

Mastering Difficult Conversations

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Check in

Are you here to learn, get unstuck, or see how others approach this?





*"The more we run from conflict, the more it **masters us**; the more we try to avoid it, the more it controls us; the less we fear conflict, the less it confuses us; the less we deny our differences, the less they divide us."*

- David W. Augsburger

The Conversation Gap

<https://learn.workbravely.com/hubfs/Understanding-the-Conversation-Gap.pdf>

70% of employees are avoiding difficult conversations

53% are handling "toxic" situations by ignoring them

<https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/topics/civility>

\$2 Billion lost daily in reduced productivity and absenteeism

Finish this sentence in the chat:

“I’d consider this session a win if...”



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➔

AGENDA

1

Why are difficult
conversations so
difficult?

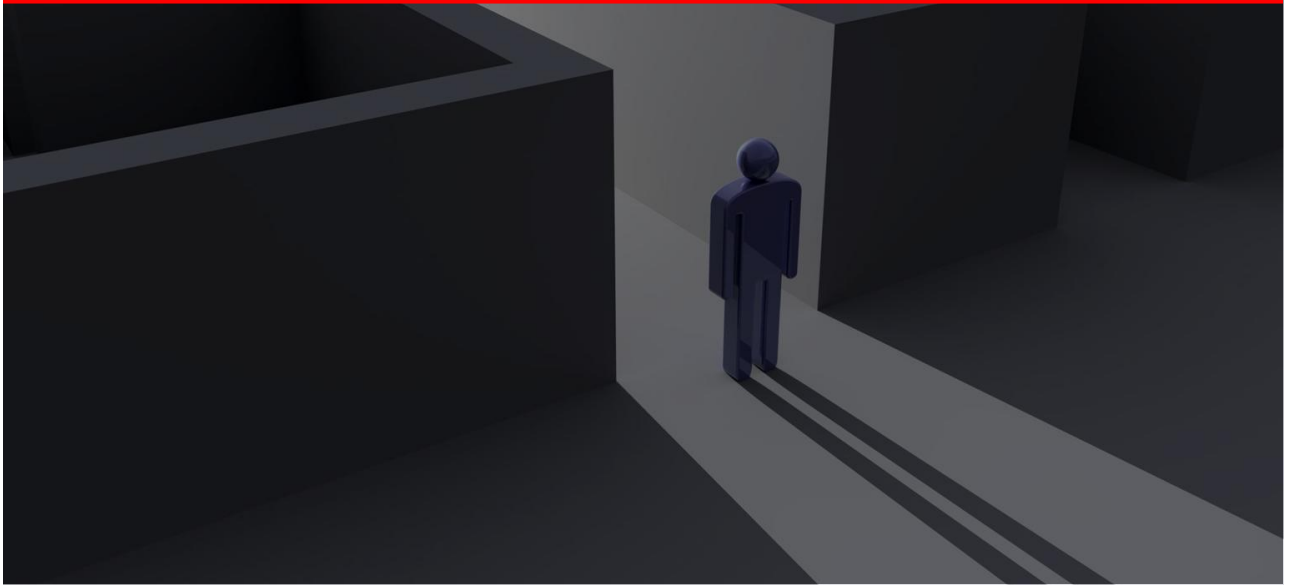
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Prepare the RIGHT
way

