



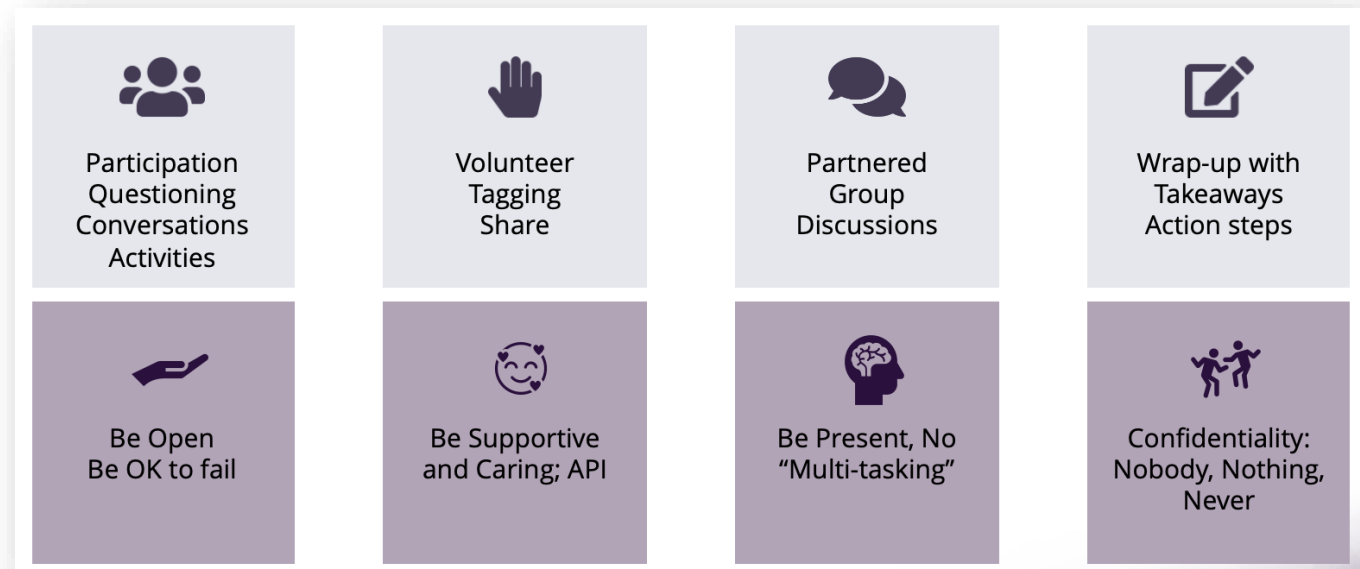
Leadership Development Workshop #2: Feedback, Conflict & Difficult Conversations

May 29, 2025

Workshop Overview

Feedback, Conflict, & Difficult Conversations

- Constructive Feedback
- Positive Feedback: Appreciation
- Managing Conflict
- Difficult Conversations
- Wrap-up



Pre-Work

TED: Dare to Disagree

- Openness alone can't drive change
- We need partners that disagree with us = constructive conflict
- People are afraid of conflict (85%) and arguments they didn't know how to manage
- How do we develop skill of thinking together?
- Fear of conflict overcome by fear of silence and what it could do
- Speaking up led to him being viewed as a leader
- Conflict is not the end, it's the beginning

Praise Reappraised

- Praise experienced as a threat
- Unconscious means of establishing superiority
- Constricts creativity rather than frees it
- People expect praise and want to feel valued
- When we evaluate, we don't gain connection
- Instead: listen, reveal your feelings to create proximity
- Help others feel free of your control = we are equals
- Be honest, use active listening

Leader Knows Feedback

- Natural instinct to avoid conflict for survival
- Too busy, too frustrated
- Wanting all the facts
- Emotions
- People dislike uncertainty

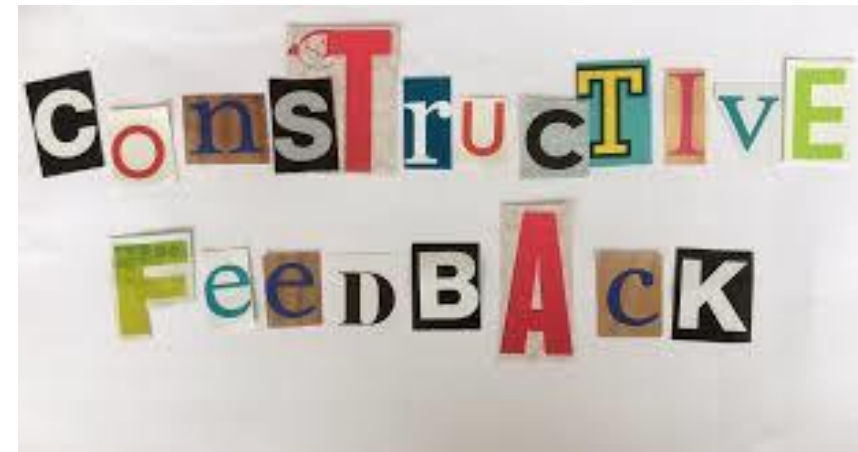
READ and WATCH:

