

Courageous Conversations TOOL

The Healthy Communication Side of Business



Difficult conversations are an unavoidable part of life. Whether it's delivering difficult/critical feedback or engaging with a challenging person, all business owners are faced with these conversations at some point. The choice you, as a leader make is *how* you choose to engage in these conversations. Luckily, learning how to effectively engage in a **Courageous Conversation** is a skill that can be acquired with an open heart and mind. Courageous Conversations are a healthy, effective method to having this potentially difficult, yet necessary conversations.

It's not just touchy-feely stuff. It's proven to increase profits.

Before following the 10 steps for a Courageous Conversation, consider the following :

1. What is the right Place and Time?

- a) **P.T.A. Pause/Think/Act.** This is the direct opposite of shooting from the hip and acting impulsively.
- b) **When is the right/best time?**
- c) **Where is the best place?**

2. What rules of engagement will you use?

- a) **Company Values.** Which of the company's published values can you use as a guide in this conversation?
- b) **Mutuality.** Where is your shared interest? How can you present this CC so that it's not adversarial?
- c) **"I" Statements.** How can you use "I" statements rather than "*You, everybody, you all, or they*".
- d) **What Voice will you use?** Are you being a Coach? A Boss? A Cop? A Cheerleader? A Teacher? A Friend? A Mentor?
- e) **How can you be authentic?**

3. How can you use active listening so that the other person feels deeply heard?

- a) **How can you keep from interrupting the speaker?** What will it take to bite your tongue and wait until they have "played himself out" and finished? (Even if you think the facts are wrong).
- b) **How can you keep driving to the heart of the issue?** How can you ask, "*Is there more?*", "*What else is going on?*"
- c) **How will you restate the speaker's point of view so that he knows you really "get it"?** This is vital to having the speaker feel "heard".
- d) **How can you check in to get total alignment** by asking "*This is what I heard you say....Did I hear that right?*"

After you have answered the questions above and have your method mapped out, follow these **10 Steps for Courageous Conversation:**

1. **Share your intention** that this conversation be open, honest and in good faith.
"I want to have a Courageous Conversation with you about this issue."
2. **Share your goal for the outcome** of this Courageous Conversation.
"I want this to be a win/win for both of us."
3. **Name the elephant in the room.** State the obvious, yet unaddressed problem, or challenge. Once it is "out in the open", both sides can honestly discuss the issue and stop evading it. What is the clear, undeniable fact or data point? (Calmly and with compassion: anger must be handled/managed prior to initiating Courageous Conversation). How can you state the issue cleanly without opinion or judgment?
"This is the third meeting in row that you have come late."
4. **Share your opinion** and point of view **with an "I" statement.** How can you own it as opposed to making it "The universal truth"? If you have a strong feeling and can share it do it in a non-confrontational way.
"When you come late, I think that the company project is not your top priority."
5. **Make a clear request.**
"I would like you to come on time or call ahead of time if you know you are going to be late"
6. **Now listen (actively)** to the other person's point of view without interrupting.
"Is there more?" "What else is going on?"
7. **Reflect back to the other person exactly what you heard.**
"This is what I heard you say....Did I hear that right?"
8. **Solutions** - Invite the other person to state possible options to resolving this situation. Share what you see as possible options, including any of theirs with which you find agreement.
9. **Commit to moving forward** with this new agreement and how you will do it.
10. **Check back/follow-up** (ie. in one week), and monitor regularly to insure that your relationship is fine and on different and healthier footing. When will you check-in: _____

Want someone to guide you through implementing the Courageous Conversation Tool?

Contact Brand Launcher for a **FREE consultation with one of our expert coaches.**

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