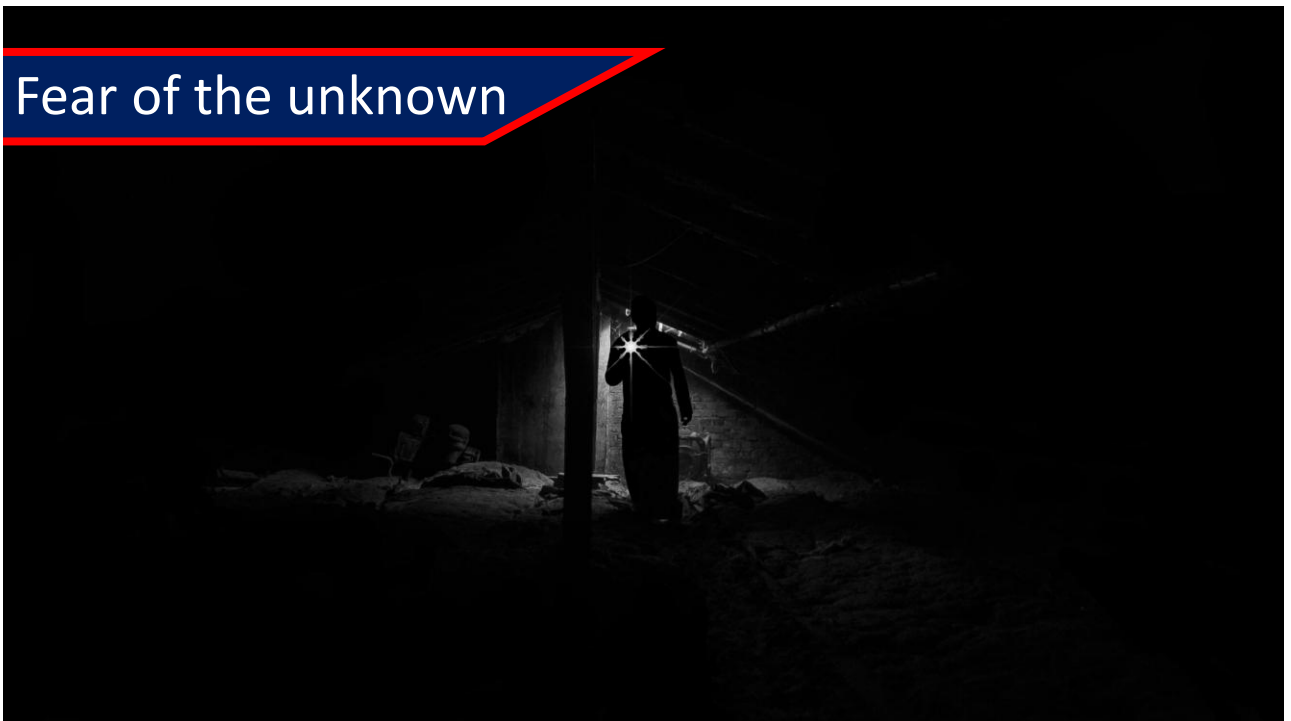
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Strategies and
Tactics

What makes difficult conversations so difficult anyway?



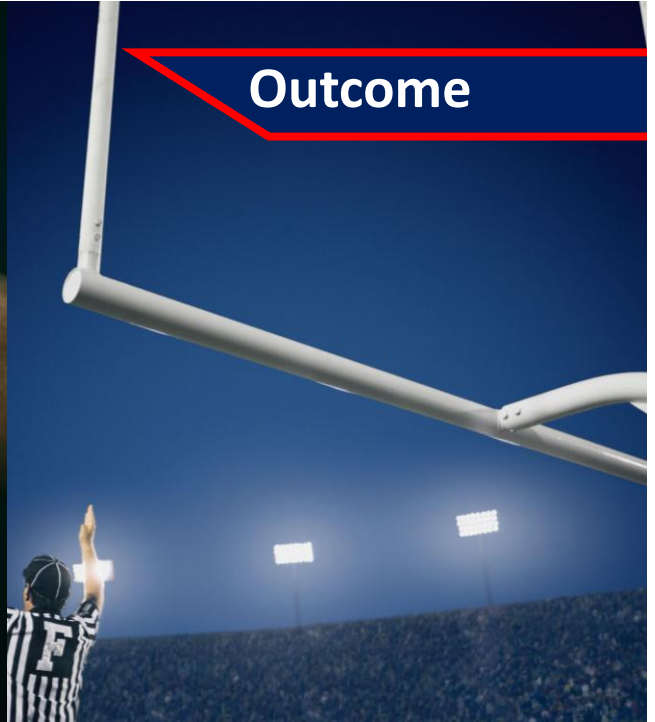
Fear of the unknown



Relationship



Outcome



We're human



Our minds limit us



No map



Check in:

Which of those 5 reasons described you the most?



