

Towards Your Employment and Career Success



Study
Sunshine Coast
Australia

Notes and resources from the Career and Employment Success workshops.

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Notes and resources from the 2021 workshop series

The following notes and resources are designed to support the information and discussions presented on the workshop series of the same name.

Use them as a helpful reminder of what you studied in the workshops and to continue putting into practice the tools and ideas you learned.

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Towards Your Employment Success

The first step to building confidence, is learning how to show it.

Congratulations!

You're about to complete your studies and gain a new qualification. Well done. All your hard work is about to pay off.

Next on the to-do list is to find an employer who values your qualification and skills as much as you do.

To help you on that journey, let's look at some simple ways you can boost your self-confidence and tap into your own personal x-factor that will give you the edge you need to succeed.



What does success look like?

First of all, let's unpack what success looks like. To do that, think of someone you see as happy and successful. Now, write 3 words that describe them:

Over the years, I've asked this same question of thousands of people and their answers are nearly always along similar lines. When asked to describe happy and successful people, the words people use include many of the following:

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Confident</i>	<i>Relaxed</i>	<i>Contented</i>	<i>Supportive</i>	<i>Adaptable</i>
<i>Curious</i>	<i>Grateful</i>	<i>Persistent</i>	<i>Caring</i>	<i>Resilient</i>	<i>Light-hearted</i>
<i>Authentic</i>	<i>Focused</i>	<i>Motivated</i>	<i>Generous</i>	<i>Cheerful</i>	<i>Optimistic</i>
<i>Hopeful</i>	<i>Upbeat</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>Creative</i>	<i>Enthusiastic</i>	<i>Encouraging</i>

The words people use to describe happy and successful people focus on character not qualifications or achievements. They focus on the *who they are* as a person, not what they done or what they have gained. It's not talent that is admired, it's effort and attitude.

We are often distracted by stories of success that highlight things like money, fame, intelligence and physical appearance. Yet real success, in life as it is in finding the right employment, is all about living true to our own values, aligning our actions with beliefs and being of service to others in ways that we find meaningful and empowering.

While your new qualification is a valuable addition to your toolkit, there will be plenty of other people with similar recognition of their expertise. Remember, your qualification may help you get an interview, but it will be your attitude that gets you the job.

And the number one attribute that employers are looking for is **confidence**.

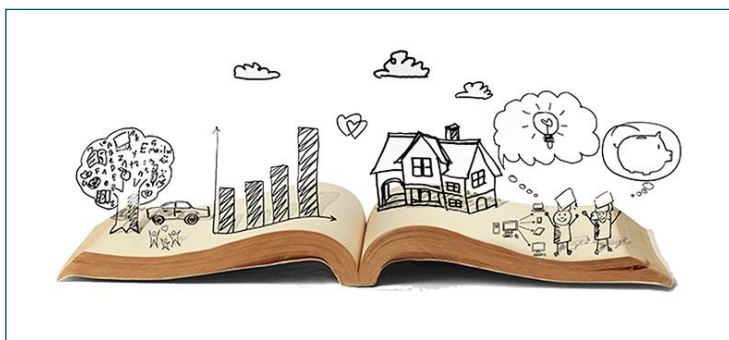
What's your story?

Roger C. Shank was one of the early pioneers of research into Artificial Intelligence (AI). While trying to figure out how to get computers to think like humans, he realised that he first had to understand how humans processed information. His research in that field led him to a fascinating conclusion – humans don't think using information, they think and learn using stories. Shank was so inspired by this idea that he shifted his entire career focus from computer science and AI to education reform.

Why is this important for us when seeking employment? Because many of us make the mistake of just sharing information with potential employers, instead of using stories to help us connect and communicate.

Rather than just talk about what qualifications and experience we have, if we tell stories that illustrate who we are and how we respond to life's challenges, we are much more likely to capture people's attention and make the connections we need to find work that will be fulfilling and meaningful.

Even more importantly, the stories in our own heads about who we are and what we're capable of have a huge impact on our own confidence to succeed.



Begin where you are. Start with what you have. Believe in your own ability to improve.

Confidence is a SNAP!

Self-confident people are at ease with themselves and their own abilities. They invite trust and inspire confidence in others. These are attractive qualities.

There are a number of things you can do to boost your confidence. Some of them are just small changes to your frame of mind. Others you'll have to work on for a bit longer to make them familiar habits.

Here are four things you can start doing today that will help you give a improve your confidence:



Say 'thank you' more often

Gratitude is contagious. When we thank someone, we feel good, and so do they. It's one of the easiest ways to lift our mood and best of all, it's free. Look for opportunities to thank other people as often as you can. It's guaranteed to boost your self-confidence. Check out this article for more on [How To Say Thank You](#)

No is empowering

Steve Jobs said that focus is not about what we say yes to, it's about how often we say no. The same applies to confidence. Getting clear about our own goals and intentions is a start. Saying no to anything that doesn't align with those goals and intentions is even more powerful. Saying no means we are clear about our own boundaries and we also know how to communicate them to others. For some great tips on how to do this, go to [Ten Reasons To Say No More Often](#)

Attitude is everything

Attitude is a state of mind. Thoughts become things – so choose the good ones. Confidence comes from victory, but strength comes from the struggle. Embracing challenges and learning from our mistakes without beating ourselves up gives us confidence. Don't fake it till you make it – face it till you make it. Check out this [video by Dr Carol Dweck](#) or this article about her research on [how to create a growth mindset](#). Remember, people hire for attitude. They can train you for skills.

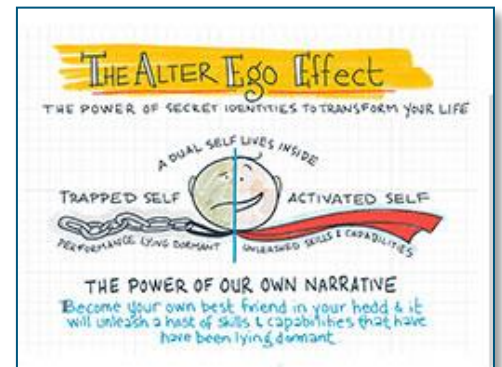
Positive posture is good for your brain

Our bodies and brains and emotions are all connected. When we slump over, drop our shoulders and look down this 'closed' posture signals to our subconscious that we are under stress. If we stand up straight, shoulders back and head high our 'open' posture lets our brain know that we're feeling positive and confident. Pay attention to your posture. It's an easy way to boost your confidence in minutes. Watch this [video by Amy Cuddy](#) for more.

How To Dissolve Imposter Syndrome

One of the great superpowers of being a human being is our creative imagination ~ Todd Herman

Imposter Syndrome is the feeling that we don't deserve to be where we are or that we somehow don't belong. Todd Herman has a simple way to dissolve that feeling and turn it into a positive. Follow the steps below or [read more on this Blog Post](#).



Step One:

List the skill or ability you think you don't have.

Who am I to think I can:

Step Two:

List an example of when you've done this in another form or a different context.

Well, I'm the one who:

List another example:

And I'm the one who:

And another one:

And I'm the one who:

And one more:

And I'm the one who:

If you spot it, you've got it!



We gain a sense of self-confidence when we see ourselves (and others like us) mastering skills and achieving goals. This encourages us to believe that, if we learn and work hard in a particular area, we'll succeed. It's this type of confidence that leads people to accept difficult challenges and to keep going in the face of setbacks. One easy way to start recognising how much we have going for us is to see how much we already have in common with those we admire and look up to. After all, if they can succeed in their given field, why can't we?

Just follow the steps below to start acknowledging your own amazing catalogue of skills and abilities. We can't recognise something in someone else if it isn't already inside us. Maybe in a different form or as yet undeveloped. But it's there. If you spot it in someone else, that means you've already got it.

Be a legend in your own mind.

List 3 people in your target industry or career that you admire or look up to:

For each of these 3 people, list 2 things you admire about them:

Now, think about each of these items on your list and ask yourself this question - Where do you already demonstrate these abilities in your life?

What's Their Story?

There is only one question employers are asking.

'Can you solve my problem?'

So to gain an employer's attention, it's up to us to showcase our experience and expertise in ways that align with specific issues and problems they face.



Our job is not to focus on how we can get a job. Our job is to focus on being a solution to someone else's challenges. That means we need to think about what an employer is struggling with, and then present ourselves in a way that fills that gap.

There are three things all employers want to save...

Every business is looking for people who will help them increase profits and lower costs. And there are three things they all want to save – time, energy, and money.

To give yourself the best chance of being hired, think about how you can help reduce time, energy or costs for your employer. As Zig Ziglar said, 'The best way to get what you want in life is to help other people get what they want.'

Show, Don't Tell

Remember, it's the story that counts, not the context. You may be new to an industry that you've never worked in before, but that doesn't mean you can't give examples from other areas of life that demonstrate your value.

We can say something like... 'I know I'm new to this space, but I bring with me the kind of skills and life experience that are exactly what you need. For example...' (and then give an example from some other context that shows you have a needed skill or ability.

For example, if you've been home raising children for years, then you have time management, problem solving and conflict management skills. If you've travelled overseas, you know how to work to tight schedules, manage an itinerary and respond to unexpected delays with agile thinking.

Think about your experiences, not just at work, but in all areas of your life, and come up with examples that demonstrate your ability to:

Solve problems

Make decisions

Handle setbacks

Manage conflict

Use initiative

Prioritise

Handle criticism

Own your mistakes

Collaborate with others

Seek feedback

Share victories

Lead others

Ask questions

Manage time

Stay confident

It's the story that counts, not the context.

The Gaddie Pitch

One way to tell a story that has impact is to use what's called a Gaddie Pitch. Named after it's creator, Antony Gaddie, a marketing expert in Melbourne, the Gaddie Pitch is a simple way to show how you are the solution to an employer's problem.

The basic pattern is in three stages. First, identify a common problem. Then give your solution, and lastly, provide an example.

To make it simple, the Gaddie Pitch uses three cues to start each section of your story:

You know how... (problem you're solving)

Well, what I do is... (solution and emotion)

In fact... (example)

Here are a couple of examples:

A Children's Book author

You know how bedtime is often the most stressful time of the day for parents?

Well, what I do is write beautiful children's stories that help kids quickly relax and drift off peacefully to sleep.

In fact, just the other day I had a letter from a single mum who said my story books have completely changed her evening routines and given her back some much-needed quiet time for herself.

