

Candour and feedback

Candour is about revealing relevant facts, judgements, opinions and feelings about an issue with the people involved in the issue, from above the line. **It's an essential practice for holding others accountable and becoming comfortable with having difficult conversations.** The opposite of candour is concealing or withholding. Most of the time, we withhold because we're afraid of:

- What others will think
- Losing control or power
- Looking odd, especially if there's a culture of concealing
- Being judged and criticised for our thoughts and feelings
- Hurting other people's feelings
- Fuelling conflict and drama

Self-leadership is about facing these fears and choosing to reveal. People who are practicing self-leadership know that concealing creates disconnection in our relationships and diminishes our integrity. When we're out of integrity, we feel internally conflicted and that impacts our energy, passion, drive and creativity.

It also costs our teams as conversations within conversations sit beneath the surface. You know how that goes...it's that massive elephant in the room. Almost everyone knows what people are actually referring to, but there isn't the psychological safety or the language to reveal.

It also costs organisations because all of the relevant facts, stories and perspectives aren't shared, making it hard to make the best decision that everyone can support. And people aren't held accountable, which means performance is compromised and/or others pick up the slack.

For the visual thinkers amongst us, here's another great [video](#) from the CLG.

Activity

Let's apply this now to an issue where you're not being candid, and are avoiding giving feedback or holding others accountable. Describe the context below:

What do you want to reveal about the situation?

What's the gap between what you want to reveal and what you're saying?

What are you afraid of (it's usually about control)?

Practice feeling these feelings. Can you welcome these fears as learning opportunities?

What's the cost of concealing to you, to them, to others?

Are you willing to reveal?

Yes_____ No_____

If the answer is yes, this is what comes next:

1. We need to let go of being right about the issue. If we reveal from a place of righteousness we set ourselves up for conflict
2. Reveal yourself for the purpose of being known, not to win the argument
3. Speak your truth with an open heart. That means we reveal the most loving, respectful and kind version of our truth and assume the best in the person / people we're revealing to.

The following feedback process and clearing conversation script provides a useful framework to follow.

Giving feedback that leads to growth

We know receiving well-timed and clear feedback is essential for performance improvement. Yet studies show that 65% of employees aren't receiving the feedback they need to learn and grow. Here's a simple framework I've adapted from the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute designed to make feedback easier to give in a way that increases trust and improves performance. This can work for positive and development feedback.

Note, feedback triggers our threat responses so it's important to set up feedback conversations rather than spring it on people.

Context - provide context for the feedback so people understand the background that has prompted the feedback.

Observations - detail the specific behaviours you've observed. Focus on facts. if there are stories getting in the way, be clear about any stories you might be making up about the facts.

Implications - Connect the facts to the impact – on them, you, the team, the work and the organisation.

Alignment - Check in on their perspective and aim to find some agreement on the observations and implications, as well as what good would look like. This will create a shared understand of the gap ie what needs to change.

Action - Agree what steps need to be taken to achieve the shared vision of good. Include a check in at a set time to discuss progress.

Now your turn...

Context	
Observations	
Implications	
Alignment	
Actions	

Clearing conversations

This process is meant to be used when you have created a disconnection with another person or group. Gossiping is a good indicator of disconnection, and so this activity helps us say yes to f). It is important that you are willing to let go of being right and take responsibility before you attempt to use this model. The goal is to reveal yourself, own your projection and re-establish connection. For effectiveness, stick to the script.

Create a resolution together

- ☐ I commit to curiosity and letting go of being right
- ☐ I commit to taking 100% responsibility for the issue
- ☐ I commit to creating a win-for-all resolution

Script for person clearing the issue

Ask for a clearing by affirming a meaningful relationship "I have an issue I'd like to clear with you. Is now a good time?" "If not now, when?"

"The specific FACTS are..." (Recordable facts; not judgments)

"A STORY I make up about you/me/the group is..."

"My FEELING is..." (Angry, Sad, Scared, Creative, Joyful)

"I specifically WANT..." (This is not a demand or entitlement but instead a way to be known)

"How I CREATED this disconnection with you is..."

PROJECTION: "The part of me I see in you that I have an aversion/attraction to is..."

Script for person listening to understand

"What I hear you saying is..." (Reflect or paraphrase without interpretation)

"Is that RIGHT?" (If not, reflect again)

"Is there MORE?" (Ask with curiosity)

"Are you CLEAR. Have you said everything you have to say and felt everything you have to feel?" (If yes, move on. If not, go back to "Is there more?")

Is there a NEXT ACTION step? (if yes, who will do what by when?)

Appreciate the person for choosing to clear the issue.

If the listener has issues, it is recommended that you take at least an hour to pause and then switch roles.