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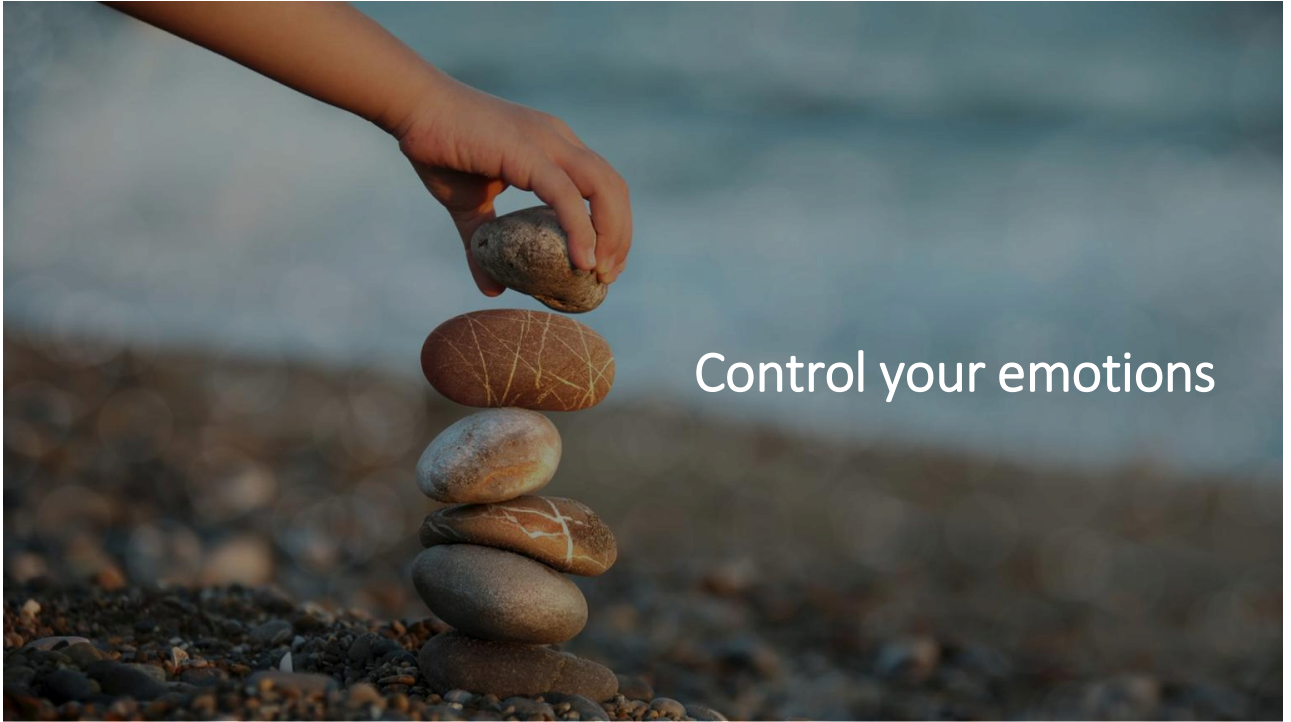
Prepare the RIGHT way





What are your goals?

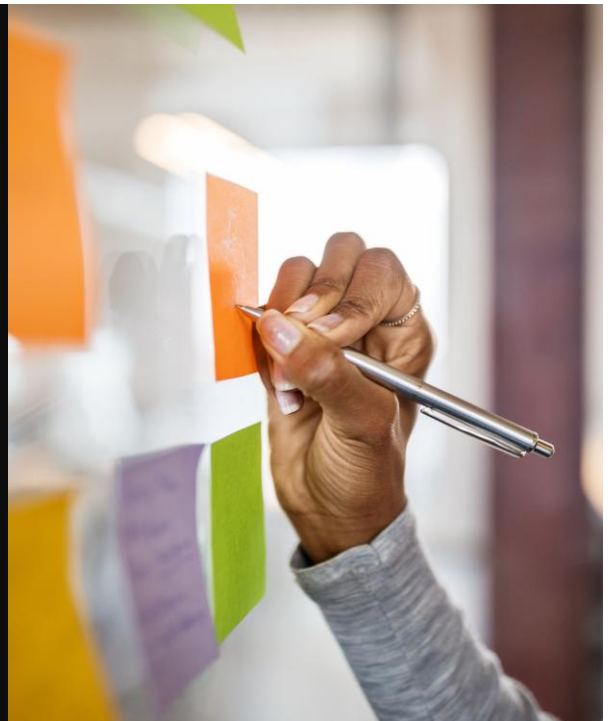




Control your emotions

Game plan the logistics

- Gather necessary information
 - Understand the dynamics
 - Write down and plan your script
 - Your own boundaries
-