A Bookkeeper

You know how stressed you feel because you've been putting off balancing the books for months at a time?

Well, what I do is give you a simple automated system that takes only minutes to do and then I take care of everything else.

In fact, just last week one of my clients was saying how much more relaxed they feel, knowing that they can focus on building their business without a single thought about spreadsheets and taxes.

If you want to know more about the Gaddie Pitch, you can download a free e-book [HERE](#)

Name, Same, Different

Another way to 'pitch' is with the name/same/different approach. This works well when introducing yourself. Your name / your industry or trade / what makes you stand out from others in your field (your specialty)

Hi, my name is Bruce Williams, I'm a training facilitator. I specialise in communication skills for new and emerging leaders.

Hi, my name is Mary Lamb, I'm a baker. I specialise in vegan and gluten free products for children with food allergies.

The AIDA Model

When everyone else is pitching, learn how to catch.

These days, an important part of building a successful career is attending business events, trade shows and networking functions. It can take a while to get used to starting conversations with strangers, especially if you're new to the industry or perhaps somewhat introverted.

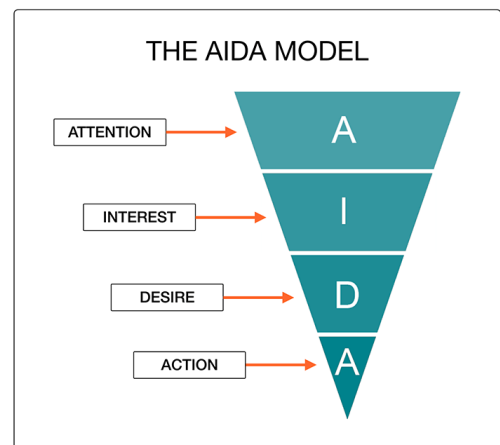
A great way to build confidence for events like this is to simply forgo talking about yourself and what you do. Instead, just ask questions of other people and let them do all the talking. After all, most people love to talk about what they do (particularly if they're passionate about it) and show off their knowledge. So when everyone else is pitching, learn how to catch.

Advertisers and marketers use an acronym to describe how ads should be designed for highest impact. AIDA stands for attention, interest, desire and action. Great ads capture our attention, get our interest, create desire and lead us to take action. But the emphasis is on the ads doing the 'getting'. Get our attention, get our interest, get our desire, get our action.

It's a very self-centred approach. And most of us sense it's happening and may feel uncomfortable or even resentful because we feel we're being manipulated.

But what if we reverse the approach?

Instead of trying to GET someone's attention with your well-rehearsed pitch, what if you simply GIVE them your attention by asking about them? Give other people your attention, your interest, your desire and your actions. All you need are a few simple questions to get the conversation happening.



Attention

What is it that you do?

Interest

How interesting. What led you to take up that career?

Or... What's the biggest challenge in your industry right now?

Or... What's new on the horizon for you?

Desire

I'd really love to know more about that. Do you have any suggestions?

Action

It's been great chatting with you. Do you have a business card please?

Or... I'd love to stay in touch, may I connect with you on LinkedIn please?

The quality of our conversations is determined by the quality of questions we ask.

The best way to create a great conversation is to ask other people questions. To be interesting and memorable, just work on being interested in others.

Here are some stock questions you could start with until you feel more confident:

- *What's the biggest challenge in your industry right now?*
- *How is that affecting your business?*
- *What solutions are you working on?*
- *What opportunities are you most excited about right now?*
- *Where do you see the most growth happening in the next few years?*
- *Do you have any connections in the xxx industry?*
- *Are you able to introduce me please?*



Another space that opens up great opportunities to stand out from the crowd is at the end of an interview. Most employers or interview panels tend to end an interview with, 'So... do you have any questions for us?'

Most interviewees ask the same sorts of questions that tend to focus on their own interests, rather than the employers'. Questions like, when will you make a decision? What is the usual pay scale? That sort of thing.

Remember that you are wanting to communicate a story about yourself that shows an employer what kind of person you are and why you'd be a great asset to their company.

- *I hear there have been some changes to rules governing this industry. How are you managing those changes? What new opportunities are they creating for business growth?*
- *What's the biggest challenge / opportunity for growth / change / in your business at the moment?*
- *What's new and exciting on the horizon for your business?*

Show you're interested in personal and professional development:

- *What learning and development programs do you offer your staff?*

Show you're interested in learning and improving, even when you fail:

- *If another candidate is successful, would you be open to a quick phone call so I can find out how to improve next time?*

For more tips on interview questions, go [HERE](#)



Your network is your net worth

LinkedIn is a fantastic way to showcase your experience and expertise, as well as the perfect platform for digital networking. Here are some simple tips to help you stand out.

A picture tells a thousand words

Make sure your profile picture looks professional. And smile.

Headline your skills

The headline section attracts a 25% weighting in search algorithms. So make sure you list your key qualification or skills that employers will want. For example:

- Baker and Pastry Chef. Specialising in French Patisserie.
- Registered Nurse. Midwifery and Post-natal Specialist.
- Office Manager. Banking and Finance.

It's not about you

Use your 'About' section to tell people how you can help them solve their problems. This is a great spot for your Gaddie Pitch. Remember, the best way to get what you want in life is to help other people get what they want.

Keep it Simple

When seeking to connect with someone new, keep the request nice and simple. For example:

Hi (their name), I'd love to be included in your professional networks here on LinkedIn if I may please. Thanks! (Your name)

And when someone accepts your request, just thank them. Don't pitch or try to sell. The important thing is to simply connect. For example:

Thanks for connecting (their name), I look forward to learning more about what you do. Cheers! (Your name)

If you want advice ask for money. If you want money ask for advice.

A great way to deepen a connection is simply to ask for advice. Most people are happy to share their wisdom. Ask a relevant question you authentically want help with. Those who are willing to share can become supportive colleagues or mentors over time.

Think about some people or companies you can approach today.

Shoot them a quick message and see what happens. You don't know if you don't ask.

For more tips on creating a great LinkedIn profile, go [HERE](#).

Where does your ideal employer hang out and who with?

Outside of LinkedIn, there are other opportunities to connect with potential employers that are low or no-cost. Think about the kind of organisations your potential employers may be part of. What groups or events might they attend? Check out the relevant websites and see what events are on their calendar that you could attend. Most organisations hold regular networking opportunities and often open them up for visitors to attend:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Industry associations
- Government sponsored networking events
- Expos and displays
- Maker centres and innovation hubs

Who is in your corner?

If you are new to an industry or trade, it can be helpful to tap into your existing networks as a way to add more credibility to your resume and job applications.

Think about people you know who may have the sort of connections you need. And don't just stick to business connections, think about friends, your extended family, your friends' parents, neighbours, past teachers or lecturers. Anyone who may be able to attest to your character and vouch for your skills.



List the people you can contact to list as referees or write a reference:

Create a list of people and start contacting them. Ask them if they would be willing to have their contact details listed as a character reference. Ask past employers for a reference and keep them all on file for when you might need them.

Reference Tip

Everyone is busy. Even people who are happy to give you a reference. Make it easy for people to help you out. Ask them if it's OK for you to send them some dot points or a draft to edit. Most people appreciate the effort and will get it back to you much sooner than if you just wait for them to write one. Plus, you can make sure the reference highlights your skills and experience in ways that you know will appeal to your employer.

Face It Till You Make It!

Remember, confidence comes from victory, but strength comes from the struggle.

You don't need to fake it till you make it. It's OK to admit that you're still learning. It's in taking on new challenges that stretch us that we build our expertise and grow our confidence.



Talk Does Not Cook Rice

The West Papuan's have a saying, 'Knowledge is just a rumour until it lives in the muscle'.

In other words, until we put what we learn into practice, it's just a theory.

Clarity (and confidence) follows action – not the other way round.

So, here are some important actions you can take this week to get the ball rolling:

List some names of people you will you contact this week:

For Advice:

For a Reference:

For a Referral:

To Join Their Network:

To Ask a Question:

To Attend Their Event:

IDEA: You've Got Personality!

Have you ever wondered why you can easily relate to some people and not to others? Have you noticed how some people seem to naturally speak your language yet with others you find it hard just to get on the same page? Do some things stress you out while other people find those same things exciting or enjoyable?



Personality is an unconscious personal algorithm that drives our likes and dislikes, our leadership capacity, communication style, how we respond to challenges and how we relate to other people. High performing teams recognise and embrace personality differences. They know how to leverage diversity to grow agile, resilient teams. They know how to transform the pressure of the modern fast-paced workplace into meaningful, positive outcomes for themselves and those they serve.

IDEA

There are four easily identifiable patterns in human behaviour. Each pattern is a pair of contrasting approaches. We all use both aspects of each pair, however, we have an unconscious bias, a preference that feels easier and more comfortable. Like right or left handedness, we have dominant and supporting modes of behaviour. Our preferred behaviour patterns need little thought or effort. While others require more conscious attention and energy.

To identify which pattern of behaviour is demonstrated, there are **four simple questions** we can ask:

- What **INFORMATION** do we tune in to?
 - Is it details?
 - Or big picture?
- How do we make **DECISIONS**?
 - Is it with logic?
 - Or empathy?
- Where is our **ENERGY**?
 - Is it extroverted?
 - Or introverted?
- How do we take **ACTION**?
 - Is it structured?
 - Or go with the flow?

Remember, we all do both. However, we have an unconscious bias towards one as our default preference. And while we may develop the skills to use both approaches to suit the context we are in, when we are stressed or tired or not paying attention, our default setting will come to the fore.

Knowing our own style is helpful – we can moderate our behaviour as needed.

Knowing other people's preferred style is even better – we can put ourselves in their shoes and communicate in ways they are more likely to relate to.

