



By [Karen Clark Cole](#)

It's my goal to build a company that people love. Employees love working for us and clients love working with us. It all boils down to building relationships — myself building meaningful relationships with each employee, and everyone in our company building those same kinds of relationships with each other and our clients.

I want each client to feel better for having worked with us — whether it's because we helped them research and design a world-leading digital product, or because we helped their team work better together and gain consensus for where the project or product needed to go.

To really do this we need to continually check in with people. I encourage project team members to ask the client how things are looking from their perspective. What about that usability session was most interesting to you? What got your attention in the summary report on usage of chat in China? Do you want to see more of this or less of that in our final report?

In order to hear what people are really saying, we need really to listen — listen without judgment and without interrupting. Allow ourselves to not have the answer, and be an active participant in exploring where the conversation needs to go. Being really open to new ideas and new ways of thinking. Really wanting to arrive at the best solution, whatever the cost, no matter whose idea it is.

Asking questions is a sign of thinking hard and really caring. Things change every day, so what employees or a client wanted at the start may have shifted, and they may not even realize it themselves until the question is asked: What is interesting to you about the data we are collecting? What part of your job do you love right now? What new thing did you discover today that changed your perspective? Have priorities in your organization shifted? Have you taken on new responsibilities at your company or on this project that have added more stress or pressure? What are the stakes for this project?

Doing this makes us more empathetic and turns a difficult project or situation into an opportunity to help make it better — being part of a solution rather than complaining or worrying. You may also find out some amazing things that really create a new level of understanding and trust that allows both people — or companies — to reach new heights.



*When not serving as CEO of Blink UX, you can find Karen organizing events to inspire young girls or training to become a professional kiteboarder.*