Making Difficult Conversations Easy

MADSEC Fall Conference
October 31, 2019

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Presenter
I actually can make a difference in each interaction.

I actually can and will make a difference in each interaction.

I actually can … and do … make a difference in each interaction!
What is a Difficult Conversation?
A Difficult Conversation Is Anything **YOU** Find It Hard To Talk About
What is conflict?
What is Conflict?

Definition: Conflict - Noun

1. Fight, Battle, War

2. (a) competitive or opposing action of incompatibles antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons conflict of principles)

(b) mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands

3. the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict
Conflict is not negative.
What are Internal Triggers of Conflict?
5 Internal Triggers of Conflict

1. unmet expectations
2. values violated
3. misperceptions
4. emotional challenge
5. different intentions
How do these triggers manifest externally?

- Facial expression
- Body language
- Voice tone
- Choice of words
- Behavior
We make assumptions of the internal based on the external.
Hearts pounding, stomach’s clenching, thoughts scatter
WE CAN’T
CHOOSE THE
INTERACTION.
WE DIDN’T
CHOOSE THE
REGULATIONS.
WE CAN
ONLY
CHOOSE
HOW WE RESPOND.
Take Stock of **YOU**!

- Quiet the chatter in your head
- Determine your goal
- Focus your thinking
- Open yourself to listening

**Know Thyself**
6 Steps to Managing My Behavior

1. I control my breathing.
2. I control my muscles.
3. I focus of my thoughts.
4. I set a proactive goal for this specific conversation.
5. I manage my body language, relax facial muscles, arms to sides, relaxed gait.
6. I put on a pleasant, calm expression.
Know Thy Impact

• Do your behaviors match your words?
• How do you conduct yourself under pressure?
• Is your conduct consistent with your stated values?
• Do you act as a role model?
• Do you self-monitor?
• Do you reflect on your behaviors after an interaction?
Some conversation stems....

To make a statement:
I think…
I notice …
I wonder …

To make a connection:
This helps me think about …
Building on what you just said …
That is an interesting point – I will think on that …

Ask questions
What do you mean by _____?
Can you say more about that?
Help me understand…

Can you add one or two that have worked for you?
When you are reacting in the moment...
Keep a pulse on how you are feeling.

Manage self-talk.

Learn how to quiet all else so you are able to focus.

Respond with non-committal statements.

Make a plan with the person(s) to get back together.
Offer a respectful way for the person to explain...

Set the stage for the person using an I statement.
I Statements Really Help!

Example

• I ... then state your feeling ... explain why you have this feeling.

• Example: “I am feeling frustrated because when we talked last week, ... pause...

• I understood I would have the data on your student’s progress by Friday.

• Can you help me understand what happened?”
Let’s Summarize
Conflict comes from unmet expectations and / or a values violation

Assumptions are made up of the internal based on the external

Seeking clarity allows us to move toward conflict – the door of opportunity

Proactive responses increase understanding, fix problems, …. and help you manage that fight/flight response.
Haiku

First, calm down.
Next, stay that way
for the rest of your life.

“Haiku,” from Ron Padgett’s *Big Cabin*
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Thank You!

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