when your team fixed a problem by understanding the real issue behind it?
4. He talks about designing for people, not machines. How can leaders make their teams more inclusive and supportive so everyone can participate and succeed?
5. Harrison reminds us that leadership is about creating space for your team—not being the smartest person in the room. How can you make your TSA team or chapter meetings more welcoming and effective?

Optional Extension Activity

Pick something in your TSA experience that could be confusing or complicated—like a meeting agenda, a competition registration process, or a team workflow. Use Harrison's human factors mindset to think about:

- Who is this designed for?
- What challenges might people face using it?
- How can it be simplified or improved so more people can participate without frustration?

Share your ideas with your team or advisor and see how small changes can make a big difference.