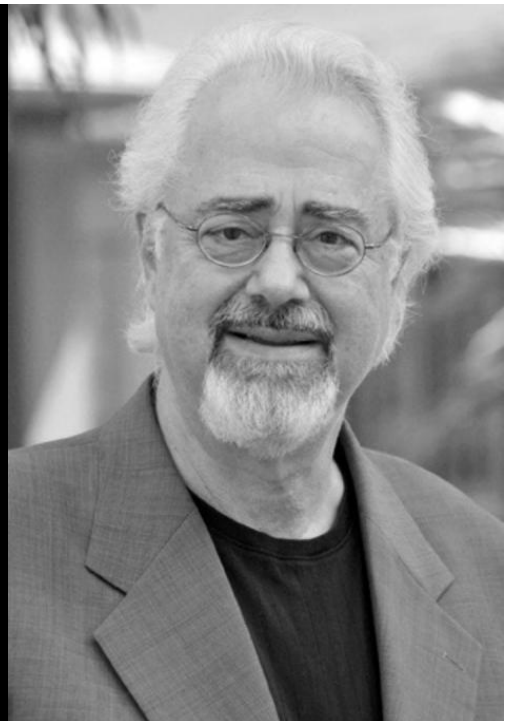


Strategies and Tactics



“Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.”

— **David W. Augsburger**



Reflect

Good
Questions

Summarize

Silence

Shared
Meaning

Reflections:

"It sounds like you're worried about your job"

"You're worried about your job"

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Reflect

Good
Questions

Summarize

Silence

Shared
Meaning

- ✗ Don't use "why"
- ✗ No hidden suggestions
- ✗ No leading the witness
- ✗ No question stacking
- ✓ One question at a time
- ✓ Ask permission
- ✓ Give people time to answer

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Reflect

Good
Questions

Summarize

Silence

Shared
Meaning



Pick and choose what makes the most sense and aligns with your narrative

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Reflect

Good
Questions

Summarize

Silence

Shared
Meaning

“Let me summarize to make sure I have everything right so far. We started by sharing... and then you talked about... . You also feel that... and you agree there must a better way for us to work through this.”

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Reflect

Good
Questions

Summarize

Silence

Shared
Meaning

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BAT

Leadership Potential
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Reflect

Good
Questions

Summarize

Silence

Shared
Meaning

Make sure you're talking
about the **SAME** thing

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Use an Agenda

Anchor and set the tone



"Thank you for agreeing to meet with me/talk with me. I wanted to talk about our work dynamic, and I know we can find a resolution that would work for the both of us."

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Set Ground Rules



"I hope we can talk openly and honestly today."

Please feel free to stop me if I say something that makes you uncomfortable.

That way, we can pause and talk about it together.

How does that sound?"

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Explore their needs and priorities



- *“What was going on for you?”*
- *“What led you...?”*
- *“Help me understand...”*
- *“What’s important for you about...”*

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Share your priorities and needs



“Here’s my main priority:”

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Find a shared solution



"I'm wondering what solution would be possible here that meets both of our needs?"