Click [HERE](#) for the You Tube Video: [IDEA 4 steps to better communication](#)

Details “Just the facts please”	Big Picture “I can see it all now”
5 senses Using hands-on and practical skills Making things Realistic and observant Known facts and details Practical and down to earth Step-by-step approach Specific realities and immediate application Concrete examples Build up to big picture Present plan and process See the parts to understand the whole	6 th sense, patterns and connections Using mind and imagination Problem solving Imaginative and innovative Possibilities and relationships Theories, ideas and metaphors Random approach An overview or big-picture concept Concepts and models Begin with the big picture Future possibilities and ideas See the whole to understand the parts
Logic “Does this make sense?”	Empathy “Who will be affected?”
Analysis and logic Information, research and data Seek honesty and truth Analyse and critique Need to be competent Impersonal, frank feedback Detached, objective, rational Logical reasoning, clear thinking Unemotional, firm and tough-minded Clear, precise, concise Consider principles and consequences	Personal values and ethics Connection and rapport Seek personal approval Empathise Need to be appreciated Relationships and people-focussed Prioritise values and harmony Consider the needs of others Persuasive and warm-hearted Tactful, indirect Consider the impacts on people
Extrovert “Let’s talk this over”	Introvert “I need to think on this”
Relate easily to the outer world Energised by interaction People, events, activities, things Immediate feedback and verbal responses Act before reflecting Initiate conversations Make small talk Sociable – easy to get to know Communicate more easily by talking Learn best by doing and interacting	Relate to the inner world Energised by solitude Ideas, thoughts, feelings, impressions Delayed feedback and written responses Reflect before acting Wait to be invited Comfortable with silence Reserved – take time to get to know Communicate more easily by writing Learn best by reading and reflecting
Structure “Just do something”	Flow “Let’s wait and see”
Planned, decided, orderly Make decisions quickly Seek closure Action and goal oriented Like to control events Prefer limited options Systematic and methodical Specific instructions and timelines Regular routines and schedules Complete one task then start another Motivated by a new task Focus on reaching the goal	Unplanned, flexible, spontaneous Explore/discuss options before deciding Open-ended Purpose and strategic direction focussed Like to respond to the moment Multiple options and possibilities Casual and easy-going Questions and flexibility Dynamic response to context Working on several tasks at once Motivated by an approaching deadline Focus on experiencing life

What INFORMATION do I tune into?

Details

“Just the facts please”

I pay most attention to physical reality, what I see, hear, touch, taste, and smell. I'm concerned with what is actual, present, current, and real. I notice facts and I remember details that are important to me. I like to see the practical use of things and learn best when I see how to use what I'm learning. Experience speaks to me louder than words.

- I remember events as snapshots of what actually happened.
- I solve problems by working through facts until I understand the problem.
- I am pragmatic and look to the "bottom line."
- I start with facts and then form a big picture.
- I trust experience first and trust words and symbols less.
- Sometimes I pay so much attention to facts, either present or past, that I miss new possibilities.

Big Picture

“I can see it all now”

I pay most attention to impressions or the meaning and patterns of the information I get. I would rather learn by thinking a problem through than by hands-on experience. I'm interested in new things and what might be possible, so that I think more about the future than the past. I like to work with symbols or abstract theories, even if I don't know how I will use them. I remember events more as an impression of what it was like than as actual facts or details of what happened.

- I remember events by what I read "between the lines" about their meaning.
- I solve problems by leaping between different ideas and possibilities.
- I am interested in doing things that are new and different.
- I like to see the big picture, then to find out the facts.
- I trust impressions, symbols, and metaphors more than what I actually experienced
- Sometimes I think so much about new possibilities that I never look at how to make them a reality.

How do I make DECISIONS?

Logic

“Does this make sense?”

When I make a decision, I like to find the basic truth or principle to be applied, regardless of the specific situation involved. I like to analyse pros and cons, and then be consistent and logical in deciding. I try to be impersonal, so I won't let my personal wishes - or other people's wishes - influence me.

- I enjoy technical and scientific fields where logic is important.
- I notice inconsistencies.
- I look for logical explanations or solutions to most everything.
- I make decisions with my head and want to be fair.
- I believe telling the truth is more important than being tactful.
- Sometimes I miss or don't value the "people" part of a situation.
- I can be seen as too task-oriented, uncaring, or indifferent.

Empathy

“Who will be affected?”

I believe I can make the best decisions by weighing what people care about and the points-of-view of persons involved in a situation. I am concerned with values and what is the best for the people involved. I like to do whatever will establish or maintain harmony. In my relationships, I appear caring, warm, and tactful.

- I have a people or communications orientation.
- I am concerned with harmony and nervous when it is missing.
- I look for what is important to others and express concern for others.
- I make decisions with my heart and want to be compassionate.
- I believe being tactful is more important than telling the "cold" truth.
- Sometimes I miss seeing or communicating the "hard truth" of situations.
- I am sometimes experienced by others as too idealistic, mushy, or indirect.

Where is my ENERGY?

Extraverted

“Let’s talk this over”

I like getting my energy from active involvement in events and having a lot of different activities. I'm excited when I'm around people and I like to energize other people. I like moving into action and making things happen. I generally feel at home in the world. I often understand a problem better when I can talk out loud about it and hear what others have to say.

The following statements generally apply to me:

- I am seen as "outgoing" or as a "people person."
- I feel comfortable in groups and like working in them.
- I have a wide range of friends and know lots of people.
- I sometimes jump too quickly into an activity and don't allow enough time to think it over.
- Before I start a project, I sometimes forget to stop and get clear on what I want to do and why.

Introverted

“I need to think on this”

I like getting my energy from dealing with the ideas, pictures, memories, and reactions that are inside my head, in my inner world. I often prefer doing things alone or with one or two people I feel comfortable with. I take time to reflect so that I have a clear idea of what I'll be doing when I decide to act. Ideas are almost solid things for me. Sometimes I like the idea of something better than the real thing.

The following statements generally apply to me:

- I am seen as "reflective" or "reserved."
- I feel comfortable being alone and like things I can do on my own.
- I prefer to know just a few people well.
- I sometimes spend too much time reflecting and don't move into action quickly enough.
- I sometimes forget to check with the outside world to see if my ideas really fit the experience.

How do I take ACTION?

Structure

“Just do something”

To others, I seem to prefer a planned or orderly way of life, like to have things settled and organized, feel more comfortable when decisions are made, and like to bring life under control as much as possible. I am motivated by new tasks and like to begin them as soon as I can.

The following statements generally apply to me:

- I like to have things decided.
- I appear to be task oriented.
- I like to make lists of things to do.
- I like to get my work done before playing.
- I plan work to avoid rushing just before a deadline.
- Sometimes I focus so much on the goal that I miss new information.

Flow

“Let’s wait and see”

To others, I seem to prefer a flexible and spontaneous way of life, and I like to understand and adapt to the world rather than organize it. Others see me staying open to new experiences and information. I am motivated by deadlines rather than tasks, and this often where I do my best work.

The following statements generally apply to me:

- I like to stay open to respond to whatever happens.
- I appear to be loose and casual. I like to keep plans to a minimum.
- I like to approach work as play or mix work and play.
- I work in bursts of energy.
- I am stimulated by an approaching deadline.
- Sometimes I stay open to new information so long I miss making decisions when they are needed.

Communication Preferences

Our **IDEA** preferences influence how we communicate. Understanding the basics about how others may prefer to operate can help us work together with less stress and more 'Yes!'

We tend to gravitate toward our own preferred styles, and this is often where we function best. Nevertheless, with practice we can adapt our communication style to suit any role. That said, it does require extra attention and energy to do so. And if we use a non-preferred style over a long period of time that doesn't allow for, or call on, our usual preferences, inefficiency and burnout may result. We contribute most when we go with our strengths. And we supplement and support this by adopting a different style when needed and communicating using other's preferences when appropriate.

DETAILS

- Like evidence, facts, details, and examples presented first.
- Want practical and realistic applications shown, with relationships between the facts clearly explained.
- Rely on direct experience to provide information and anecdotes.
- Use an orderly, step-by-step approach in conversations.
- Like suggestions and ideas to be straightforward and feasible.
- Refer to specific examples.
- In meetings, follow the agenda.

BIG PICTURE

- Like global themes and broad issues presented first.
- Want to consider future possibilities and challenges.
- Rely on metaphors, insights and imagination as information and anecdotes.
- Use a meandering, roundabout approach in conversations.
- Like suggestions and ideas to be novel and unusual.
- Refer to general concepts.
- In meetings, use the agenda as a starting point or a guide only.

LOGIC

- Prefer to be brief and concise.
- Want the pros and cons of each alternative to be listed.
- Can be intellectually critical and objective.
- Are convinced by cool, impersonal reasoning.
- Present goals and objectives first Use emotions and feelings as secondary data.
- In meetings, seek involvement with the task first.

EMPATHY

- Prefer to be personable and in agreement.
- Want to know an alternative's impact on people and values.
- Can be appreciative and accepting of others.
- Are convinced by personal authenticity.
- Present points of agreement first.
- Consider logic and objectivity as secondary data.
- In meetings, seek involvement with people first.

EXTRAVERSION

- Communicate with energy and excitement.
- Respond quickly without long pauses to think.
- Converse about people, things, and ideas in the outside world.
- Sometimes need to moderate your delivery.
- Seek opportunities to communicate with groups.
- Like at least some communication to be face-to-face.
- In meetings, like talking out loud to build your ideas.

INTROVERSION

- Keep energy and enthusiasm inside.
- Pause and reflect before responding.
- Think through ideas, thoughts, and impressions Sometimes need to be drawn out.
- Seek opportunities to communicate one-to-one.
- Like at least some communication to be in written format.
- In meetings, verbalize ideas that have been thought through.

STRUCTURE

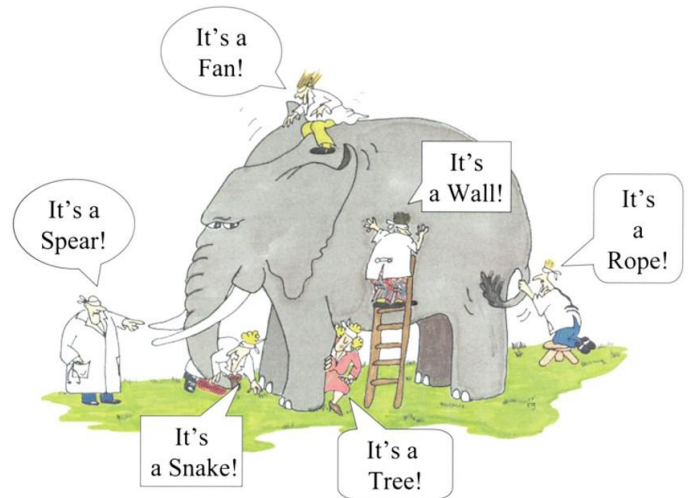
- Want to agree on schedules, timetables, and reasonable deadlines.
- Dislike surprises and want advance warning.
- Expect others to follow through, and count on that happening.
- State your positions and decisions as final.
- Want to hear about results and achievements.
- Focus on purpose and direction.
- In meetings, concentrate on completing the task.

