The Art of The Fierce Conversation

COMMUNICATING TO BE UNDERSTOOD

BY

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Today we are going to talk about relationships and the conversations that build them.

Based on the relationships we develop, our lives, succeed or fail gradually, then suddenly.

Relationships are constructed one conversation at a time.

In a conversation we must always aim to be understood rather than interpreted.

Fierce Conversation interrogate reality without assigning blame - - - they are purposed to build relationships.
Key Points

- When you think of a Fierce Conversation - - -
  - Think *passion*,
  - Think *integrity*,
  - Think *real*,
  - Think *authenticity*, and
  - Think *collaboration*
Much of the material used for today’s presentation is from a 2002 book by Susan Scott entitled, *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life, one conversation at a time.*


Scott Outlined 7 **Principles** of a Fierce Conversation.
The Seven Principles of a Fierce Conversation

- Principle 1: **Master the courage to interrogate reality**
  - No plan survives its collision with reality, and reality has a way of shifting, at work and at home. People change and forget to tell each other – we are all changing all of the time. (Not only do we neglect to share this with others, we are skilled at masking it from ourselves.)
  - The conversation always begin with ourselves!!
Principle 2: Come out from behind yourself into the conversation and make it real.

While many people fear ‘real,’ it is the unreal conversation that should scare us to death. Unreal conversations are expensive for the individual and the organization. No one has to change, but everyone must have ‘the conversation.’ When the conversation is real, the change occurs before the conversation is over. You will accomplish your goals, in large part, by making every conversation you have as real as possible.
The Seven Principles of a Fierce Conversation

- Principle 3: **Be here, be prepared to be nowhere else.**
  - Our work, our relationships, and our lives succeed or fail one conversation at a time. While no one conversation is guaranteed to transform an association, a business, a relationship, or a life - **any single conversation can!** Speak and listen as if the conversation you are in is the most important conversation you will ever have with this person. It could be. Participate as if it matters. **It does!**
The Seven Principles of a Fierce Conversation

- Principle 4: **Tackle your toughest challenge today.**
  - Burnout does not occur because we are solving problems; **it occurs because we have been trying to solve the same problem over and over.** The problem named is the problem solved. **Identify and then confront the real obstacles in your path.** Stay current with the people important to your success and happiness.
Principle 5: Obey your instincts

Don’t just trust your instincts – obey them. Your radar screen works perfectly. It’s the operator who is in question. An intelligence agent is sending you messages every day, all day. **Tune in.** Pay attention. Share these messages with others. What we label as illusion is the scent of something real coming very close!!
Principle 6: Take responsibility for your emotional wake.

For leaders, there are no trivial comments. Something you may not remember saying more than likely had a lasting impact on someone who looked to you for guidance and approval. The conversation is not about the relationship; it is the relationship. Learning to deliver messages without a ‘load factor’ allows you to speak with clarity, conviction, and compassion.
• Principle 7: *Let silence do the heavy lifting.*
  
  When there is simply a whole lot of talking going on, conversations can be so empty of meaning they *crackle*. **Memorable conversations include breathing space.** Slow down the conversation so that insight can occur in the space between the words and you can discover what the conversation really wants and needs to be about.

  “*Do not speak unless you can improve the silence.*”
  
  - Old Vermont Saying
Preparing for the Fierce Conversation

- Prepare for a conversation? When do I have time to do that?
  - Many conversations just happen; all of a sudden; unannounced; without much warning. We have to be ready for them!! Ask yourself – **what do I want from this conversation?**
  - Planned conversations, confrontations, that impact people’s lives require careful preparation - - - enough preparation for you to address the question – **what do I want from this conversation?**
Preparing for the Fierce Conversation

- Preparing the presentation of an issue helps prevent incoherent or incomplete explanations of a problem.
  - **Be concise** – in one or two sentences, get to the heart of the problem. Is it a concern, challenge, opportunity, or recurring problem that is becoming more troublesome?
  - **What is at stake?** (The significance of the problem)
  - **Ideal outcome** (What specific results do you want?)
  - **Provide relevant background information.**
  - **What has been done up to this point? What Options are you considering?**
  - **What help do I need from the individual or group?** (Alternative solutions, identification of consequences, more information?)
This Model allows us to confront tough issues with courage, compassion, and skill.

- **Opening Statement**: (60 Seconds)
  - Name the issue, illustrate with an example, describe your emotions about the issue, clarify what is at stake, identify what you have done so far, indicate your wish to resolve the issue, invite your partner (partners) to respond.

- **Interaction**: Inquire into your partner(s) view.

- **Resolution**:
  - What have we learned? Where are we now? Has anything been left unsaid that needs saying? **Move forward given the renewed understanding.**
Confrontation

- When confronted with reality people must not be left to frolic on the fringes of the forest waiting for the message to unfold. Confronting reality is an art everyone can develop when they choose to do so.

- Real conversations are honest, passionate, pointed, quick, and renewing - - - - they are free of sugar-coating yet there must be a sweetness to them.
Thank You

- Thank you so much for providing the opportunity to introduce the *art of conversation* to you today.

- Do you have questions?? Or Comments?