- TED talk: Dare to Disagree
- Praise Reappraised
- Leader Knows How to Give Feedback



What are your biggest challenges giving feedback?

- I don't know what to say.
- I'm too busy to provide feedback – they need to figure it out themselves.
- What do I do if they cry?
- I don't know if there are legal/ HR “watch outs”.
- It's really uncomfortable to tell someone I like something negative.
- There's never a good time.
- They should know they are doing a good job without me saying anything.
- They won't like me if I'm honest with them.
- It's a waste of time – nothing will change.
- I don't know how to give feedback constructively.



What if feedback was a gift intended to help someone grow?

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

“Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.”

- Brene Brown



Setting the Stage for Receiving Feedback

What happens when we feel attacked?

FIGHT



FLIGHT

FREEZE

Cognitive Bias

Our assumptions about the context of a situation will affect how we see the situation



What's the impact of bias on feedback?

Assume Positive Intent (API)

WE SEE WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

People rarely try to underperform or make mistakes

Our negative reactions impact our ability to address mistakes effectively

Pause and reflect:

What (most likely) was their positive intention?



API In Action

What's the most important leadership advice you've been given?

- “Whatever anybody says or does, assume positive intent. You will be amazed at how your whole approach to a person or problem becomes very different.”

- Indra Nooyi, Former Chairman and CEO of PepsiCo



What was their intent?

Someone is constantly interjecting and interrupting in a meeting to share their point of view

Assume Negative Intent

“He thinks he is the only person with good ideas and believes that no one on the team is as talented as he is.”

Assume Positive Intent

“He is really engaged and excited to share his ideas.”

Positive or Negative Intent: How will it affect the conversation?



Growth & Trust Accelerates

Being in Protection



- Bringing an “expert mindset” – “know-it-all”
- Holding tight to opinions and assumptions
- Emotional unavailability
- Uptight, closed, finger pointing
- Focusing on the past
- Hiding/denying own shortcomings/contribution
- Holding on to questions and answers we know
- Perception that problems are caused by others
- Victim perspective
- Not caring, detached, coping

Being in Learning



- Bringing a “beginners/learners” mindset
- Showing a genuine interest in others’ perspectives, curiosity
- Emotional availability, vulnerability
- Interest in discovery, accountable
- Focusing on the future
- Desire to learn more about self
- Wanting to understand their contribution to the situation
- Ownership of problems and seeking of solutions in ourselves

Is the Feedback Objective?

You don't care about the business

You didn't contribute to the process

You've been late to the meetings

You are doing a great job

You are not communicating effectively

You did not follow up with the customer within 24 hours

You have no respect for people's work

You have created a report that compared results, with graphics and highlighted the best approach

