

Preparing for *Courageous* Conversations

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GovLoop NextGen session



**PARTNERSHIP
FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

Effective teams have:



Effective Communication Skills

- Listen
- Ask Effective Questions
- Give and Receive Feedback
 - Behavioral feedback
 - Feedback about the relationship



Curious Listening

- Listen—don't prepare to speak
- Wait until the other party finishes to form conclusions
- Be intentional with your non-verbal cues
- Ask questions to ensure understanding
- Summarize and paraphrase what you heard to communicate understanding



Ask Effective Questions



- Closed
- Problem-focused
- Seek compliance
- Imply blame/fault



- Open
- Solution-focused
- Generate observable data
- Promote action



Feedback: SBI + D Model

Use the SBI framework for both positive and constructive feedback.

S

Describe the **situation**. Include the context, when and where it occurred.

B

Describe the observable **behavior**. Be specific.

I

Describe the **impact** the behavior had on you. Include what you thought, felt, and/or did.

PAUSE!

D

Describe the **desired outcome**. (Stop, start, change, continue the behavior and/or express appreciation).

Adapted from the Center for Creative Leadership's S.B.I. model

Courageous Conversations

- What are “courageous conversations”, and how can I engage in them effectively?
- Three characteristics:
 - Opposing/Varying Views
 - Strong Emotions
 - High Stakes



Three Options

Avoid them

Handle poorly

Handle well



Courageous Conversations

- Deal with unresolved conflict in a constructive way
- Identify the source of conflict
- Understand and adapt to the conflict styles involved
- Treat conflict as normal and a potentially beneficial part of relationships



Courageous Conversations

Tips for Success

- Recognize when you're facing a crucial conversation
- Hold the right conversation
- Start with your intent, not your content
- Start with facts, not feelings
- Examine your feelings
- End with clarity

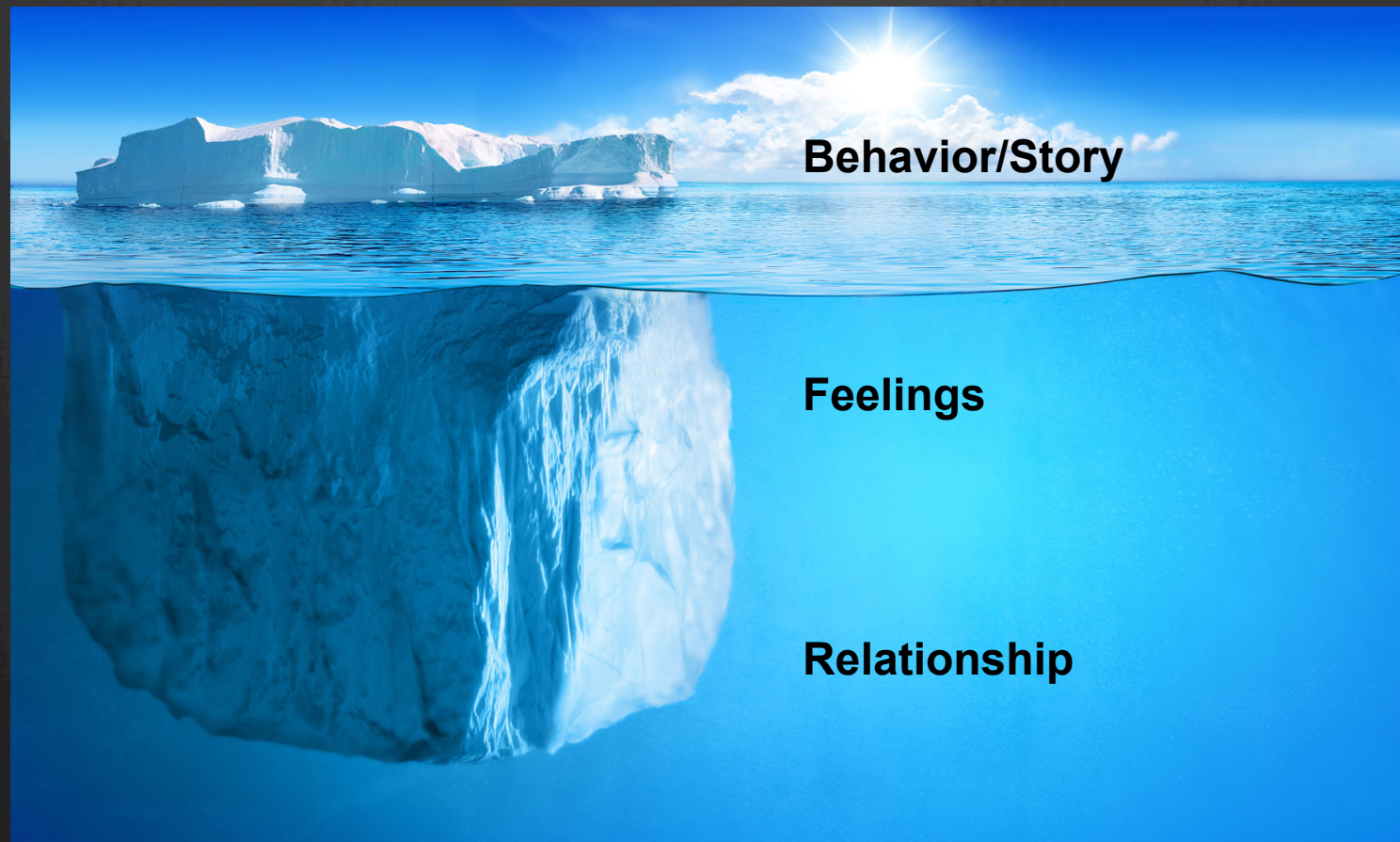


Recognize the Conversation

- Mindful Leader: Notice when tension/stress arise
 - Thoughts (e.g. He is out to get me.)
 - Sensations in the body (e.g. clenched jaw)
- Make a process comment to pause the action. Stop the debate.
- “If you’re not getting the results you want, change what you’re talking about.” ~Crucial Conversations



Change what you're talking about



Hold the Right Conversation

- [VIDEO: Bad Debate](#)
- [VIDEO: Better Debate](#)



Focus on What You Want

Unhealthy Goals

- Be right
- Look good/save face
- Keep the peace
- Win
- Punish/blame
- Avoid conflict/confrontation

Goals of Dialogue

- Learn
- Find the truth
- Produce results
- Strengthen relationships

Beware!



- Beware of the **Sucker's Choice**: Binary way of thinking; creates a needless “or” statement
 1. “*You* tell the bosses that their plan will never work. I’ve got a family to feed.”
 2. “Sure I backed off my opinion. You’ve got to pick your battles, and I decided it was their turn to win.”
 3. “I know I insulted her, but someone had to have the guts to speak up and be honest.”

Start with intent, not content

- Establish **safety**.
 - You care about their best interests and goals (Mutual Purpose).
 - You care about them (Mutual Respect).
- Skill: **Contrasting**
 - My intention is not to _____. My intention is _____.
- Return to content

Start with Facts, Not Feelings

- Remember SBI: State the situation and the observable behavior (facts/verifiable).
- The benefits of facts:
 - Less controversial
 - More persuasive
 - Least insulting
- Ask for others' facts
- Examine your feelings (EQ!)

End with Clarity

- Decide how to decide.
- Document who does what by when and follow-up.
- Hold one another accountable.
- Incorporate crucial conversation skills into your daily life.



Review:

Courageous Conversations

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Time to Practice!





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