FLOW

- Are willing to discuss timetables but resist tight deadlines and unchangeable schedules.
- Enjoy surprises and adapt to last-minute changes.
- Expect others to respond to situational requirements.
- Present your views as tentative and modifiable.
- Want to hear about options and opportunities.
- Focus on autonomy and flexibility.
- In meetings, pay attention to how things are proceeding.

QUALITY SOLUTIONS COME FROM QUALITY QUESTIONS

We don't know what we don't know. And what we do know is only a small part of the picture. We are wise to ask questions of other people whose focus is different to our own. It's the best way to get a well-rounded understanding of the information we need to make good decisions and create optimal solutions. Here are some suggestions of question to ask when other people have a different style to ours:



DETAILS

- How did this problem occur?
- What are the verifiable facts?
- What exactly is the situation now?
- What has been done and by whom?
- What already exists and works?

BIG PICTURE

- What can we interpret from the facts?
- What insights and hunches come to mind about this situation?
- What would the possibilities be if there were no restrictions?
- What other directions/fields can we explore?
- What is the problem similar to?

LOGIC

- What are the pros and cons of all the alternatives?
- What are the logical consequences of the options?
- What are the objective criteria that need to be met?
- What are the costs of each choice?
- What is the most reasonable course of action?

EMPATHY

- How will the outcome affect the people, process, and organization?
- What do we like and dislike about each alternative?
- How will others react and respond to the options?
- What are the underlying values involved for each choice?
- Who is committed to carrying out the solution?

A NOTE ABOUT STRESS

In most circumstances we are reasonable consistent with the kind of **information** we tune into and how we make **decisions**. However, under stress we may unconsciously begin to switch to our less preferred (and less developed) style and act in ways that are the inverse of our usual behaviour.



DETAILS:

You will usually

- Recognise the pertinent facts
- Apply experience to problems
- Notice what needs attention
- Keep track of essentials
- Handle problems with realism

Under stress you may

- Become caught in a rut, rehashing the same details
- Get stuck, lose common sense, and not see possible ways out
- View the future in negative terms
- Turn unduly pessimistic

BIG PICTURE

You will usually

- Recognise new possibilities
- Come up with new solutions to problems
- Delight in focusing on the future
- Watch for additional ideas
- Eagerly start in on something new

Under stress you may

- Become overwhelmed with ideas and possibilities, all equally enticing
- Obsess over unimportant details
- Become so preoccupied with one irrelevant fact that it becomes your whole focus
- Overindulge with excessive eating, drinking, exercising, TV, etc., to avoid facing reality

LOGIC

You will usually

- Analyse the situation
- Find flaws in advance
- Hold consistently to a principle
- Weigh the pros and cons
- Stand firm against opposition

Under stress, you may

- Become opinionated and unwilling to change your point of view
- Have unexpected and uncontrolled emotional outbursts
- Be hypersensitive to suspected slights
- Take criticism very personally

EMPATHY

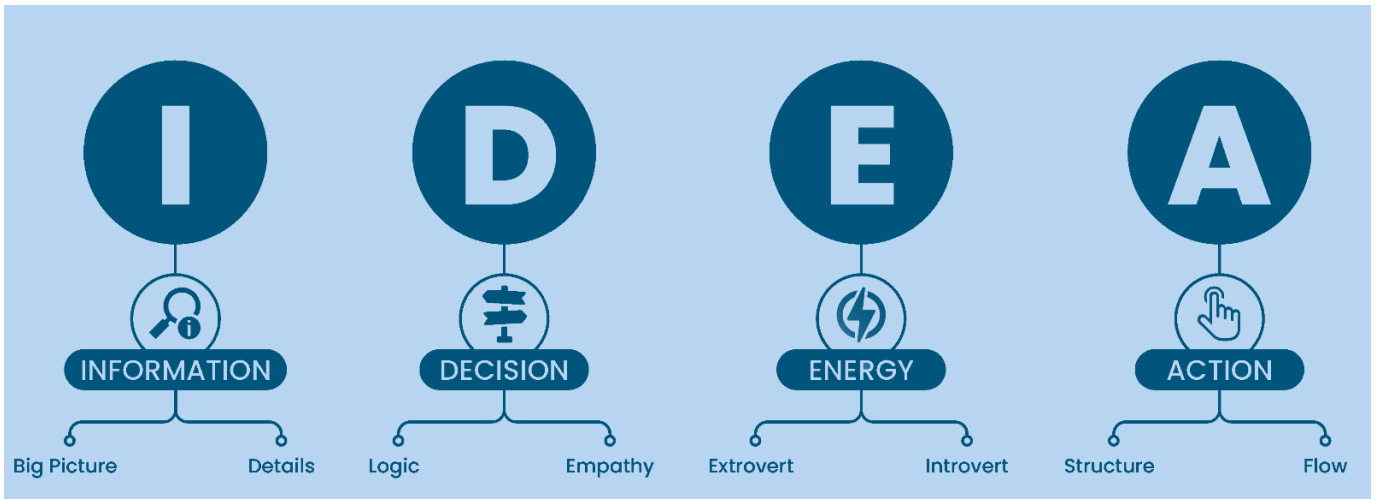
You will usually

- Empathise with people
- Be concerned about how others will feel
- Allow for extenuating circumstances
- Know what is really important
- Appreciate each person's contributions

Under stress, you may

- Stop listening to and accommodating others
- Become so sensitive to conflict that you ignore or avoid it
- Be hypercritical; find fault with almost everything, but in an illogical manner
- Act domineering, taking charge without a thought to others

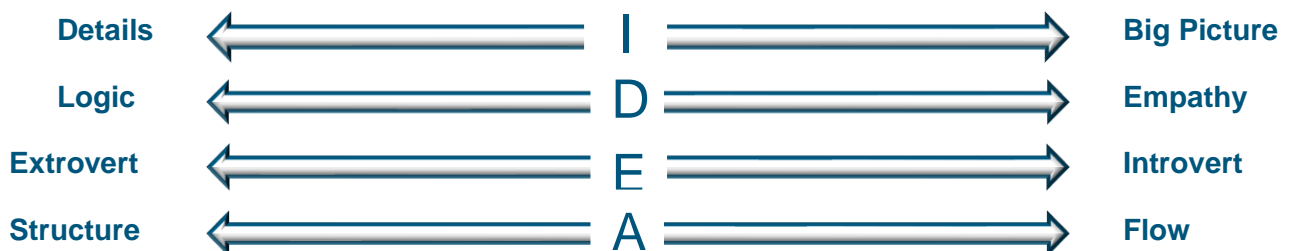
How to map your IDEA preferences



When we understand how other people tick, we work together with less stress and more 'Yes!'

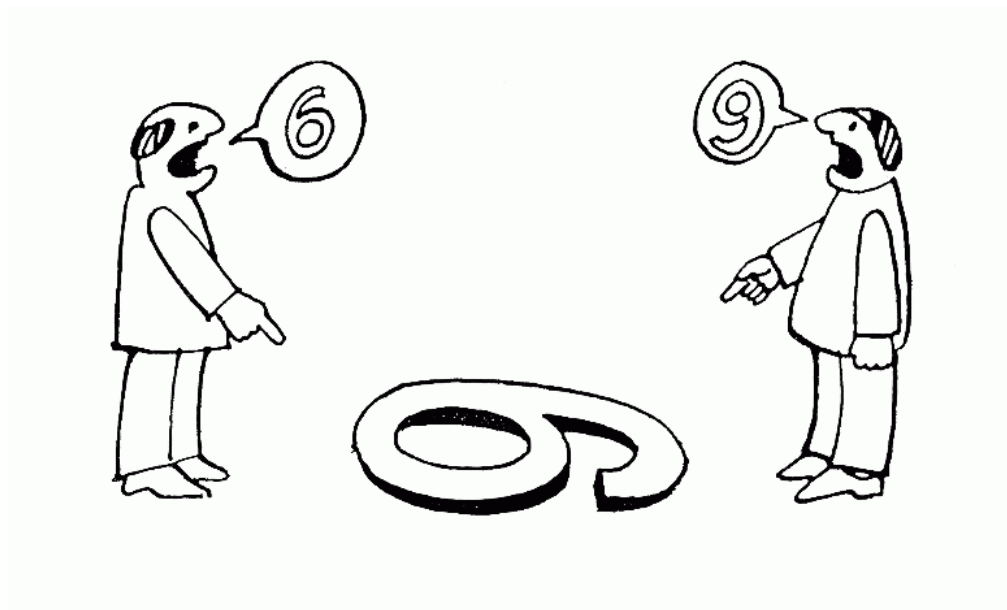
Bruce Williams

- Watch the 5-minute IDEA video
Click [HERE](#) or go to <https://youtu.be/-IVHyFpUowI>
- Think about which side of the 4 IDEA scales you more often tend to operate.
- Read through the descriptions of each of the 4 IDEA scales in the [Fact Sheet](#)
Click [HERE](#) or go to <https://brucewilliams.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/IDEA-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- Draw a small circle where you feel you most often operate on each of the 4 IDEA scales below.
(Remember, we always have a bias towards one side or the other, no-one is 50/50.)



Conflict Literacy

Conflict is inevitable but combat is optional ~ Max Lucado



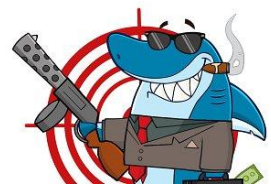
How do you feel about conflict?

Think about how you feel when conflict occurs. On a scale of 1 to 10 how do you feel?

