

Exemplary Leadership:

***Building Our Capacity for Skillful
Feedback and Difficult Conversations***

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Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders

- **Model the Way**
- **Inspire A Shared Vision**
- **Challenge the Process**
- **Enable Others to Act**
- **Encourage the Heart**

Components of Trust In The Literature

- Honesty and integrity
- Openness and Collegiality
- Competence
- Caring and Personal Regard

Sources: Bryk and Schneider, (2003) *Trust in Schools*,
Tschannen-Moran, (2007) *Trust Matters*
Stephenson, (2009), *Leading With Trust*

S – B – I Feedback Model

Two Kinds of Feedback:

Encouraging: Behaviors you want to see repeated

Constructive: Behaviors that need to change or stop

To offer feedback effectively, use the following S-B-I model:

Capture the **Situation**:

Describe the **Behavior**:

Deliver the **Impact**:

Source: Center for Creative Leadership, Feedback That Works, 2000.

Your Best Feedback Tips!

- *Encouraging feedback* may be given either .
- *Constructive feedback* must be given
- It's helpful to go to the other person's classroom or area to give feedback. You can end the conversation as you wish when you do that. *Note: when you plan a longer, more complex difficult conversation, that needs to take place in your office.*
- Remember, the IMPACT holds the power of the statement! Make sure you clearly articulate the WHY of your words.
- Do not use "I like the way...." statements. Feedback is about the other person, not about you.
- When you encounter resistance to your feedback the first time, you should simply....
- When a person becomes extremely resistant or angry...You might choose to say:
" I now

I'm concerned about

I'm not sure what I'll choose.....
- Try never to devalue your feedback statements by saying things like....
 - "It's probably just me, but
 - You probably didn't mean to, but.....

ACCOUNTABILITY CHARTS

ENCOURAGING FEEDBACK

To...	About...	By This Date...	Reflection

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

To...	About...	By This Date...	Reflection

ACCOUNTABILITY CHART

DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

With...	About...	By This Date...	Follow-Up: Meeting, email, IDP, Memo of Understanding?	Reflection: What went well? What would you do differently?

Definition: Difficult Conversations

“Whenever you feel uncomfortable, have second thoughts, or try to avoid saying what you need to say, what you aren't saying is your difficult conversation.”

---Jennifer Abrams, *Having Hard Conversations*

When we avoid difficult conversations:

- Our beliefs and actions are not aligned
- We give silent support to others
- We cede control to others
- We experience a high level of tension, stress, anxiety, and depression
- Our own trustworthiness can be undermined

Having Hard Conversations: Why Do We Hesitate?

Source: *Having Hard Conversations*, Jennifer Abrams. (2009, Corwin Press)
Chapter 2

“Knowing what is stopping us from speaking may help us move forward.”

Reason 1: A desire to please

- I don't want to seem mean
- I want people to like me and respect me

“For some of us, our need to appear nice overrides our interest in telling the truth to someone.”

Try this: Realize the “nice” thing to do is to speak up.

Reason 3: Personal comfort

- I like it easy emotionally and with work---no waves
- It will take so much effort to do what I need to do if this starts

“Consider the consequences of remaining quiet....”

Try this: Ask yourself, “How valuable to me is my personal comfort compared with the effort I would have to make to result in long-term goals for others?”

Reason 8: Perfectionism

- I don't have the right words yet

“Waiting for the right words could be more about you wanting to get an A in hard conversations than about actually serving the other person...Rehearsing for weeks the perfect performance is avoidance.”

Try this: When you're stuck for words, ask someone to strategize with you. She'll be outside the situation and will most likely be able to help you articulate the essence of the request without inserting the emotion you might be feeling.”

Reason 9: Distrust of Oneself and Others

- I don't trust my gut to be right
- I am too judgmental, and maybe this is just another example

"This is where we need to stop and look at the evidence. Is what you are seeing working for the collaborative group, the department, or the class?"

Try this: Separate yourself mentally and imagine you are standing on a balcony, looking from a distance at what is taking place. You may be right about what is going wrong.

Reason 10: Lack of Authority

- I don't have enough internal authority or perspective, and I have NO external role authority. So who am I to bring it up?

"I often hear, 'Why doesn't the principal do something about it? Why isn't the superintendent handling this?' In many circumstances, they don't even know the problem exists. *You* are in the room. *You* are the one to speak up. We must begin to believe ourselves worthy of speaking up.

Try this: Read Marianne Williamson's quote: "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you."

Reason 11: Distrusting Our Own Judgment

- It's her choice to do what she wants..Who am I to tell my peer what is best for kids?

"There are teaching standards and research-based curriculum...Some methods are better than others, and evidence exists to help you share those thoughts."