You made a choice without involving management

You interjected before I revealed my solutions

We think you are difficult to deal with

We believe you have a bad attitude

Specific – Factual – Non-judgmental

Removing assumptions and adding clarity makes feedback more effective

SBI Model for Feedback



Situation

Be Specific
about time
and place



Behaviour

Describe
observable
actions



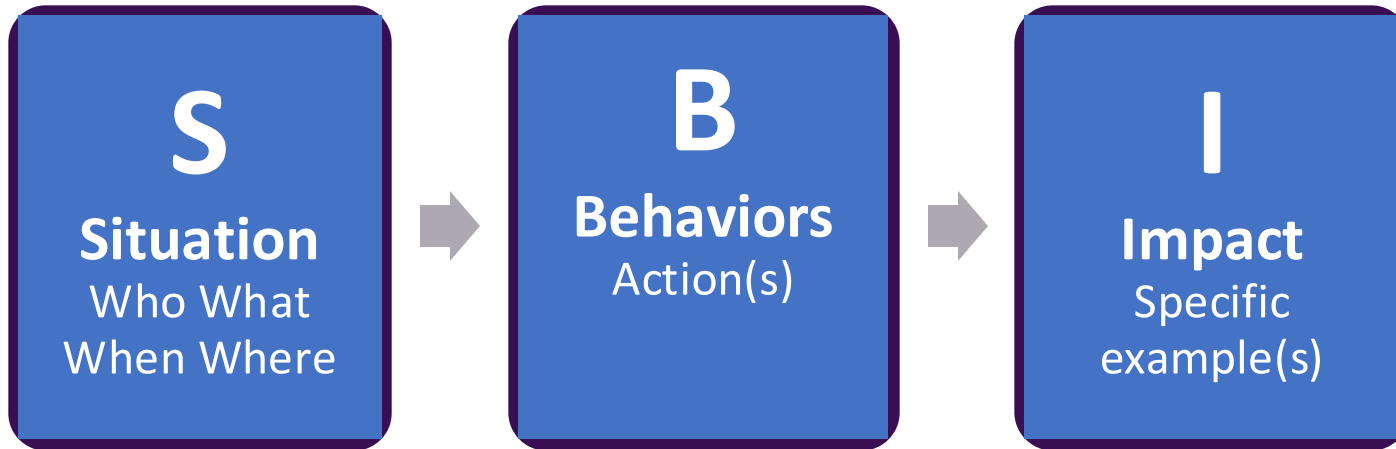
Impact

What was
felt and
result of
behavior

The Situation – Behaviour – Impact Feedback Model



Constructive Feedback Conversation



NEXT: Ask their side of the story
Create 2-way Conversation

(Pause | Ask Questions | Use Listening Skills)

GET TO
Resolution & Commitment



Constructive Feedback Conversation - Example

1 - Describe **situation and what you observed/heard**

2 - Then ask: “What are your thoughts about the **situation**?” (hear their side of the story)

3 - Then add: “I’d like to share my observations about it as well. Are you open to that?”

4 – Share: “What I noticed...[**behaviors**/actions]

5 - “As a result... [**impact**].

Pause | Ask Questions | Use Listening Skills

6 – Move into **Resolution** – Transfer ownership

What steps can you take to resolve this?

What could you do differently next time?

Constructive Feedback: Key Points

- Make sure they feel heard
- Understand their perspective
- Be curious
- Make a connection
- Align on the issues
- Solve it together

THREE SKILLS USED HERE:

1. Discovery based questions
2. Non-judgmental listening, curiosity, care
3. THEN share your ideas respectfully

BUILD TRUST - THE NEXT TIME IT WILL BE EASIER

Constructive Feedback Conversations: Pair Discussions

ACTIVITY

PAIR FEEDBACK PRACTICE

- SBI
- Create Two Way Conversation
(Pause | Ask Questions | Use Listening Skills)
- Resolution & Commitment

Positive Feedback Conversation

1 **Situation:** Who | What | When | Where

2 **Behaviors:** Action(s) / Inaction(s)

3 **Impact:** Specific example(s)

4 **Recognition:** What they did
Appreciation: Qualities → WHO they are

- Brain releases “feel-good” hormones (*Giver + Receiver*)
- Consistent practice → inspires loyalty & higher levels of performance

Creating Opportunity

Providing Positive and
Constructive Feedback

DO NOT WAIT!

When, where, how, and with whom can you practice both
positive and constructive feedback?

Break



Navigating Difficult Conversations & Conflicts

What thoughts and feelings come to mind when you think about conflict?



What if we think of “conflict”

not as:

Battle Fight War Competition
Incompatibility

But simply:

- Difference in how we say or express things
- A disagreement, difference of opinion, feeling or perspective

Let's Talk About Conflict

Conflict is natural and necessary

WHEN IS CONFLICT POSITIVE?

- Facilitates growth
- Exchange of ideas
- Leads to better results
- Catalyst to discover more
- Adds new perspectives
- Innovation
- Improves relationships
- Creates more trust