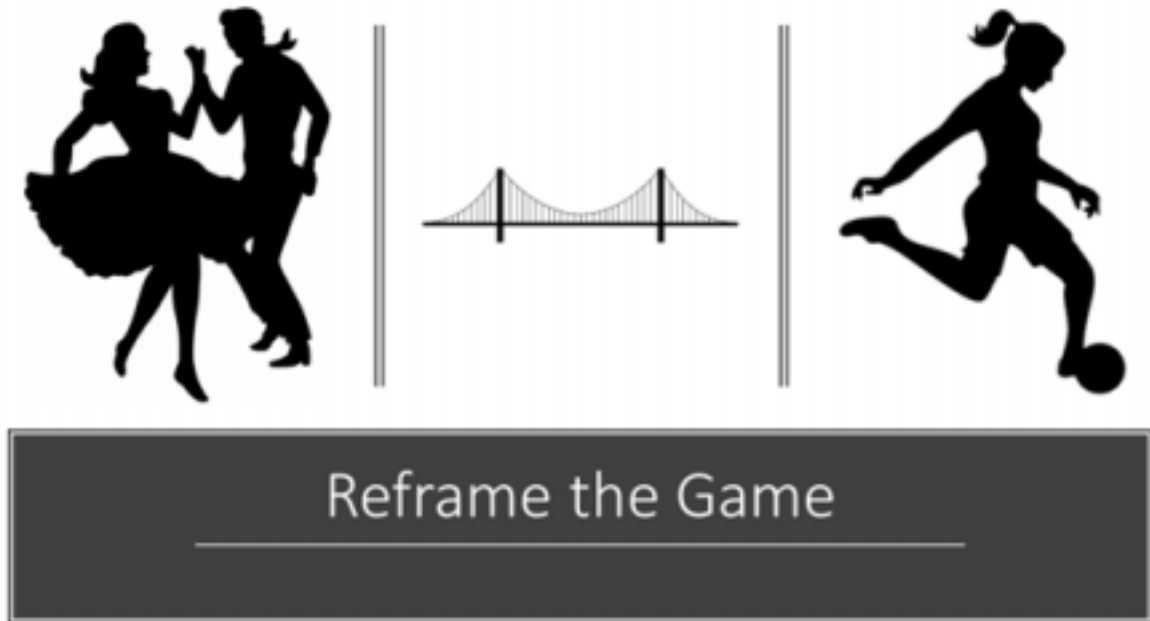
One = 'Run! We're all going to die!'

Ten = 'Yes! Bring it on!'

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



After you complete the workbook, come back and revisit your response to see if it has shifted.



Conflict is often seen as a negative. Yet it is conflict – a difference of opinions or ideas – that can lead to innovation and improvement. As we learn to embrace conflict as an opportunity for growth, we gain clarity and better understanding of each other or our situation. We come up with new ways to improve and boost performance.

Conflict as a dance.

Dance partners move in opposite directions and hold different positions, however with practice, the end result can be quite graceful and enjoyable. If we think of conflict as an invitation to dance, if we practice engaging gracefully with people who hold different opinions and positions from our own, the entire experience can produce a much more positive outcome.

Conflict as a game.

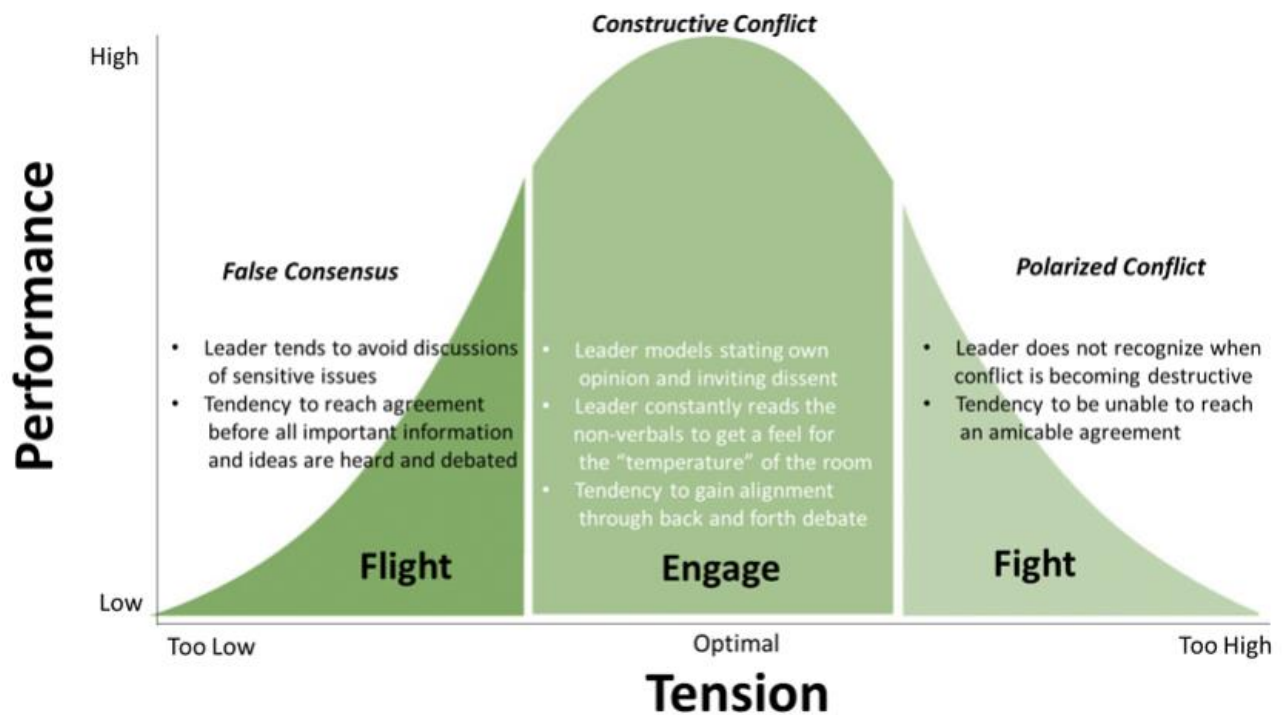
Great rivalries lead to excellence. Think Fischer-Spassky, Evert-Navratilova, Borg-McEnroe, Rousey-Holm, Red Sox-Yankees, Real Madrid-Barcelona. In sport, we expect opposition and plan for it. And the stronger the opposition, the more we learn and the better we become. Our rivalries revive and revitalise us. Opposition opens us to new opportunities - we win or we learn. Faced with new and unexpected challenges, we reinvent and innovate. Having the courage to step into conflict situations rather than avoid them helps us learn more about ourselves and others. We can value and appreciate our opposition because they are the ones helping us find new opportunities to improve, refine and develop.

Conflict as tension.

Tension is when opposing forces stretch something and pull it tight. It's a very useful force. Without it there'd be no Harbour Bridge. Without tension we couldn't parachute, sail, ski, yo-yo, trampoline, play tennis, start a chainsaw or hang the clothes out to dry. Tension is what holds two opposing objects in place and produces something useful in between. Think of a suspension bridge. Too little resistance and the bridge is unstable. Too much tension and the bridge snaps. Like a good suspension bridge, we need just the right amount of tension. We need resistance from opposing ideas and perspectives to create good connections and bridge the gaps in our thinking. Conflict is an opportunity to hold the space between and create something new and useful to bridge the gap.

Friends become wiser together through a healthy clash of viewpoints.

Optimal Tension = Constructive Conflict



Conflict literate leaders have an ability to sense the optimal amount of tension to bring out the best ideas and actions for their team.

The left side of the curve shows what happens when there is too little tension or conflict. People avoid difficult discussions and make decisions without allowing for a complete airing and debating of everyone's views and opinions. Psychologists often call this the "flight" response. People flee from any potential conflict either to preserve an artificial sense of harmony or to avoid dealing with differences. If a leader is uncomfortable with conflict, their team will never be able to have constructive debate. Differences will not go away until they are acknowledged and discussed.

Avoiding tension leads to unresolved conflict. Team members will become passive aggressive and fail to support decisions since they weren't given a chance to express their opinions. Or, at a future meeting, people not satisfied with the decision will bring up the issue again....and again. This is a major reason why teams seem to have the same meetings, discussing the same issues, over and over again. The issue was never resolved. It was avoided, but the tension remains.

The other end of the curve shows what happens if there is too much tension. People don't recognise (or care) if a debate gets destructive or personal. Typically, the most dominant people take over a meeting or conversation and try to impose their ideas on the team. Differences are not debated in a way that enables everyone to feel heard, leading again to unresolved conflict.

Constructive conflict occurs when we are comfortable to state our own opinion as well as to invite dissent, debate and contrary ideas.

Excerpted from an article by Michael Seitchik. For the full text, click this link:

<https://www.bates-communications.com/bates-blog/how-to-make-conflict-constructive>

What are the benefits of conflict?

One way to reframe the game and become more comfortable with conflict is to think about all the upsides of conflict.

When Rosa Parks said 'no' to giving up her seat on a bus, when Martin Luther King declared, 'I have a dream...' it was not consensus that opened a space for change. The real catalyst was conflict.

Folks like Copernicus, Galileo, Earhart, Einstein and Malala Yousafzai all encountered opposition and were vilified and ridiculed before they changed the world. Marie Curie faced unbridled hostility and opposition in her pursuit of an education and was denied entry to Warsaw's male-only university. Undeterred she persisted and eventually became the first woman to win a Nobel Prize (physics), and her later win in Chemistry made her the first person ever to claim Nobel honours twice. Her research led to the discovery of polonium and radium, she championed the development of X-rays and pioneered the first steps in treatments for cancer.

Curie saw conflict and opposition as a call to curiosity. 'Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less'.

Think about times in your life when experienced conflict that was uncomfortable but that eventually led to positive outcomes or change.

In the space below, write as many benefits of conflict as you can think of:

After you've listed all the benefits you can think of, check out these articles:

The Ten Benefits of Conflict: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/279778>

Advantages of Conflict in the Workplace: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/279778>

The Upside of Conflict: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/upside-conflict-bruce-williams/>

Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.
~ William James

There are 4 Domains of Conflict

There are four main domains of conflict. All four domains arise when there is a disconnect between what we expect and what occurs. This happens because we assume the other person understands our expectations. However, our expectations in any of these four domains may be unspoken, unrealistic or poorly explained. It is useful to work out what domains are in play for any given conflict as a starting point to find solutions.

1. Outcomes – What we want

Many conflicts are about two or more sides who feel the other is preventing them from getting or keeping something they want. For example. One partner wants to hire someone. The other partner doesn't. An employee wants a raise; The employer says, 'No'. A supervisor assigns a new responsibility. The staff member chooses to ignore it. Someone is given responsibility for a project. The results are not up to the standards everyone expected. The difference between expected and actual outcomes is most often due to less than adequate communication. Instructions may not be clear or precise enough. Or assumptions are made without getting proper clarification first.

2. Process – How we do it

Some conflicts are about how an outcome is to be achieved; a process to be followed, a system to use, a workflow already in place. It may also be about expectations of who should be included in discussions and decisions. Sometime the outcome is achieved, but the process used creates tension or disagreement. Sometimes people have a different way of operating that others are not used to or are uncomfortable with. Conflicts about process are great opportunity to examine our systems and workflows to make sure we are doing things the most effective way possible.