Try this: If you're feeling unsure about your position, bounce your thoughts off a knowledgeable colleague or do some research to shore up your ideas. Gathering information will not only help you with the conversation, it will validate your own practice.

Planning a Difficult Conversation

Do a **POP** for a difficult conversation:

Purpose: Determine the overall purpose for the intentional conversation. Ask yourself, ***“WHY do I feel a need to have the conversation? What issues must be addressed?”***

Outcome(s): Consider the 2-3 outcomes that must be accomplished during the conversation so that the overall purpose will be met. Ask yourself, ***“WHAT” do I want the person to know and be able to do? In what order shall these outcomes be accomplished during the conversation?”***

Procedure(s): Think ahead about, ***“HOW shall I prepare for the conversation?”***

Prepare:

- the data or artifacts which need to be gather
- how the data will be used
- key questions that will promote reflection
- the major messages you must get across to accomplish the outcomes

Also, ask yourself, ***“How will I check for understanding during the conversation to make sure the person has heard and understands the key points.”***

Action Steps: Decide what action steps will be taken, if appropriate, at this point in the process. These should be very specific action steps, taken by the person, including timelines. Determine what support and/or resources are needed.

Assessment: Determine how you will assess the effectiveness of this conversation, immediately and over time. Ask yourself, ***“How will I know the conversation was effective? What questions can I pose or what observations can I make?”***

Planning a Difficult Conversation

Purpose:

Outcomes:

To _____

To _____

To _____

To _____

Procedures:

Data:

Key Questions:

Major Messages:

How To Check For Understanding:

Action Steps

By When

Support Needed

1.

2.

Assessment : Reflections and Observations

Follow-Up:

Adapted from POP, a TWQM strategy. McFalone Consulting LLC and Colflesh & Associates LLC

Individual Development Plan Goals and Initial Actions

Name:

Date:

Identify **three** goals; fill out one of these forms for each one. Goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-focused.

Goal: What I want to improve and accomplish.

Rationale: Why this goal is an important one for my practice and my students' learning.

Measure of Success: What evidence or artifacts will support my successful achievement of this goal?

Possible Obstacles:

Possible Solutions:

Action Steps:	By When	Review Date	Completed

Support from my Supervisor:

Additional Notes:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TEMPLATE

TO: Employee
FROM: District Leader
DATE: Date

RE: *Follow-up from our Conversation Dated* _____

Thank-you for taking the time to meet with me today to discuss (general statement of the problem or issue). The following is a summary of our conversation:

- _____ (Specific statement of the problem or issue)
- _____ (Data to support your assessment of the problem or issue)
- _____ (Directive)

In the course of our conversation, I committed to (outline the support you agreed to provide)

_____.

You committed to _____ (outline the action steps the employee will take).

I will _____ (Describe the follow-up and accountability measures you will take including the date for each).

I sincerely hope that, as a result of these agreements, we will _____ (describe the desired state in terms of target teacher behavior and student achievement results).

If you have any questions or concerns, my door is always open.

Teacher's signature showing receipt of memo

Date

Administrator's signature

Date

Thoughts on Difficult Conversations.....

Debbie McFalone, Ph.D.

In the course of our careers, all of us are going to have occasion to have conversations that cause us anxiety and concern. Here are some things that have helped me in the past:

- Plan ahead: Keep your desired outcome for the conversation clear, and stick to it. Be intentional about planning your main points to be made, and don't be swayed from the plan.
- Practice: Ask a trusted colleague to listen to your "script" for the meeting, and give you frank feedback. It's much better to have a friend tell you that you sound defensive than to have that tone occur in the actual conversation.
- Timing is everything: Take control of the time and place of your meeting for this conversation. Many people prefer to hold these conversations at the end of the day, so that each party has the opportunity to reflect or gather their composure after work. If the staff member approaches you and you don't feel ready to devote the energy needed to the challenging conversation, simply state that you want to make sure you give your best attention to him/her when you meet, and you're not able to do that right now.
- Remember that trust from your staff is eroded when incompetence is not addressed. Although they may not verbalize it, faculty members respect leaders who model consistent, high expectations for all members of their school staff. The courage you show will pay off in the long- term relationship you have with your staff, and in their development of trust in you.
- Keep it simple: Say what you need to say, ask if your staff member has questions, make sure to articulate how you'll follow up, and offer support. Then, end the meeting. Keep it simple, stick to your plan, and be calm in your delivery.
- Seek support for yourself among your friends and family. Never breach confidentiality, but do share that you are having a difficult time and you welcome support. It's always best to know you're not alone!

Resources: Difficult Conversations

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