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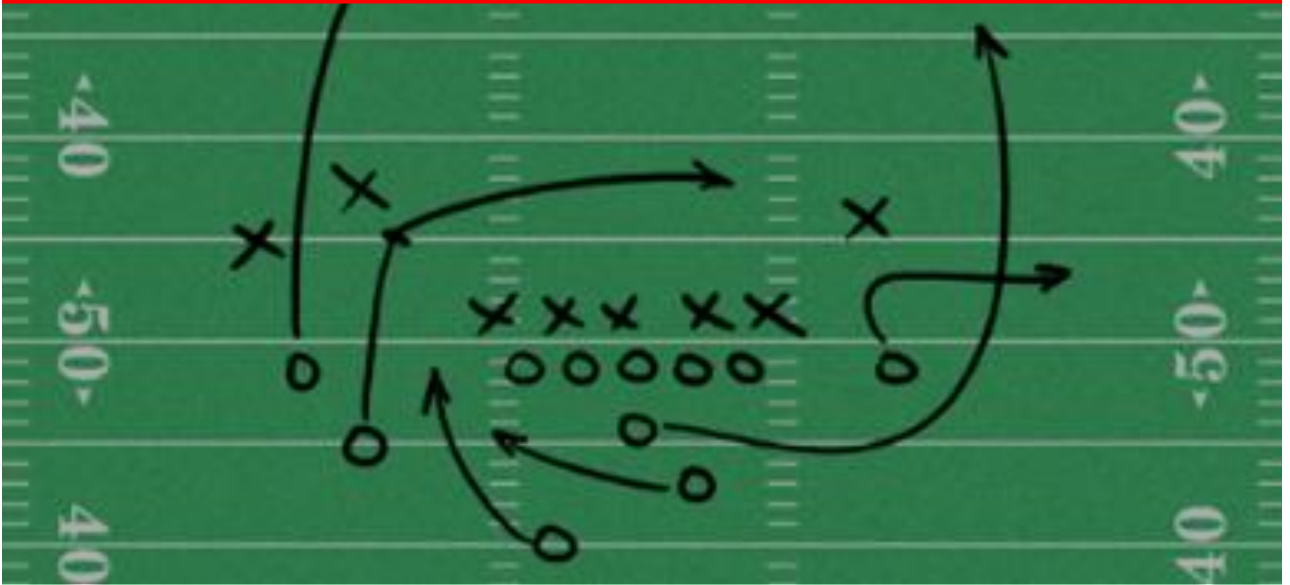
Express Next Steps and Gratitude

