

[< Back to overview](#)

Chasing Positivity® > The Charismatic Advisor® in Conversation

LISTEN | A proven approach to increase engagement

10 minutes

Hi. I'm David Richman with Eaton Vance Advisor Institute. Acknowledging the strengths of a prospective or existing client and learning about their passions early on in the relationship can be such valuable steps to chasing positivity. Why? Because it conveys your interests lie not just where life intersects with money, yet where life intersects with life. Let's dive deeper into what this really means for you as an advisor.

My long-time friend and collaborator, Dr. Robert Brooks, a renowned clinical psychologist, years ago coined the phrase "islands of competence." In all new patient engagements, he leads with this notion of trying to discover the patient's strengths and passions, these "island of competence." Now prior to this approach, he would lead initial therapy sessions with new patients with a discussion about their problems. For example, if he was seeing a child in therapy, the first session would always be with parents. These conversations almost exclusively would focus on the difficulties the child was having. Often at the end of those initial therapy sessions, both Dr. Brooks and the patient's parents seemed a bit more depressed.

After an especially difficult day, Dr. Brooks shared with me a number of years ago, he had concluded that his patients were, in his phrase, drowning in an ocean of inadequacy, and this triggered for him an important revelation. He wondered if there's an ocean of inadequacy, perhaps there must be islands of competence, and that's where the phrase was born, and it was at that point precisely he changed his approach. Now, he still would start sessions quickly trying to understand the patient's problems. Then, he would quickly though pivot, and he would start to attempt to uncover their passions and their strengths, these "islands of competence."

What occurred for Dr. Brooks was transformative. He was seeing now each patient as a whole person, not just someone coming in with problems, and his patients began to see themselves in the same way. What was Dr. Brooks doing? He was creating positive emotion. As you know, positive emotions lead others to more likely become more open and become better problem solvers and more receptive to discussion. Think about this. What if you got to know a prospective client as a whole person first before diving into their financial concerns? Right from the get-go, you would be creating positive emotions and fostering a motivating environment for that prospective client to become more receptive, more willing to listen to your ideas and possibly become inspired to move forward with you as their advisor.

Here's an example to help us kind of visualize how you can lead with islands of competence. Suppose you were introduced to a young couple, John and Lisa. They're in their mid-30s. They're married. They're both in software sales. They've been absolutely crushing it over the past several years generating a combined annual income in the very high six figures. Flush with cash, John has been taking up investing with a relatively new online trading platform. He's so proud of his outsized returns generated by investing in just a handful of high-flying stock.

John and Lisa came to you through a referral. The reason for the desire to meet is because they have been having disagreements about money. Lisa first shares with you in this meeting that they have very different opinions about how much to save, how much to invest and how much to use to enjoy in their lifestyle. John feels good about their professional and his investment successes and believes that they

The views expressed in these posts are those of the authors and are current only through the date stated. These views are subject to change at any time based upon market or other conditions, and Eaton Vance disclaims any responsibility to update such views. These views may not be relied upon as investment advice and, because investment decisions for Eaton Vance are based on many factors, may not be relied upon as an indication of trading intent on behalf of any Eaton Vance fund. The discussion herein is general in nature and is provided for informational purposes only. There is no guarantee as to its accuracy or completeness. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

What's next?

If you're interested in digging deeper into this topic, you can go to the next resource. If not, we recommend continuing to the next subtopic.



Getting started



[LISTEN](#) | [An approach to learning the 3 Dynamics](#)

[6 minutes](#)



[WATCH](#) | [Why the 3 Dynamics matter](#)

[5 minutes](#)



[LEARN](#) | [A road map to master the 3 Dynamics](#)

[5 minutes](#)



[LEARN](#) | [Prepare for success](#)

[3 minutes](#)



Communicating empathically



[LISTEN](#) | [Practice leaving yourself behind](#)

[8 minutes](#)



[LEARN](#) | [Lead with genuine interest](#)

[5 minutes](#)



[LEARN](#) | [Three strategies to understand purpose](#)

[5 minutes](#)



