

TURNING ~~DIFFICULT~~ CONVERSATIONS INTO OPPORTUNITIES



David Buirs



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1.

**Effective communication
depends on the *free flow of
information*.**

The barrier? **Fear.**



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What causes fear? Not the message itself, but the **context -**

it happens when we imagine **negative intentions or **incompetence** with the other.**



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This fear triggers either **silence or **aggression**.**



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4.

Silence:

Holding back true thoughts
(sugar-coating, sarcasm, pleasing)

Thinks: *“this plan is doomed to fail”*
Says: “it could work”

Avoiding the topic

Withdrawing



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Agression:

Imposing your views

Dominating the conversation

Stereotyping/labeling

Insulting/belittling

Threats



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6.

Conclusion: passive and aggressive behavior comes from fear.

To allow information to freely move, **create safety.**



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How to create safety?

Find and emphasize a **shared purpose,**

and ensure **mutual respect.**



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Shared purpose:

Align on a common goal:

“We both want to collaborate and make this project work / see you grow / solve this challenge.”



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Mutual respect:

Even if you dislike someone, see them a **human being**, with dreams, fears, insecurities, just like yourself.

People pick up on **judgements** – try limit them and practice empathy to foster mutual respect.



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Is the shared purpose or mutual respect at risk?

Either:

Genuinely apologize - when you made a mistake

Redefine shared goals

Use contrasting



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Contrasting:

“What I **don’t want is... *to offend you.*”**

[address fear you don’t respect them or have bad intentions]

“What I **do want is... *to help you grow and be successful in your role.*”**



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12.

Recap:

Silence or aggression signal **fear**.

Cultivate a **shared purpose** and **respect** to dismantle fear, paving the way for smoother, more effective conversations.



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And remember:

Feeling anxious about certain conversations is completely **normal**.

With each conversation, you'll gain more **confidence**.

You don't have to be perfect.

Good luck!