



Friction to Fuel

Turn workplace conflict into competitive advantage

3 DAYS · 18 HOURS

IN-PERSON

CREDASSURED

30-DAY IMPLEMENTATION BRIDGE

Friction to Fuel is a three-day executive training for team leads, department heads, HR managers, project managers and senior managers who want to master the psychological frameworks and tactical communication techniques required to transform workplace disagreements from destructive friction into high-fidelity **collaborative outcomes**.

Most managers work in environments where “false harmony” (polite silence) masks deep-seated inefficiencies, or where volatile friction stalls project momentum. They are caught between the need for “radical candour” and the fear of damaging professional **relationships** leading to team dysfunction, unspoken resentments, or the aftermath of poorly handled past conflicts.

This programme provides the frameworks and practical skills to transition from “Conflict Avoider” to “Conflict Catalyst”. You will gain the **confidence** to navigate “the heat” without burning bridges and be able to establish a “psychologically safe” culture where disagreement is seen as a sign of high engagement and a prerequisite for excellence, not a personal attack to be avoided.

PROGRAMME CODE
LIBT-CT-PEI-2.3

COMPETENCY CURVE
CC2 (Practitioner)

FORMAT
Workshop – in-person

DURATION
Three days – 18-hour sprint

LEVEL
Department Head / HR Manager / Team Leader / Project Manager / Manager

REGISTER AT
<https://libt.co.uk/courses/friction-to-fuel-2026>

LOCATION	LONDON	ISLE OF MAN	DUBAI	THAILAND	JAMAICA
DATES*	FEB	JUN	AUG	OCT	NOV

*Dates are subject to change

Business Value

Unresolved workplace conflict is a silent EBITDA killer. Research shows that employees spend an average of 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict, equating to approximately £2,500 per employee per year in lost productivity. In the UK alone, the total annual cost of workplace conflict to employers (including management and resolution) is £28.5 billion. Conflict-driven turnover costs organisations 50-200% of an employee’s annual salary per departure, with 23% of employees citing conflict as a primary reason for leaving. Yet 72% of organisations lack a formal conflict resolution policy, leaving teams without the tools to transform friction into fuel.

Meanwhile, organisations with strong conflict resolution cultures report 50% higher team innovation rates and 35% faster decision-making cycles. (CPP Global Human Capital Report 2024; ACAS Workplace Conflict Research 2023; Gallup Workplace Conflict Study 2024; CIPD Conflict Management Survey 2023)

This programme is a **Friction-to-Fuel Converter**. By equipping practitioners with the psychological awareness and tactical protocols to resolve disputes at the source, the organisation reduces “management overhead,” accelerates decision-making cycles, and protects its most valuable asset: human capital. When managed effectively, over 50% of workplace conflicts lead to improved working relationships and more creative solutions.

Intended Outcomes

- 25% reduction in time spent on HR escalations of internal disputes within 90 days
- Verifiable increase in team psychological safety scores using validated measurement tools
- Adoption of a unified conflict resolution protocol across the participant's team or department
- Increased confidence in having difficult conversations (measured pre/post programme)
- Personal conflict management style awareness and adaptive capability

Competencies and Skills Developed

Competency Anchor	Functional Skill	Behavioural Indicator (CC2 Practitioner)
Emotional Regulation & Empathy	Emotional De-escalation	Manages stress effectively without affecting work quality; validates others' perspectives before responding; adapts approach when sensing others' emotional states; builds trusting relationships with immediate stakeholders
Inclusive Leadership & Psychological Safety	Root-Cause Friction Analysis	Actively draws out contributions from quieter team members; gives credit publicly and constructive feedback privately; creates space for dissenting opinions without penalty; adapts communication approach for colleagues with different working styles
Intelligent Process Architecture	Conflict Resolution Protocol Design	Maps end-to-end processes using standard notation; builds automations using low-code/no-code platforms; measures time savings and error reduction from process improvements; maintains and troubleshoots existing workflows
Persuasive Storytelling & Stakeholder Alignment	Interest-Based Negotiation	Crafts persuasive proposals tailored to audience interests; negotiates standard agreements achieving win-win outcomes; builds professional rapport with key stakeholders; handles objections calmly and constructively