3. Evidence – Where we look

Conflict can also arise from where we look for evidence to support our decisions and actions. If we are operating from faulty, incomplete or inaccurate data, we are less likely to achieve a suitable outcome or use an appropriate process. Sometimes the data is accurate and complete, but different parties interpret and understand the data in different ways. Conflict allows us to question our evidence and make sure we take into account what is relevant and useful (and disregard what isn't).

4. Values – Why we want it

All of us have an internal value set that drives our actions and decisions. Some people have a very high value on punctuality, others have a more relaxed attitude towards timeliness. For some, keeping their workspace well organised and tidy at all times is important. Others may have a much higher tolerance for mess and disorder and are happy to get everything done then tidy up later when they have time. Some may be motivated by achievement and success. Others may be more interested in making sure everyone feels included and supported.

Conflict helps us uncover values that we didn't know were important for ourselves or other people.

If we manage conflict constructively, we harness its energy for creativity and development.
~ Kenneth Kaye

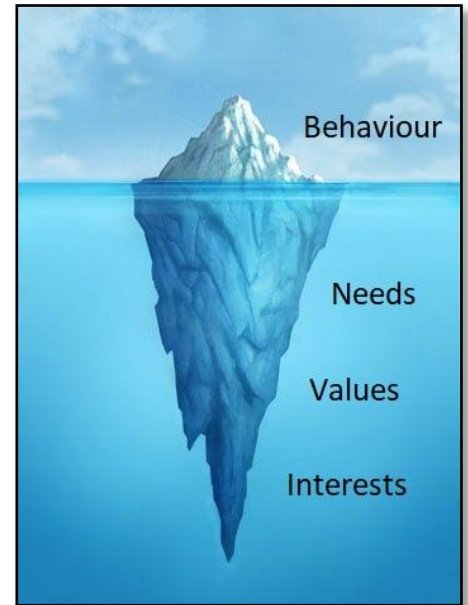
Conflict reveals unknown or unspoken...

- Needs, Values, Interests

In most conflict situations, what we observe is simply a person's behaviour and actions. However, the actual source of that behaviour is unknown or unspoken. Like an iceberg, what we see is only a small portion of the whole.

If we pay attention to what is going on when conflict arises, it will give us valuable insight into why this issue is important for the other person and clues about how to resolve it.

To help change someone's behaviour we must first understand their underlying reasons. In most conflict situations, the real drivers of behaviour are hidden below the waterline. Unless we are able to clarify those underlying drivers, our attempts to resolve conflict may be sunk before we begin.



The 5 Whys

The 5 Whys method is part of the Toyota Production System developed by [Sakichi Toyoda](#).

'The basis of Toyota's scientific approach is to ask why five times whenever we find a problem. By asking why five times, the nature of the problem as well as its solution becomes clear'

Five whys can also help us uncover 'below the waterline' needs and interests.

First acknowledge the issue: 'It sounds like this is really important for you'.

Then, ask why: 'I'm curious, do you mind if I ask why this is important?'

Listen to the answer and ask again: 'And why is that important?'

As you keep drilling down, any hidden needs, values and interests will soon become clear.

For example, a staff member complains they feel really dissatisfied with their slow laptop.

It sounds like you feel quite frustrated by this. Do you mind if I ask why?

Well I'm wasting a lot of time just waiting for it to do its thing.

And why is that important?

Because it slows me down and I can't get all my work done in time.

And why is that important?

It means I can't assist as many patients as everyone else on the team.

And why is that important?

Other people are noticing my lighter workload and they think I'm slacking off.

And why is that important?

I love the work we do together. I want to contribute my best as a valued member of the team.

There's not one person in this crowd who's gonna agree with everything I say. Not one.
~ Howard Dean

5 Whys Exercise

Think of an issue or experience at work that is currently creating some level of conflict for you.

First write down the issue, then use the five whys to dig deeper and get clear about what underlying needs, values or interests may be influencing your feelings and behaviour.

What is the issue?

Why is this important?

Why is this important?

Why is this important?

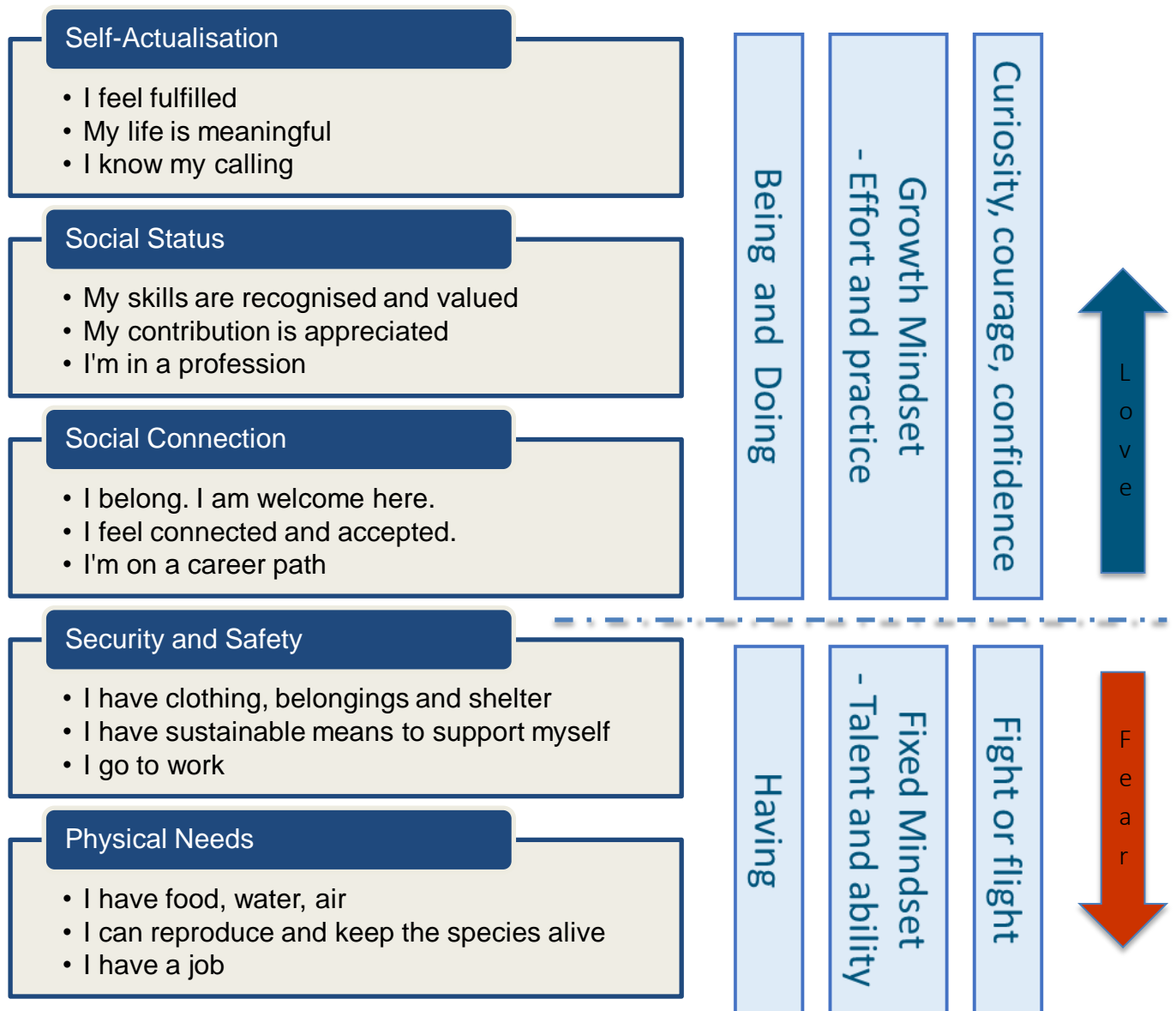
Why is this important?

Why is this important?

Now list any insights you now have about 'below the water-line' needs, values or interests that are influencing the situation. What approaches to a resolution do these suggest?

Resolution, like responsibility, is a product of ownership,
and we can't resolve a conflict until we figure out how we contributed to it.
~ Richard Eyre

Unspoken Needs



Maslow's Hierarchy

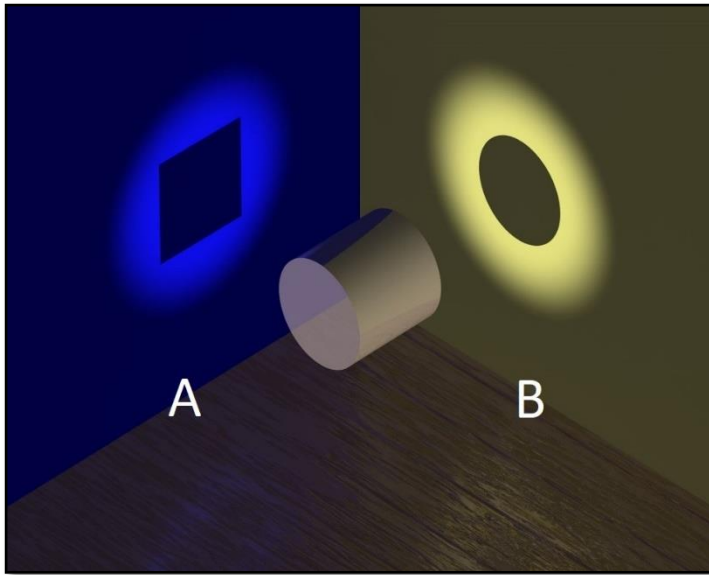
If people feel like their safety or security is threatened, they may react in fight or flight mode. When seeking to understand unspoken or unmet needs we may need to first reassure people that the conversation is not about punishment, penalty or retribution. It is about seeking clarity in order to find a workable resolution for all concerned. It is about keeping an open mind and being curious, generous and listening with positive intent. Be gentle, give people a way forward or a way out with dignity. Be kind. Be clear. Be respectful.

Some opportunities turn up dressed in overalls and look like work.

Being willing to change allows you to move from a point of view to a viewing point
- a higher, more expansive place, from which you can see both sides.

~ Thomas Crum

Positions vs Interests



A person standing inside this image at position A and looking directly at the end of the cylinder would think they are looking at a circle. But a person standing at position B would think that what they see is a square. Position A and Position B are both true, but they are not the whole truth.