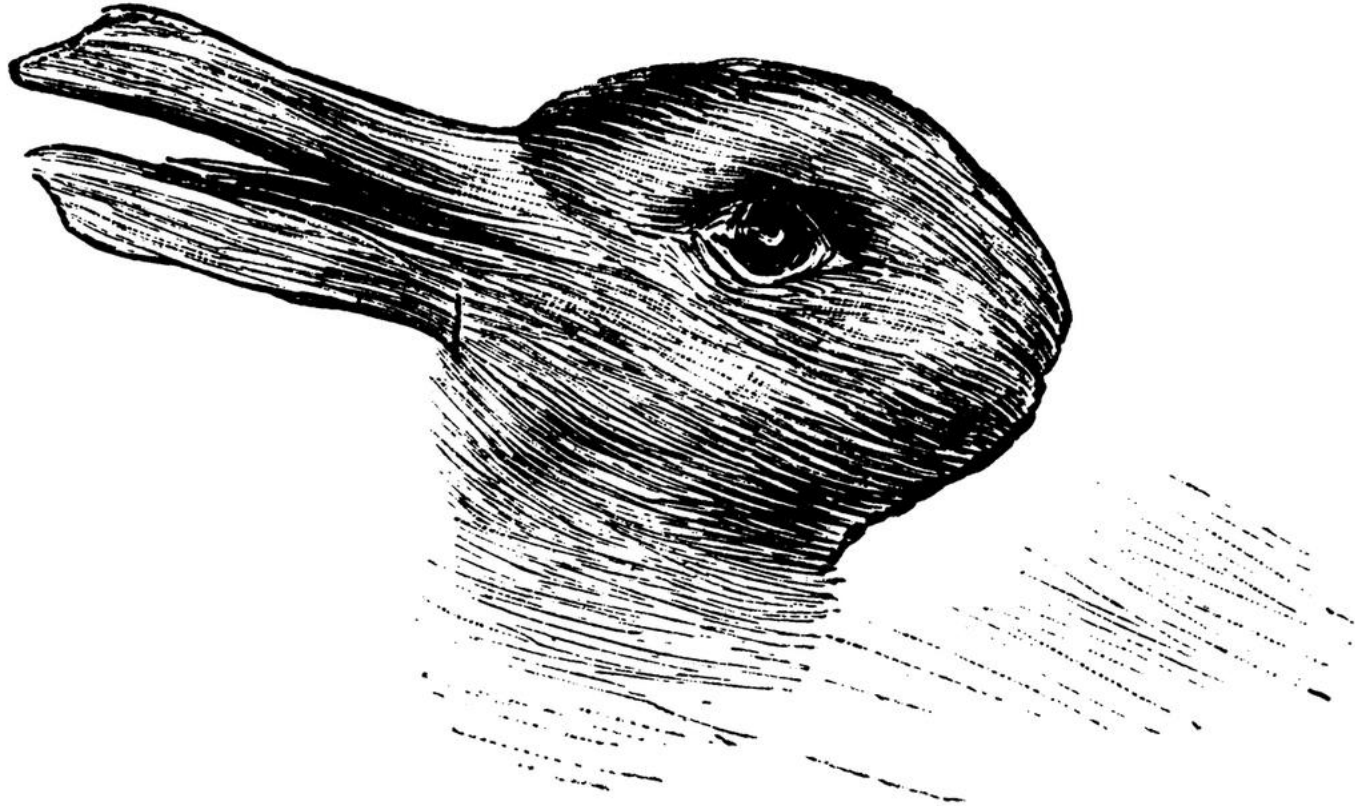
WHEN IS CONFLICT TOXIC?

- Impediment to growth
- Stuck with stubborn mindset
- Not a win-win
- Aggressive language & behavior
- Verbal abuse
- Threats
- Deception
- Detrimental to relationships

“For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, debate.” – Margaret Heffernan, 5 time CEO, TED speaker

What do you see?

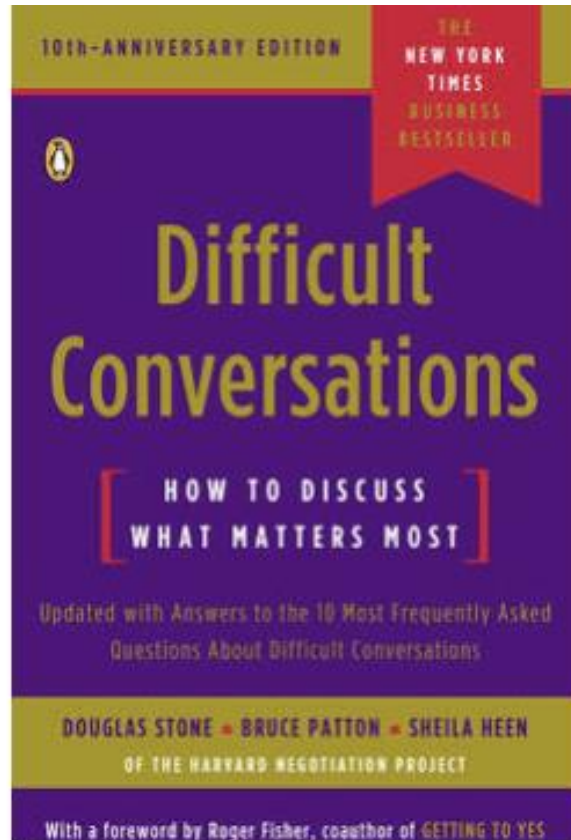
WHAT DO YOU SEE?