Foundational Knowledge and Tools

- **Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High** by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan & Al Switzler (2002, updated 2011) - foundational text on high-stakes dialogue and psychological safety in difficult discussions
- **Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life** by Marshall B. Rosenberg (1999, 3rd edition 2015) - the "I-statement" methodology and needs-based framing for conflict transformation
- **Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In** by Roger Fisher & William Ury (1981, updated 1991) - interest-based negotiation principles and the search for mutual gains
- **Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity** by Kim Scott (2017) - balancing direct challenge with personal care in feedback and conflict
- **The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth** by Amy C. Edmondson (2018) - research foundation for psychological safety and productive conflict

Tool Category	Platforms	Application
Conflict Style Assessment	Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), Conflict Dynamics Profile	Understanding personal conflict tendencies and adaptive strategies; completed in pre-programme preparation and debriefed during Day 1
Visual Conflict Mapping	Lucidchart / Miro	Visually mapping the interests, fears, and needs of all parties to identify underlying concerns and find collaborative solutions
AI Role-Play	Claude, ChatGPT	Safe, private role-play simulations to practice de-escalation scripts, "I-statements," and difficult conversation framing before live interactions

CURRICULUM

Pre-Programme Preparation (Completed 1 week prior to Day 1): Participants complete individual 30-minute online briefing with the programme trainer covering personal background, current conflict challenges, programme expectations, and prerequisites.

DAY 1 Session 1

- Lesson 1 **The Amygdala and the Office** - Recognising the physical signs of “fight, flight, or freeze” in yourself and others. Understanding why conflict triggers physiological responses that impair cognitive function and how to recognise when you (or a colleague) have been “hijacked” by stress responses.
- Lesson 2 **Conflict Modes and Personal Tendencies** - Debriefing the TKI results completed during pre-programme preparation. Understanding your default conflict style (Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, Accommodating) and when each mode is appropriate vs. counterproductive.
- Lesson 3 **Creating Psychological Safety** - Learning the framework for building the conditions where productive conflict can occur. Using “Contrast Statements” from Crucial Conversations to fix misunderstandings before they escalate into arguments.

Session 2

- Lesson 4 **The 10-Second Pause and Neutral Framing** - Tactical techniques for interrupting emotional escalation in real-time. The physiological reset that occurs with deliberate breathing and the power of neutral language.
- Lesson 5 **AI-Assisted Role-Play Practice (Tool Lab)** - Using AI conversation partners to practice de-escalation scripts in private, low-stakes simulations. Participants work through increasingly difficult scenarios, building muscle memory for de-escalation techniques before live practice with peers.
- Lesson 6 **Peer Role-Play Cycle 1 (Trainer-Facilitated)** - Each participant engages in first trainer-facilitated role-play addressing a prepared workplace conflict scenario. Trainer provides real-time coaching and immediate feedback.

DAY 2 Session 3

- Lesson 7 **Positions vs. Interests** - Moving beyond “I want X” to “I need Y because of Z.” Understanding the difference between stated positions (what people say they want) and underlying interests (why they want it).
- Lesson 8 **The Conflict Mapping Exercise (Tool Lab)** - Using visual collaboration tools to plot the competing interests, fears, and needs in current workplace disagreements. Participants work on real scenarios from their teams, creating visual maps that reveal opportunities for collaborative solutions.
- Lesson 9 **Root-Cause Validation Techniques** - Learning the “reflection loop” methodology from Nonviolent Communication: demonstrating that you understand before proposing solutions.

Session 4

- Lesson 10 **The 4-Step Resolution Framework** - Introduction to systematic conflict resolution protocol: (1) Define - establishing shared understanding of the issue; (2) Align - surfacing underlying interests and needs; (3) Innovate - brainstorming solutions that meet all interests; (4) Commit - creating clear accountability mechanisms.