Our **position** gives us a limited perspective that creates our perceptions and from this we construct a story about what we believe to be true. This is called the '[Ladder of Inference](#)' or '[unconscious bias](#)'.

When we take a position on an issue, we quickly decide on a solution that matches our position. When then argue about our proposed solutions rather than exploring more deeply what other possibilities may exist.

For example, two companies may be negotiating to buy a crop of oranges. Both companies want 100% of the crop to maintain their production outcomes and to fulfill existing client orders. Company A produces orange juice. Company B manufactures natural citrus-based cleaning products. Both companies have a position-based solution in mind - they want all the oranges. They approach negotiations as adversaries and argue their positions because anything less will put them out of business.

It is only when they agree to put their positions to one side and dig deeper to look at 'interests' that they discover Company A only wants the oranges' pulp to make their juice, they don't need the skins. Company B on the other hand only wants the skins, not the pulp. When they consider the interests below the water line, their conflict is resolved and both companies get what they need.



In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

~ Albert Einstein

Positions vs Interests

There is a [game we play](#) in some workshops to help people see the difference between positions and interests.

First everyone pairs up and then they take an arm-wrestle position.

At the buzzer, they have 20 seconds. For every time they get their opponent's hand to the desk, they get one M&M.

Some pairs try to out-muscle each other. Others collaborate and either flip flop their hands backward and forward, or repeatedly tap one player's hand on the table and agree to share the points.

What we resist, persists. Pairs that focus on position score poorly. Those that consider their shared interests do really well.



Think of a conflict issue you are facing and map out potential positions vs interests on the table below. What shared interests can you see?

What potential solutions do the shared interests suggest?

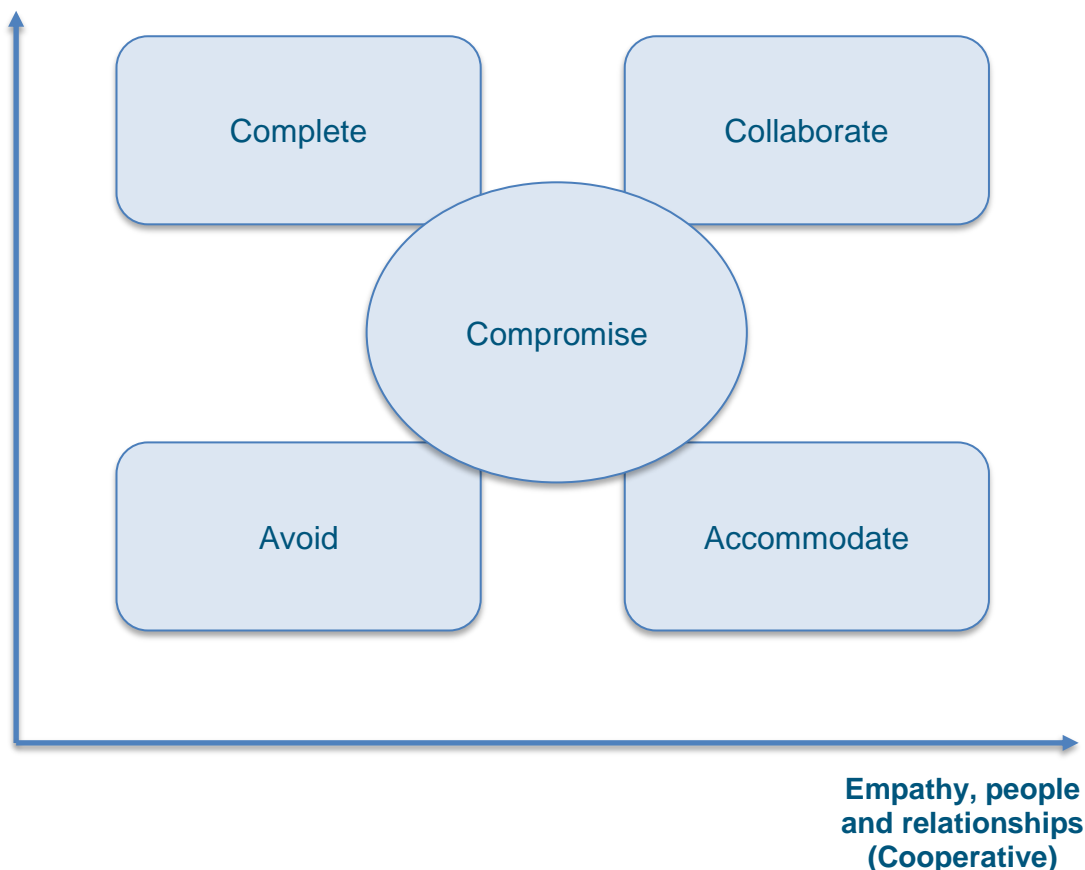
Describe the Issue		
My Position		Your Position
My Interests	Our Shared Interests	Your Interests
Possible Solutions		

*Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.*

~ Winston Churchill

Conflict Modes

Logic, tasks
and outcomes
(Assertive)



Conflict Modes: Some personalities naturally focus on logic, tasks and outcomes. Others focus more on empathy, people and relationships. Our natural personality focus will influence how we normally approach conflict or situations where it appears our concerns seem incompatible with someone else's concerns. Task focussed people tend to be more assertive and put their own needs ahead of others. Empathetic people tend to be more cooperative and put other's needs ahead of their own.

Competing is assertive and uncooperative. An individual pursues their own concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to win your own position - your ability to argue, your rank, or economic restrictions. Competing means 'standing up for your rights,' defending a position which you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.

Knowing when to fight is just as important as knowing how.

~ Terry Goodkind

Accommodating is unassertive and cooperative. It is the complete opposite of competing. When accommodating, you neglect your own needs to satisfy the needs of the other person. There is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view.

Avoiding is unassertive and uncooperative. You neither pursue your own concerns nor those of the other person. This does not deal with the conflict. However, there are times when this mode may be useful. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation.

Collaborating is both assertive and cooperative. The complete opposite of avoiding. Collaborating involves an attempt to work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies both their concerns and ours. It means digging into an issue to pinpoint the underlying needs and interests of the two individuals. Collaborating requires time, energy and focussed attention. It is not a simple process as both sides need to explore, question and listen to learn about the other's perspective. The effort is worthwhile, however, because once common interests have been identified, potential solutions usually present themselves that were not evident before.

Compromising is moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness. The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. It falls midway between competing and accommodating. Compromising gives up more than competing but less than accommodating. Likewise, it addresses an issue more directly than avoiding, but does not explore it in as much depth as collaborating. In some situations, compromising might mean splitting the difference between the two positions, exchanging concessions, or seeking a quick middle-ground solution.

We use all five conflict modes. None of us have a single style of dealing with conflict. But we tend to have our favourites – whether because of personality or practice. We tend to use some modes better than others and, therefore, tend to rely on those modes more heavily than others. Our conflict behaviour is a result of both our personal predispositions and the contexts or situations we encounter.

Think about the 5 conflict modes and the scales of assertiveness vs cooperation.

Where do you see yourself in relation to these scales?

Which conflict mode do you tend to rely on most often? Why do think this is so?

Which conflict mode would you most like to understand more fully and improve?

The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our

discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.

~ M. Scott Peck

There are 5 Es in Feedback

Feedback closes the communication loop and makes possible the improvements, innovations, creativity and solutions we desire.



Example

The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing. Focus on one example, one experience or one event. Forget the feedback sandwich. Hold the carbs, just the protein.

Name the issue: 'I would like to talk with you please about the effect (name behaviour or action) is having on (who or what is affected).'

Experience

Share your perspective. How you see what happened and the evidence you are taking into account.

Acknowledge feelings and emotions, even if we feel vulnerable or uncomfortable. Affirms we are all human and brings deeper levels of authenticity and empathy to the conversation. Use 'I' language, not 'you' language. (When you... I feel... because...)

Effect

Why this is important. What is at stake to gain or lose if this behaviour continues. For them, for you, for the organisation, for clients and colleagues. People are either unaware of the problem, or insufficiently disturbed by it. Our responsibility is to disturb them (with empathy) towards change. To increase awareness and responsibility.

Explore

Invite the other person to respond. Be curious. Listen responsively to understand their perspective. Explore what options are available and possible. Acknowledge your own contributions to the situation. What does fixing this look like to you? Can we make a plan together for how to...

Expectations

Who will do what by when? Are we both clear on what we've agreed? Is there anything left unsaid? How will we execute and take action? Confirm and agree on how we will check in moving forward.

- Praise in public. Correct in confidence.
- Timing is everything. Choose your moment.
- Prepare your opening. Practice. Begin with the end in mind – a mutually beneficial solution.

Creativity comes from a conflict of ideas.

~ Donatella Versace

5 Es in Feedback Example

Feedback closes the communication loop and makes possible the improvements, innovations, creativity and solutions we desire.



Example

I would like us to talk please about the effect your communication style is having on the team.

Experience

In our meeting this morning you interrupted and spoke over the top of other team members on three separate occasions.

I noticed there was a build-up of tension in the group and it felt like not everyone was getting a fair go to share their ideas. Some people sat back and folded their arms. It looked like they had disengaged from the conversation.

When you interrupted, I felt concerned because some of the group were showing signs of frustration and began to hold back on what they really think. I also felt a bit anxious about how you were coming across and apprehensive that this might reduce trust levels in our team.

Effects

There's a lot at stake here. Not just how you are perceived as a leader and how we get on as a team, but also that we may leave good ideas off the table and not give ourselves the best chance to optimise results for our project.

Explore

Let's work on this together. We have an opportunity here to foster a more open and inclusive team culture, and also to bring as many good ideas as possible into the mix so we create the best possible solutions for our clients.

I really want to understand your perspective. Talk with me. What does fixing this look like to you?

Expectations

So here's what I understand we've agreed to. In our next meeting, we'll share some ground rules for our discussions. I'll pay more attention to drawing out the quieter team members and you'll be more aware of letting others speak before you share your thoughts. And we'll agree to all keep each other accountable. Is that how you see it?

Let's check in with each after the next meeting to see how we feel about our new approach. How does that work for you?