“When we change the way we look at things.....the things we look at change.”

Dr Wayne Dyer

Harvard Negotiation Project



“Difficult conversations are almost never about getting the facts right. They are about conflicting perceptions, interpretations, and values.”

– *Stone, Patton & Heen*




The Three Conversations



The “What Happened?” Conversation

We argue about what happened, who’s right and who’s to blame. We each think we’re right, when we both make wrong assumptions.






-  Truth: Explore each other’s stories
-  Intention: Separate intent & impact
-  Blame: Map out the contributions



The Feelings Conversation

We try to avoid feelings, when they are often at the heart of difficult conversations.






-  Know your Feelings
-  Negotiate Emotions
-  Share your Feelings



The Identity Conversation

We keep asking: “what does this say about me?” and try to protect our sense of self.



-  Don’t go off-balanced
-  Anchor your identity
-  Be mentally-prepared

Difficult Conversations Preparation

1. Identify and describe the issue

- The issue I intend to resolve is: (objective based on facts, not on your assumptions, careful of your biases and being judgmental.) – Describe what you know, how long it has been going on (be objective)

2. Discuss the current impact

- How is this issue impacting you, the organization or customer? When you consider the impact, what are your emotions? How is this affecting you?

3. Discuss the *future* implications

- If nothing changes what would be the consequences? To whom and what? What's at stake for you, the team, organization and/or customers?

4. Examine your personal contribution to this issue

- Take some time to explore whether you have forgotten to provide information, triggered a poor behavior, failed to be involved, etc.... Reflect on how you might have contributed to the problem even slightly.

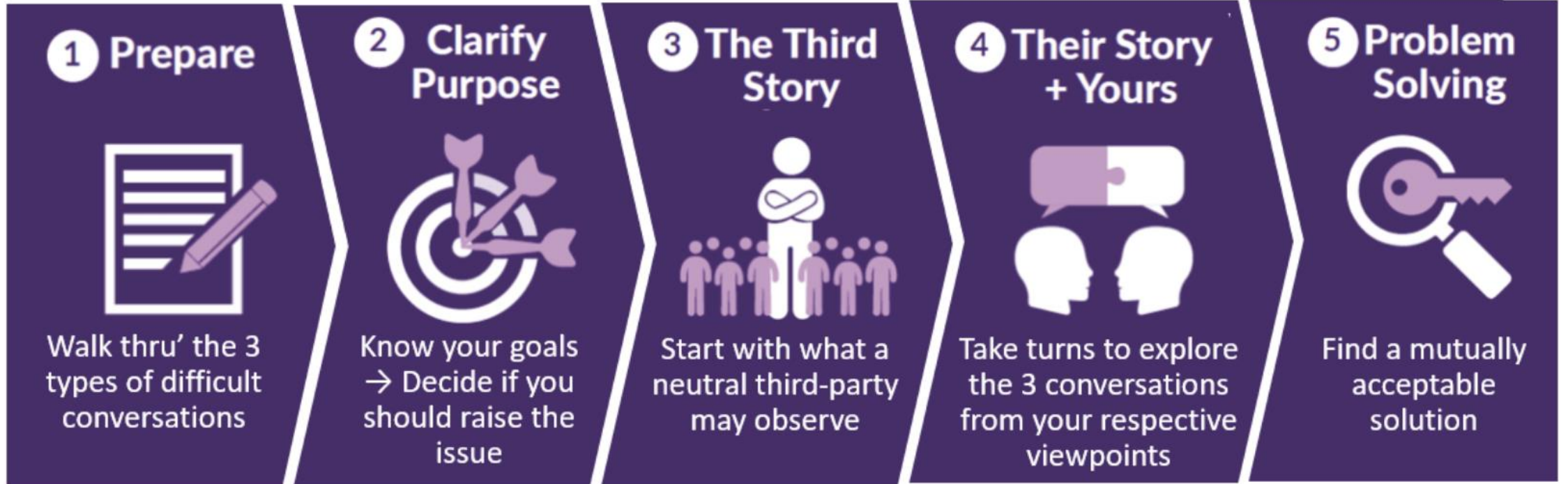
5. Determine the ideal outcome

- When the issue is resolved, how will that affect you, your relationship, your organization, etc.? What positive results will you and others experience?

6. Commit to action and a timeframe

- When will you have this difficult conversation? How will you show up in the conversation? What's your intent? What steps will you ask to implement to avoid this in the future?

Let's Practice



Wrap-up

- Takeaways
- Next Steps
 - Schedule workshop #3
 - Complete pre-work



Thank you!