Lesson 11 **High-Stakes Scripting and Individual Consultation** - Participants draft "Crucial Conversation" scripts for actual upcoming difficult conversations using the 4-step protocol. Trainer conducts individual 20-minute consultations with each participant, reviewing their specific workplace conflict scenarios and refining their approach.

Lesson 12 **Peer Role-Play Cycle 2** (Trainer-Facilitated) - Second round of trainer-facilitated role-plays, this time using participants' drafted scripts from Lesson 11. Focus on the complete 4-step protocol from opening to commitment.

DAY 3 Session 5

Lesson 13 **The Radical Candor Framework** - Deep dive into Kim Scott's 2x2 framework: "Challenge Directly" whilst "Caring Personally." Understanding and avoiding the three failure modes: Ruinous Empathy (caring without challenging), Obnoxious Aggression (challenging without caring), and Manipulative Insincerity (neither challenging nor caring).

Lesson 14 **Asynchronous Feedback** - Techniques When and how to deliver difficult feedback via video message (Loom, Vidyard) to reduce immediate physiological threat response whilst maintaining personal connection. Structuring video feedback using the situation-behavior-impact model.

Lesson 15 **Individual Consultation and Advanced Scenarios** - Trainer conducts second individual consultation (15-20 minutes) with each participant addressing advanced challenges: managing conflict with senior stakeholders, navigating cultural differences in conflict expression, handling emotionally volatile colleagues, and addressing chronic conflict patterns.

Session 6

Lesson 16 **Conflict as Organisational Ritual** - Designing "Retro-Friction" meetings where teams can safely air grievances regularly. Creating conflict rituals that prevent accumulation of unspoken resentment.

Lesson 17 **Threaded Transparency Protocols** - Establishing team norms for resolving technical and project disagreements in public channels (Slack, Teams) to prevent siloed resentment whilst maintaining psychological safety. When to take conversations private vs. modeling productive public disagreement. Creating documentation that builds organisational learning from conflict resolution.

Lesson 18 **The Resolution Defense** (Capstone Assessment) - Live 3-way simulation where each participant must facilitate a disagreement between two peers (or simulated colleagues with trainer support). Assessed on: de-escalation technique, interest surfacing, protocol application, and commitment generation. Comprehensive feedback from trainer and peer observers. Final individual debrief on progress, strengths, and continued development areas.

Programme Artefacts

- **The De-escalation Script Deck:** Library of templated phrases for opening, navigating, and closing difficult conversations
- **The Interest-Based Mapping Template:** Visual canvas (Miro/MURAL) for plotting competing interests and finding common ground
- **The "Safety-First" Feedback Rubric:** Structured framework for delivering challenging feedback using Radical Candor principles
- **The 4-Step Resolution Protocol:** Systematic approach to conflict resolution from problem definition to committed action
- **The Retro-Friction Ritual Guide:** Framework for creating regular team sessions to address emerging conflicts before escalation

30-Day Implementation Bridge

- **Week 1:** Deploy one de-escalation technique in a real workplace conversation; document the outcome using the provided reflection template; email trainer with brief update on implementation and challenges.
- **Week 2:** Conduct an interest-based mapping exercise with your team for a current low-stakes disagreement; share visual map and outcomes with cohort via shared platform; trainer provides async feedback.
- **Midpoint Check-In (between Week 2 and 3):** 30-minute virtual group call with trainer to review implementation progress, troubleshoot common challenges, and share peer learning. Opportunity for brief individual questions.
- **Week 3:** Facilitate your first "Retro-Friction" huddle with your team; gather team feedback on the format; document participation, topics addressed, and outcomes; submit evidence pack.
- **Week 4:** Attend "Resolution Clinic" (90-minute virtual session) with LIBT facilitator to present implementation results, receive feedback on submitted evidence artefacts, troubleshoot ongoing challenges, and refine conflict resolution protocols for sustained practice.