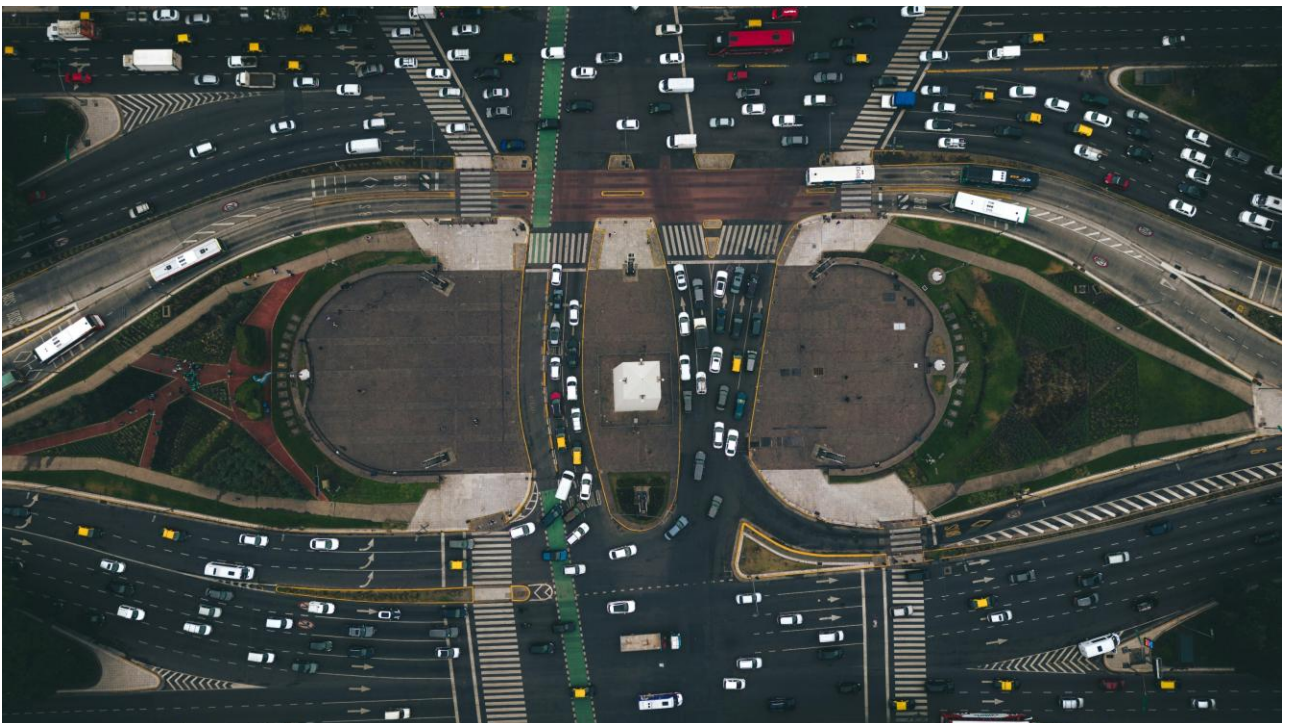


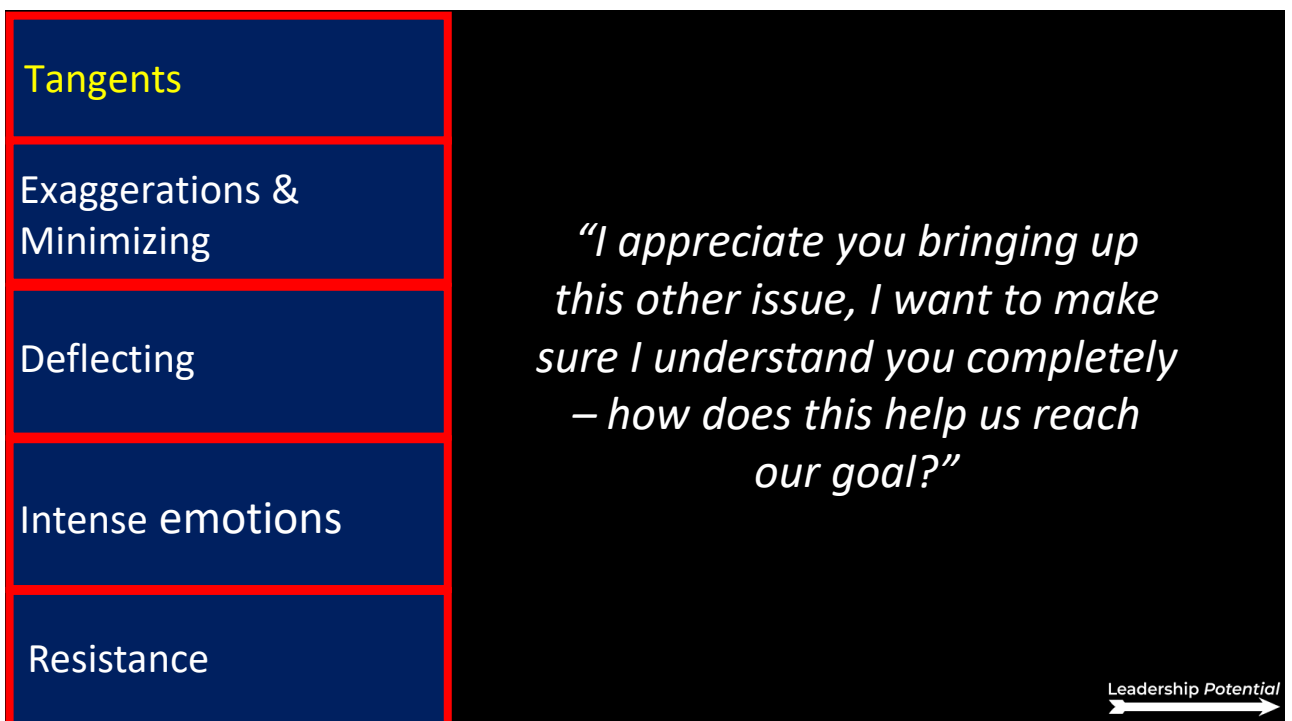
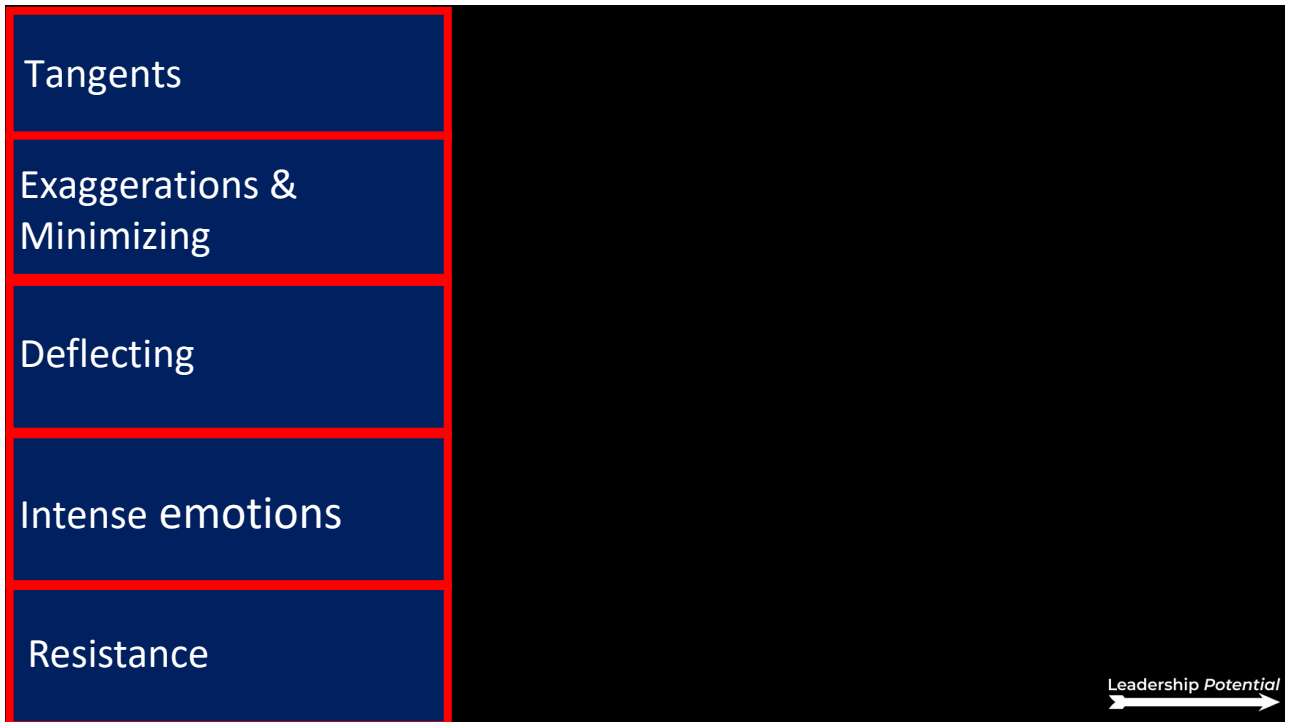
"I know this wasn't easy for you, and I really appreciate your patience and willingness to hear me out. I'm really excited about where we ended on this and where we're headed next."

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Responding to difficult behaviors







Tangents

Exaggerations &
Minimizing

Deflecting

Intense emotions

Resistance

Go back to the
information you prepared

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Tangents

Exaggerations &
Minimizing

Deflecting

Intense emotions

Resistance

*"I understand you want to
bring up [person A] because
it's important to you, and as
we talked about at the
beginning, this conversation is
about you and me and I'd love
to focus on that first."*

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Tangents

Exaggerations &
Minimizing

Deflecting

Intense emotions

Resistance

- Ask questions
- Use silence
- Take Breaks
- Summarize
- Reflect

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Connect with me



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The Art and Science of Difficult Conversations Podcast

<https://bio.site/tasdc>

Scan this QR code



Or go to

<https://talk.ac/chriswong>

and enter this code when prompted

NLA

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Resources

Recommended Books:

- Crucial Conversations – Grenny, Patterson, McMillan, Switzler, Gregory
- Difficult Conversations – Stone, Patton, Heen
- Never Split the Difference – Voss, Raz
- Leadership is Easy: Said No One Ever - Lane

Recommended Podcasts:

- Coaching for Leaders
- Negotiate Anything
- NegotiateX

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