Change means movement. Movement means friction. Only in the frictionless vacuum of a nonexistent abstract world can movement or change occur without that abrasive friction of conflict.
~ Saul Alinsky

5 Es in Feedback

Use this blank outline to draft a conversation outline for a feedback conversation you plan to have:



Example

Experience

Effects

Explore

Expectations

No matter how thin you slice it, there will always be two sides.

~ Baruch Spinoza

When the wheels fall off...

There are three tactics people may use when they attempt to avoid dealing with an issue:

Defend

What are you talking about? How could you say/think that about me? Where is all this coming from? This is so unfair.

Deny

That's not what happened. I didn't do/say that. I don't even know what you're talking about.

Deflect

You think my desk is a mess, take a look at Harry's. That's nothing, you should hear what Jo said.
My stats are way better than Jack's, why aren't you talking to him?

Pause. Listen. Acknowledge. Return to the 5 Es.

Circle of influence vs circle of concern.

Responsible vs accountable.

Let silence do the heavy lifting.

The Red Zone

None of us listen or learn when we are in fight or flight mode.

Take a break. Agree on a better time to continue the conversation.

When you return, explore and acknowledge any feelings and emotions.

Then come back to effects and expectations. The goal is a mutually beneficial solution.

If someone continues to be aggressive or confrontational, keep your cool, stay safe, avoid escalation and maintain appropriate boundaries. You have the right to be treated with respect.

Conflict ➡ Curiosity ➡ Courage ➡ Confidence

For some tips on handling confrontational people, see this article in Psychology Today:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/communication-success/201510/9-keys-handling-hostile-and-confrontational-people>



Peace is not an easy prospect - it requires greater bravery than does conflict.
~ Ozzie Zehner

Use a 'Heaving Line'

When large ships are about to moor, they throw a light heaving line to someone on the dock. A heaving line is a light rope, easy to throw and control, used to make the first connection. The much heavier, stronger hawser is then able to be dragged across and connected to safely moor the vessel.

In the same way, we need to use curiosity and empathy to make our initial connections. This gives us a way to open up the more substantial and perhaps uncomfortable conversation we need to have.

It's helpful to always have a few 'heaving lines' on board, ready to go. Here are a few suggestions:

It sounds like... (you may be feeling x about this)

It seems like... (this is something you care deeply about)

It appears... (x is important to you)

Would you be open to...

I'm curious. May I please ask why...

That's interesting... (tell me more about that please)

What does fixing this look like to you?

Tell me how this plays out for you. I'd like to understand.

What does done look like to you? Paint me a picture.

What can I do to support your participation?

Could we make a plan together for how to...

Tell me more about that.

Say more about that. Walk me through...

What more do I need to learn and understand about this?

You shared something hard with me, and I wish I had shown up in a different way. I really care about you and what you shared. Can we try again?



Never assume we know what people think or feel.

We mean well when we use phrases like 'I know how you feel' or 'I understand what you're going through'. However, often they can often come across as condescending or patronising

No matter how much we think we understand about the other person's experience, we can only ever guess at what they are feeling. Never assume. Be curious. Use phrases like those above to explore and confirm what someone is experiencing.

Brene Brown's book *Dare to Lead* is an excellent resource if you'd like to explore these skills in more detail.

You find some helpful resources based on the book [HERE](#)

And some other helpful resources [HERE](#)

Any problem, big or small, always seems to start with bad communication. Someone isn't listening.

~ Emma Thompson

Excerpt from *Dare to Lead* by Brene Brown

Courage and fear are not mutually exclusive. Most of us feel brave and afraid at the exact same time. We feel vulnerable. Sometimes all day long. During those moments, when we're pulled between our fear and our call to courage, we need shared language, skills, tools, and daily practices that can support us through the rumble.

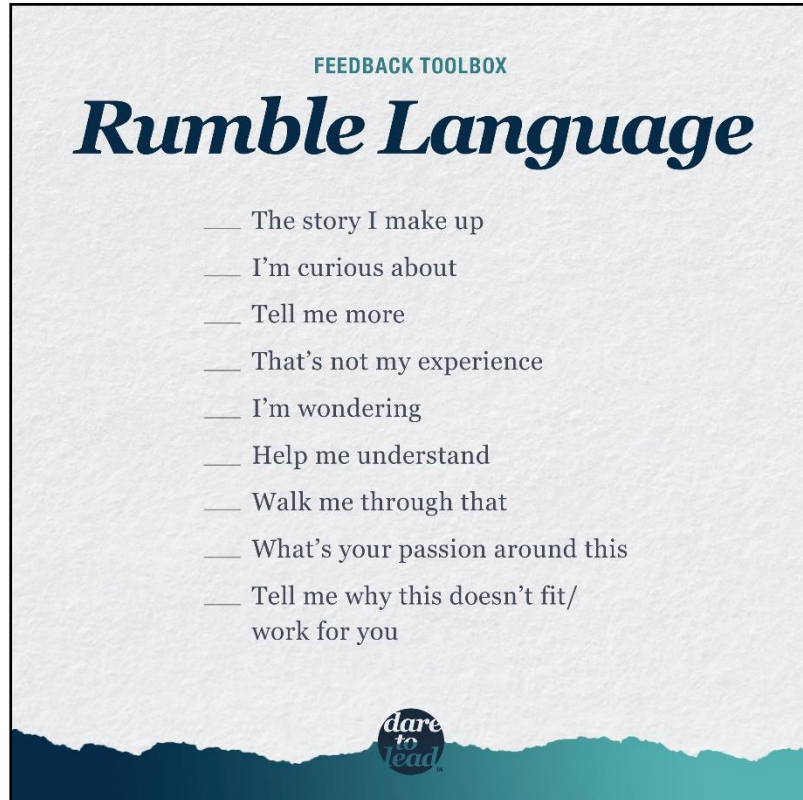
The word **rumble** is a way to say, **'Let's have a real conversation, even if it's tough.'**

*A rumble is a discussion, conversation, or meeting defined by a commitment to lean into vulnerability, to **stay curious and generous**, to stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving, to take a break and circle back when necessary, to be fearless in owning our parts, and to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard. When someone says, "Let's rumble," it is a cue to show up with an open heart and mind so we can **serve the work and each other**, not our egos.*

Open hearts and open minds are critical if we want to be brave. Remember, it's not fear that gets in the way of courage – it's armour. It's the way we self-protect, shut down, and start posturing when we're in fear.

When we feel like reaching for our favorited armour (perfectionism, anger, being the knower, trying to control, emotional intensity, getting critical), remember that **the antidote to armouring up is staying curious.**

Here's a cheat sheet of rumble starters. They **keep your heart and mind open** and the conversations productive and brave.



Conflicts may be the sources of defeat, loss and limitation but they may also lead to greater depth of living and the birth of more far-reaching unities, which flourish in the tensions that engender them.
~ Karl Jaspers

Create a Culture of Trust

Grass grows greenest where we water it.

What's rewarded, gets repeated. What we tolerate, we propagate.

To create an environment of trust where people are more willing to hear corrective feedback, we must demonstrate our commitment to their growth and development with praise, acknowledgement, appreciation and positive reinforcement.

Culture is how we do things around here.

Trust is how safe we feel about how we do things around here.

Catch people doing the right thing

The 5 Es apply to praise as much as they do to course corrective feedback.

Be specific.

Let them know how feel.

Acknowledge the impact and effect of their actions.

Talk does not cook rice

Knowledge is just a rumour until it lives in the muscle ~ West Papuan proverb.

Set goals below about how you will take action to put these ideas into practice:

One feedback goal you will take action to accomplish in the next two weeks:

The names of 4 people you intend thank or acknowledge in the next month:

One communication habit or behaviour you will work on and practice over the next 3 months:

Ideas stand in the corner and laugh while we fight over them.
~ Marty Rubin

Additional Reading

Leadership and Communication

Dare to Lead: *Brave work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*
Brene Brown

Never Split the Difference: *Negotiating as if your life depended on it*
Chris Voss

The No Asshole Rule: *Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't*
Robert Sutton

Fierce Conversations: *Achieving Success at Work and in Life One Conversation at a Time*
Susan Scott

Conflict and Leadership: *How to Harness the Power of Conflict to Create Better Leaders and Build Thriving Teams* - Christian Muntean

Words That Change Minds: *The 14 patterns for mastering the language of influence*
Shelle Rose Charvet

Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen

Resilience and Confidence

The Obstacle is the Way: *The Timeless Art of Turning Trials into Triumph*
Ryan Holiday

Mindset: *The New Psychology of Success*
Carol Dweck

The Flinch
Julien Smith

Do The Work: *Overcome Resistance and Get Out of Your Own Way*
Steven Pressfield

The Alter Ego Effect: *The Power of Secret Identities to Transform Your Life*
Todd Herman

Rest: *Why You Get More Done When You Work Less*
Alex Pang

The Art of War
Sun Tzu

Perspective and Emotional Balance

The Four Agreements
Don Miquel Ruiz

The Tao Made Easy: *Timeless Wisdom to Navigate a Changing World*
Alan Cohen

The Wisdom of No Escape: *How to love yourself and your world*
Pema Chodron

The Values Factor: *The Secret to creating and inspired and fulfilling life*
John F Demartini

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

~ Marian Wright Edelman

Useful Links

IDEA Video and Resources

[Click HERE](#)

7 Principles of Fierce Conversations

<https://blog.matrixlms.com/the-7-principles-of-fierce-conversations-every-leader-should-know/>

Rumble Language

<https://brenebrown.com/blog/2019/05/01/lets-rumble/>

Never Split the Difference: 12-minute summary

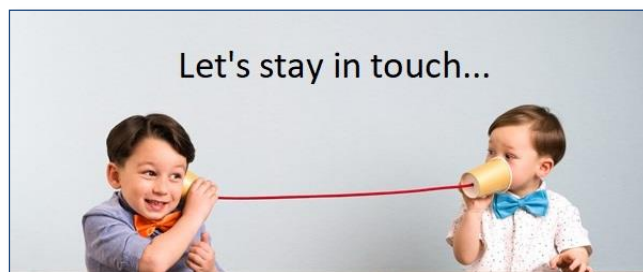
<https://www.freshworks.com/freshsales-crm/sdr-sales-development-reps/summary-of-never-split-the-difference-blog/>

Most Leaders Don't Even Know the Game They're In – Simon Sinek

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyTQ5-SQYTo>

Rachel Botsman – How to establish trust

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/why-trust-matters-with-rachel-botsman/the-power-of-trust>



Make sure you connect with me on LinkedIn.

And if you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.