Evidence of Competency and Skill

To earn the **Certificate in Workplace Conflict Resolution (CREDASSURED)**, participants must submit the following validated workplace outputs:

Evidence Artefact	Description	Competency Demonstrated
The Conflict Map	A visual breakdown (Miro/MURAL) of a real workplace disagreement, identifying the underlying interests, fears, and needs of all parties with proposed resolution pathway	Inclusive Leadership & Psychological Safety; Persuasive Storytelling & Stakeholder Alignment
The Resolution Script	A written transcript of a "Crucial Conversation" using the 4-step protocol, demonstrating neutral framing, interest surfacing, and the use of "Contrast Statements"	Emotional Regulation & Empathy; Intelligent Process Architecture
The Peer Facilitation Evidence	Documentation from Day 3 capstone assessment showing facilitation of resolution between two colleagues, including observer feedback and trainer assessment	All four competencies
The Retro-Friction Evidence Pack	Documentation of one "Retro-Friction" huddle conducted with actual team during implementation bridge, including agenda, participation data, topics addressed, and outcomes achieved	Inclusive Leadership & Psychological Safety; Intelligent Process Architecture

For more information, please contact:

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Trainer Profile

Tony Reilly

Executive Coach

Embark on a transformative coaching journey with Tony, a seasoned leadership expert with an illustrious career spanning three and a half decades at the British Council. His world travels have not just been a testament to his vast global experience, but also a rich source of insights into diverse organisational cultures and dynamics. With a genuine passion for people development, Tony's executive coaching is more than just guidance—it's a masterclass in

self-discovery and leadership development. Dive deep into tailored sessions that draw on his vast industry knowledge, offering you unparalleled insights that guide you in arriving at your own personal strategies. With Tony by your side, unlock the leadership excellence within you, driving both personal and organisational success and fulfilment.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I'm not a manager. Is this programme relevant for me?

Absolutely. Conflict doesn't follow organisational charts. If you work with other humans, you experience friction. This programme is designed for anyone who needs to navigate disagreements, whether with peers, stakeholders, clients, or cross-functional partners. In fact, learning these skills before you become a manager makes you a stronger leader when you do step into formal authority. Many participants are individual contributors managing complex stakeholder relationships or project coordinators navigating competing priorities across teams.

2. What if my workplace culture doesn't support open conflict?

That's exactly why this programme exists. Research shows that 72% of organisations lack formal conflict resolution policies, leaving individuals without frameworks for productive disagreement. We teach you how to introduce productive conflict practices gradually, starting with your immediate sphere of influence. The "Retro-Friction" ritual is specifically designed to be low-risk and easy to pilot with your immediate team before expanding. You'll learn how to create psychological safety in your immediate context even when broader organisational culture remains conflict-avoidant.

3. I'm worried about making conflicts worse by addressing them directly.

This is the most common fear and the reason "false harmony" is so prevalent in workplaces. The programme teaches you a structured, de-escalating approach that reduces, not increases, emotional volatility. You'll practice extensively in safe simulations (both AI-assisted and peer role-plays) before applying techniques in real situations. The 4-step protocol is designed to surface underlying interests whilst managing emotional intensity. Participants consistently report that structured approaches make difficult conversations less volatile than avoiding them until resentment explodes.

4. How does this relate to formal HR processes like grievances and investigations?

This programme focuses on informal early resolution, catching conflicts before they escalate to formal processes requiring HR investigation. Research shows that workplaces with strong informal mediation cultures see 45% fewer formal grievances compared to those relying solely on traditional HR interventions. However, we also explicitly teach you to recognise when situations involve potential harassment, discrimination, or other legal violations requiring formal escalation rather than informal resolution. You'll understand your organisation's escalation protocols and when informal resolution is inappropriate.

5. Can I use these techniques with external stakeholders like clients and suppliers?

Yes. The interest-based negotiation framework and de-escalation techniques work in any context where humans disagree, whether internal or external to your organisation. Many participants find the skills most immediately useful in client negotiations, supplier disputes, or cross-organisational partnerships. The principles of surfacing underlying interests, maintaining psychological safety, and finding collaborative solutions apply universally across professional relationships.