

# DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

## 1 DAY - 10 PARTICIPANTS



“Explicit disagreement is better than implicit misunderstanding.”  
- Douglas Stone, ‘Thanks for the Feedback’ -

### Overview

When trust is unstable or compromised, a difficult conversation is required. And if our mindset isn't in the right place the conversation can turn toxic, usually because we've made the key mistake of falling into a combat mentality. This allows the conversation to become a zero-sum game, with a winner and a loser. But the reality is, when we let conversations take on this tenor – especially at the office – everyone looks bad and everyone loses. The real enemy is not our conversational counterpart but the combat mentality itself. And you can defeat it, with strategy and skill.

To avoid the combat mentality, we need to respect the person we're talking to, and respect ourselves. Making sure that we respond in a way we can later be proud of will prevent us from being thrown off course if our counterpart is being openly hostile.

We start this workshop exploring why we resort to submission or aggression under pressure and move on to learn how to:

- Choose and prepare for a collaborative mindset
- Separate the people from the problem
- Use effective questioning and listening skills to uncover the other party's deeper intent
- Find common ground
- Look and listen for divergence in focus or intent
- Speak assertively AND empathically
- Move the conversation forward positively
- Stay steady and stay course under fire

This workshop, tailored to needs, will cover many of the following:

#### Introduction

- Our personal 'difficult discussions'
- What happens to us, the other party and the conversation ....and why
- What would be the outcome if we could do it differently
- Our true objective

#### Preparation

- Why a 'collaborative mindset' is useful
- Mentally and emotionally preparing ourselves using the four Rs: Right Focus; Right Intention; Right View and Right Understanding
- Planning our opening using the PAID formula
- Anticipating and preparing for a range of responses

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### The Conversation

- The core communications skills for a constructive conversation
- Using effective questioning technique to explore the:
  - (a) behavior/issue versus the person
  - (b) intention versus impact
  - (c) position versus interest
- Staying conscious and present for signs of emotional tension or divergent focus
- Containing our own emotions while continually creating safety for the other person
- Breaking it down, brainstorming and moving forward

### Payoff

This powerful one-day workshop assists participants to:

- Maintain confidence and calm during a difficult discussion
- Better manage difficult people and situations
- Strengthen relationships, self respect and results
- Create better outcomes and feel better about Performance Review meetings – whether giving or receiving feedback
- Be comfortable speaking up and voicing concerns in daily meetings even to more senior executives or stronger personalities

As a result, the benefits to your organisation include:

- More rigorous and honest discussions
- Healthier, more trusting, positive and effective working relationship
- More positive and productive contributions to meetings
- Calmer, more confident and more in control staff and working environment
- Less stress and greater productivity
- Increased creativity, more vibrant culture and improved staff retention

*If interested in how we can tailor this workshop to your organisation's difficult discussions, please call Carolyn Crawford on 03 9444 0154 or 0411 222 360.*