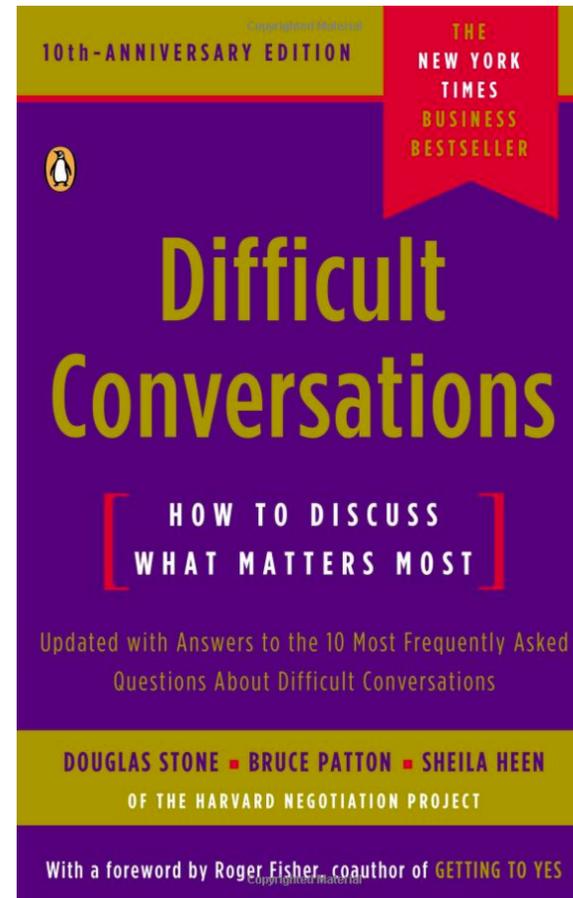


Difficult Conversations

How to discuss what matters most



How do we get to the
next level in our
Business?



A pair of hands holds a white rectangular sign against a plain white background. The sign features the text "IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS" in a bold, red, sans-serif font, arranged in three lines. The hands are positioned at the left and right edges of the sign, with fingers gripping it. The lighting is even, highlighting the texture of the paper and the skin of the hands.

**IT'S ALL
ABOUT
RELATIONSHIPS**

Relationships are made
up of Conversations

What is a Difficult Conversation?

- When we feel vulnerable
- When our self- esteem is implicated
- When we care deeply about what is being discussed



Message Delivery Stance

- Prove a point
- Give a piece of our mind
- Get our way
- Persuade others to do or be what we want



A Learning Conversation

- Understand what happened from the other's point of view



Every Conversation is Three Conversations



- “What Happened” Conversation

- “What Happened” Conversation
- Feelings Conversation

- “What Happened” Conversation
- Feelings Conversation
- Identity Conversation

The “What Happened” Conversation

- Stop Arguing About Who is Right
- Explore Each Other’s Stories

Three Fronts:

- Truth
- Intentions
- Blame

The Truth Assumption

- Difficult conversations are almost never about getting the facts right
- They are about conflicting perceptions, interpretations, and values

- Shift from CERTAINTY to CURIOSITY

From: How can they think that?

To:

I wonder what information they have that I don't.

From: How can they be so irrational?

To:

How might they see the world such that their view makes sense?

Ask:

What don't I know about myself that the other knows?

The “And” Stance

- Transcend and include **both** your story and the other’s story.
- Understanding *doesn’t mean agreement*.
- Both stories have different information and different interpretations, thus both make sense at the same time.

The Intention Assumption

Don't Assume They Meant It:

Disentangle Intent from Impact

2 Key Mistakes

#1 : Our assumptions about intentions are often wrong or incomplete

2 Key Mistakes

#2 : Good intentions don't sanitize bad impact

INTENTIONS/IMPACT

How can we Disentangle Impact from Intent ?

Why do we go from:

“I was hurt”

to:

“You intended to hurt me?”

- Disentangling Impact from Intent
- Questions to ask:
 - Actions: “What did the other person actually say or do?”
 - Impact: “What was the impact of this on me?”
 - Check your Assumption:
 - “What assumptions am I making about what the other person intended?”

The Blame Assumption

Blame

Blame is about judging and looks backward.

It creates :

- Disagreement
- Denial
- Little Learning

Make the Shift ...

From Assigning Blame

To:

Understanding Contribution

Contribution

- Contribution is about understanding, and looks forward.
- Questions to be answered:
- How have we each contributed to this situation?
- Having identified the contribution system:
- How can we change it?
- What can we do to move forward?

Hard to Spot Contributions

- Avoiding the problem until now.

Hard to Spot Contributions

Being Unapproachable- which means being:

- Uninterested, unpredictable, short-tempered, judgmental, punitive, hypersensitive, argumentative, or unfriendly.

Hard to Spot Contributions

- INTERSECTIONS:

Understanding differences in personal background, preferences, communication style, or assumptions about relationships.

Moving from Blame to Contribution

Map the Contribution System

- What are they contributing?
- What am I contributing?
- Who else is involved?

Map the Contribution System

- Take responsibility for your contribution early
- Help them understand their contribution.
- Clarify what you would have them do differently.

Map the Contribution System

- Identify what you each need to do to influence and improve the situation.
- Identify how the change they make would help facilitate the changes you need to make.

The “Feelings” Conversation

The “ Feelings” Conversation

- If unaddressed, feelings will either ‘leak out’ or ‘burst out.’
- Unexpressed feelings lead to disengagement from the conversation.
- Unexpressed feelings block our ability to listen.

The “ Feelings” Conversation

- Hardest/most important communication tasks are [Describing feelings & Listening](#).
- Good listening requires :
 - 1) an open and honest curiosity about the other person.
 - 2) A willingness and ability to keep the focus on the other person.

Describing your Feelings

- Sort out just what your feelings are.
- Share your actual feelings, not attributions or judgments about the other person.
- Be aware that feelings transform themselves into judgments, accusations and attributions.

Acknowledgement

- Feelings need to be heard and acknowledged before you can sort through them.
- Acknowledgment cannot be skipped!!!!

Acknowledgement

- It means:
- Letting the other person know that what they have said has made an impression on you.
- It means letting them know:
- Your feelings matter to me.

The “Identity Conversation”

Identity:

“The story we tell ourselves about ourselves.”

The “Identity Conversation”

Ground Your Identity: Ask Yourself What’s at Stake

The “Identity Conversation”

Core Identities:

- I am Competent
- I am a Good Person
- I am Worthy of Love

Identity Vulnerabilities

All or Nothing Syndrome

I'm either:

- Competent **or** incompetent
- Good **or** bad
- Worthy of love **or** not.

This syndrome causes us to be hypersensitive to feedback

All or Nothing Syndrome

- Feedback does not define who we are.
- “All or Nothing” Syndrome creates an unstable identity.

“Complexify” Your Identity

Take an “And ” Stance

Identity includes:

- Good and bad behavior
- Noble and less noble intentions
- Wise and unwise choices

“Complexify” Your Identity

Accept that :

- I will make mistakes
- My intentions are complex
- I have contributed to the problem

Create a Learning Conversation

Difficult Conversations

How to discuss what matters most

