

Fierce Conversations

Achieving success at work and in life, one conversation at a time.

Scott Susan (2004) *Fierce Conversations* Berkely Books NY

With the courage and skills in having effective conversations with others you will improve work productivity, leadership effectiveness, interpersonal relationships and your own self esteem.

Instead of being reactive to events and other people's behaviour, Susan Scott helps you to *step out from behind yourself* and have your say in a manner that increases the quality of relationships. The model uses assertiveness, perspective-taking, curiosity, accountability, ownership, responsibility, openness and proactivity.

Several very helpful and clear conversation formats are described, including how to seek help, how to frame a powerful conversation, and how to have your say while still keeping lines of communication open.

The Seven Principles

The book presents 7 principles on which fierce conversations are based:

Principle 1: Master the courage to interrogate reality.

Principle 2: Come out from behind yourself into the conversation and make it real.

Principle 3: Be there, prepared to be nowhere else.

Principle 4: Tackle your toughest challenge today.

Principle 5: Obey your instincts.

Principle 6: Take responsibility for your emotional wake.

Principle 7: Let silence do the heavy lifting.

Mineral Rights

How to have a really great conversation about something that really matters.

This model works well in the workplace as well as with your partner. For this model to work best both sides in the conversation are encouraged to use the model. Listening is a key to success.

1. What is the most important thing you and I should be talking about?
2. Describe the issue. What's going on relative to _____?
3. How is this currently impacting you? Who or what else is being impacted? *The emphasis is on the word current, so keep your partner focused on current impact and results. Ask, "What else?" at least three times. Probe feelings. When you consider these impacts, what do you feel?*
4. If nothing changes, what are the implications? *Say, "Imagine it is a year later and nothing has changed. What is likely to happen?" Ask, "What else?" Probe feelings. When you consider those possible outcomes, what do you feel?*
5. How have you helped create this issue or situation? *If someone says, "I don't know," then ask, "What would it be if you did know?" Don't comment on the response other than to say, "That's useful to recognize". Move on.*
6. What is the ideal outcome? *When this is resolved, what difference will that make? Ask, "What else?" Probe feelings. When you contemplate these possibilities, what do you feel?*
7. What's the most potent step you can take to begin to resolve this issue? *What exactly are you committed to do and when? When should I follow up with you?*

Presenting the Issue

1. THE ISSUE IS:

(Be concise. In one or two sentences, get to the heart of the problem. Is it a concern, challenge, opportunity, or recurring problem that is becoming more troublesome?)

2. IT IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE:

(What's at stake? How does this affect dollars, income, people, products, services, customers, family, timing, the future, or other relevant factors? What is the future impact if the issue is not resolved?)

3. MY IDEAL OUTCOME IS:

What *specific* results do I want?

4. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Summarize with bulleted points: How, when, why, and where did the issue start? Who are the key players? Which forces are at work? What is the issue's current status?

5. WHAT I HAVE DONE UP TO THIS POINT:

What have I done so far? What options am I considering?

6. THE HELP I WANT FROM THE GROUP IS:

What result do I want from the group? For example, alternative solutions, confidence regarding the right decision, identification of consequences, where to find more information, critique of the current plan.

Confrontation Model

This model allows us to confront tough issues with courage, compassion, and skill. Learning is provoked and relationships are enriched.

1. OPENING STATEMENT

Write your opening statement and practice saying it out loud, in sixty seconds or less. Your opening statement should:

2. NAME THE ISSUE

Select a specific example that illustrates the behavior or situation you want to change.

3. EMOTIONS

Describe your emotions about this issue.

4. WHAT'S AT STAKE

Clarify what is at stake.

5. YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Identify your contribution to this problem.

6. POSSIBLE RESOLUTION

Indicate your wish to resolve the issue.

7. INVITATION

Invite your partner to respond.

8. Interaction

Inquire into your partner's views. Use paraphrasing and a perception check. Dig for full understanding; don't be satisfied with the surface. Make sure your partner knows that you fully understand and acknowledge his or her position and interests.

9. Resolution

What have we learned? Where are we now? Has anything been left unsaid that needs saying? What is needed for resolution? How can we move forward from here, given our new understanding?

10 Agreement

Make a new agreement and determine how you will hold each other responsible for keeping it.