[PLAN](#) | [Become more empathic](#)

[15 minutes](#)





Collaborating consciously



LISTEN | [Put away the black robe](#)

[5 minutes](#)



LISTEN | [Beware of painting with a broad brush](#)

[5 minutes](#)



LISTEN | [Don't take the bait](#)

[5 minutes](#)



WATCH | [Why intentionality matters](#)

[6 minutes](#)



LEARN | [Engage clients based on their coping style](#)

[5 minutes](#)



PLAN | [Become a better collaborator](#)

[15 minutes](#)



Inspiring action



LISTEN | [A proven approach to increase engagement](#)

[10 minutes](#)



LISTEN | [Align by deploying the joining technique](#)

[11 minutes](#)



LEARN | [Words and phrases to inspire action](#)

[5 minutes](#)



PLAN | [Inspire action in others](#)

[15 minutes](#)





HEADQUARTERS

One Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02110

Investments

[Eaton Vance Funds](#)

[Parametric Funds](#)

[Calvert Funds](#)

[Separately Managed
Accounts](#)

[Closed-End Funds and
Term Trusts](#)

Insights

[Advisory Blog](#)

[The BEAT](#)

[Market Update Events](#)

[The Advisor Institute](#)

Taxes & Tools

[Investment Tax Center](#)

[Tax Information](#)

[Investment Tax Calculator](#)

[Laddered Investing Interest](#)

[Rate Scenario Tool](#)

[Concentrated Stock
Position Calculator](#)

[Tax-Equivalent Yield
Calculator](#)

Resources

[Forms & E-Delivery](#)

[Mutual Funds & Abandoned
Property](#)

[DST Vision](#)

[Active Advisor](#)

[Corporate Filings](#)

[Annual Reports](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Accessibility	Business Continuity	Privacy & Cookies	Your Privacy Choices	Terms & Conditions	Careers	Contact
Investor Account Access	Morgan Stanley Investment Management Terms of Use					

To report a website vulnerability, please go to [Responsible Disclosure](#).

Eaton Vance is part of Morgan Stanley Investment Management, the asset management division of Morgan Stanley.

For USA PATRIOT Act Disclosure Notice please click [here](#).

 This image indicates content designed specifically for Financial Advisors / Investment Professionals. This material is not to be used with the public.

Before investing in any Eaton Vance, Calvert or Morgan Stanley Investment Management Inc.-advised fund, prospective investors should consider carefully the investment objective(s), risks, and charges and expenses. Read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money. For **open-end mutual funds**, the current prospectus contains this and other information. To obtain an **open-end mutual fund** prospectus or summary prospectus and the most recent annual and semiannual shareholder reports, contact your financial advisor or [download a copy here](#). For **closed-end funds**, you should contact your financial advisor. To obtain the most recent annual and semi-annual shareholder report for a closed-end fund contact your financial advisor or [download a copy here](#). To obtain an **exchange-traded fund**, ("ETF") prospectus or summary prospectus, contact your financial advisor or [download a copy here](#).

Before purchasing any **variable product**, consider the objectives, risks, charges, and expenses associated with the underlying investment option(s) and those of the product itself. For a prospectus containing this and other information, contact your investment or insurance professional. Read the prospectus carefully before investing.

NOT FDIC INSURED | OFFER NO BANK GUARANTEE | MAY LOSE VALUE | NOT INSURED BY ANY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY | NOT A DEPOSIT

Eaton Vance does not provide tax or legal advice. Prospective investors should consult with a tax or legal advisor before making any investment decision. The information on this Web page is for U.S. residents only and does not constitute an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to purchase, securities in any jurisdiction to any person to whom it is not lawful to make such an offer.

© Eaton Vance Management. All rights reserved.

Eaton Vance open-end mutual funds are offered through Eaton Vance Distributors, Inc. One Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02110. Member [FINRA](#) / [SIPC](#). Exchange-traded funds are distributed by Foreside Fund Services, LLC.

Publication details: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 10:50 AM

Page ID: 39558 - <https://www.eatonvance.com/listen-advisor-institute.php>