

The Art of Having Difficult Conversations

Presented by,
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Introductions

Who am I?

Who is here?

Name
What County do you work for?
What unit/s do you supervise?

AGENDA

1. What makes a conversation difficult?
2. Moving towards more comfort with difficult conversations

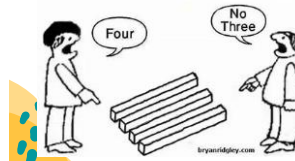
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What makes a conversation difficult??



Perspective...

Reality can be so complex that equally valid observations from differing perspectives can appear to be contradictory.



Perspective....



CONSIDER.....

What do you want from someone who has to HAVE a difficult conversation with you?

(i.e. doctor/parent/director/child's principal)

Example

EXAMPLE:

A number of years ago, my mother needed to have surgery. Her condition was not life-threatening; however, it was serious, and I wanted to make sure both she and I were clear about the risks and benefits of the proposed surgery. I remember accompanying her to the doctor, nervous and hopeful. The doctor was terrific in walking us through the procedure, telling us what would happen and what the benefits would be. I remember asking, with some trepidation, "What are the risks?" Without batting an eye, the doctor looked at me and said, "It's a complicated part of the body—I could cut something I shouldn't."

My first thought upon hearing this was: *Gulp!* Maybe we should find another surgeon! If she is worried she could cut something she shouldn't, perhaps we should find someone more confident and careful. Wouldn't that be better? But within a few seconds, I realized my heart rate was dropping, and I slowly began to feel a little better. This doctor knew the damage she could inadvertently cause while trying to be helpful. On reflection, this was exactly the kind of surgeon I wanted for my mom.

Example considerations

1. **Plan:** you would want someone to be thoughtful and plan what they were going to discuss with you, and understand the content.
2. **Think about timing:** you would want them to let you participate in the timing so it works into your schedule
3. **Talk about feelings:** avoid shame ("you don't respect me") and use "I" statements ("Can you see why I would find that hurtful?")
4. **Pace the conversation:** you would not like someone to throw lots of info at you, you would get overwhelmed and likely miss some of the information.
5. **Listen:** you would want the person to then listen to ensure you understand correctly.
6. **Stay calm:** you would want someone delivering tough information to remain calm
7. **Take breaks:** if the conversation stops being productive you would want the option to take a break and try again after you've had the needed time for a break.

Why is initiating and facilitating still so hard????



What makes a difficult conversation successful?

A successful outcome will depend on two things: **HOW** you are and **WHAT** you say.

HOW you are (centered, supportive, curious, problem-solving) will greatly influence **WHAT** you say.

What is your *ELEPHANT* in the room?



Communication is about Connection

*Instead of trying to change **WHAT** they are thinking, change their **EXPERIENCE** of hearing within a difficult conversation.*

Wrap-up/Take aways

1. Difficult is a perception
2. Communication is about connection
3. Get out of your own way
4. See the conversations *as the work*



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Thank you for joining!

"NEW "Reflective Leader Intensive" COHORT STARTING NOV 1st

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Website: www.rayofhoperreflectivecoaching.com



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COHORT INFORMATION

Starts in November - November 1st through November 15th

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2 Week Course

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