

Difficult Conversations

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The Situations You Face are CHALLENGING!

#1 How do you listen to citizens who are contentious and still stay calm?

#2 What do we do with board members who might be undermining everyone else?

#3 How do you support a decision when you totally disagree with it?

#4 How do we get some members to quiet down and listen while inviting others to speak up and talk?

Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When the Stakes Are High

Updated with New Approaches for Today's Communication Challenges

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“Twenty years of research involving more than 100,000 people reveals that *the* key skill of effective leaders, parents, and loved ones is the capacity to skillfully address emotionally and politically risky issues. **PERIOD.**”

Silence or Violence

Silence (flight):

- Sarcasm
- Verbal games
- Masking / Understating your emotions
- Avoiding / Hiding from sensitive topics
- Silently fuming
- Silence = Safety
- Becoming the “PEACE MAKER”

Violence (fight):

- Pushing your ideas on others
- Controlling other’s thinking
- Negatively labeling people or ideas
- Name calling / Belittling
- Attaching / Threatening
- Dismissing others / Stone-walling
- Blaming
- Raising voice / Using physical force
- TRYING TO BE RIGHT

“Imagine the magnitude of what we’re suggesting here. We’re asking you to recode Silence and Violence as signs that people are feeling unsafe. We’re asking you to undo years of practice, maybe even eons of genetic shaping that prod you to take flight or pick a fight, and recode the stimulus.”

“Ah, that’s a sign that the other person feels unsafe.” And then what? **Do something to make it safe.**”

“When it’s safe, you can say anything.”

Google Project Aristotle

The quest: seeking to find the keys to building the perfect team.

- Gathered data from 180 teams
- Two year study
- Personal friendships, strong management, team structure, personal interests, gender, and longevity provided **no insight**
- Group norms rather than the collection of superior individuals showed the hints of success they were looking for

Findings:

The top group norm needed for a successful team is Psychological Safety.

Demonstration

Chad Ford:

- International conflict mediator
- College professor
- Senior Consultant for the Arbinger Institute
- Executive Board Member for PeacePlayers
- Author of the book *Dangerous Love*

“Turn
First”

Safety Condition #2: Mutual Purpose

Would you ever enter a tough conversation with someone if you didn't feel like they cared about your needs or goals?

Would you enter a conversation with someone who was only trying to be right, win, or blame you?

How can you stand on opposing side and still meet safe conditions?

Mutual Purpose (quick ideas):

Start With Similarities:



Recognize the Purpose Behind the Strategy:

“We think we’ll never find a way out because we equate what we are asking for with what we actually want. In truth, what we are asking for is the strategy we are suggesting to get what we want. We confuse wants or purpose with strategies.”

Safety Tip #3: Mutual Respect

“The instant people perceive disrespect in a conversation the interaction is no longer about the original purpose– it is now about defending dignity... Emotions become highly charged, then people resort to pouting, name calling, yelling, and making threats.”

Mutual Respect (quick ideas):

Understand Face Needs:

- In order to “save face” or feel safe, people need 3 things

#1 Feel Liked

#2 Feel Competent

#3 Feel Independent or Have Choices

Contrasting:

Contrasting is a Don't/Do statement that:

- Addresses other's concerns
- Clarifies your real purpose

Angry Roommate: “There you go again, telling me how to run my life. I can't change the vacuum cleaner bag without you jumping in and giving me advice.”