



## Coaching for Challenging Conversations

Leadership in a high performance environment sometimes requires that the leader hold a challenging conversation with individuals who need to make a change if they are ultimately going to be successful. Of all the situations, we face as a coach, holding these conversations with a coachee is among the most uncomfortable. And yet, when handled effectively, these moments of truth can deliver the biggest performance improvements, deepen the relationship with the coachee and become a growth experience for both coach and coachee.

What enables leaders to effectively hold these conversations is a clear framework to guide the conversation and core skills that have been refined through practice. This program provides participants with practical map for conducting challenging conversations, safe opportunities to practice the key skills that will be required, video examples to demonstrate effective and ineffective use of the skills and strategies for managing your emotions when things get heated—drawn from our work in the world of Sport Psychology.

### **Overall Program Objectives:**

Participants have the opportunity to:

- Determine when it is productive to engage in a challenging conversation.
- Gain an understanding of their personal tendencies in addressing conflict (using the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Management Instrument) and how to adjust in the heat of the moment.
- Learn how to reframe these conversations in a way that lessens the pressure.
- Learn and practice the key steps in analyzing the situation and preparing for the conversation using scenarios.
- Learn the components of an effective opening and practice creating an opening for a challenging conversation using a scenario.
- Work with a peer coach to create an effective opening for a real challenging conversation that the participant is contemplating.
- Determine the common roadblocks to positive outcomes, and how to avoid them.
- Practice asking effective questions, listening and paraphrasing to uncover how the other person is viewing the situation
- Determine how to manage their non-verbal's and identify how to properly assess the non-verbal language of the other person.
- Learn how to resolve the issue and create an action plan that secures the other person's commitment with support and accountability built-in to increase the likelihood of success.
- Determine strategies to effectively manage negative reactions from the other person that might emerge during the course of the conversation.
- Practice a process to bring your own emotions under control and listen attentively to the other person during the conversation.
- Prepare for a real challenging conversation using a custom planning tool



## **Core Program Description**

The Coaching for Challenging Conversations Workshop consists of 3 phases.

### **Phase 1: Pre-work**

In the 2-Day program, participants are asked to identify 2 real world challenging conversations that they would hold if they believed that the conversation would result in positive change.

In the 1-Day Blended program, participants are asked to identify several real-world challenging conversations, then choose 1 and perform some analysis around the following related to that conversation:

- Negative impact created by the undesirable behaviour.
- Anticipated reaction of the person and how to best manage that reaction.
- Specific triggers or hot-buttons that the participant might need to manage.

In addition, in the 1-Day Blended program, participants will be asked to complete and score the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Assessment (TKI), read through the results and determine the implications for them as they head into a challenging conversation

### **Phase 2: Live Instructor-led Day Workshop (1 or 2 days)**

The live workshop is designed as a highly interactive experience using experiential exercises, video examples, skill practice, small and large group discussions and peer coaching exercises. Agendas for both the 1 and 2 day versions are attached at the end of this description.

### **Phase 3: Learning Application – Action and Reflection**

In the 2-Day program, participants take part in two peer coaching exercises: one to create an opening statement for a real conversation and one to create a conversation plan for that conversation. They then commit to holding the conversation within 6 weeks and are provided with a conversation debriefing tool to reflect on what they learned.

In the 1-Day Blended program, participants also take part in a peer coaching conversations to create an opening statement and to create a conversation plan. The first peer coaching exercise, to create the opening, takes place during the workshop. The second exercise, to create the conversation plan, takes place outside the workshop. At the end of the workshop, participants are guided through a process to set up the second peer coaching conversation and commit to holding it within 2-weeks following the workshop. Fully prepared, participants then hold their conversation within 5 weeks post-workshop and 6-weeks post-workshop participants have a 20-minute accountability call with the facilitator to debrief the conversation, reflect upon lessons learned and determine next steps.



## Agenda for 1-Day Challenging Conversations Workshop (7 Hours of Content)

8:30AM Start

### **Program Introduction 8:30-9:00**

- Intros and expectations

### **Challenging Conversations Overview 9:00-10:00**

- Defining a Challenging Conversation
- Overview the Model
- Conflict Styles

### **Break (10:00-10:15)**

### **Analyze and Prepare (10:15-11:00)**

- How do you want to be?
- What is the Problem?

### **Prepare the Opening (11:00-12:30)**

- Saboteurs and Guidelines for an effective Opening
- Peer Coaching exercise to prepare a real Opening

12:30-1:00PM LUNCH

### **Explore Reality (1:00-2:30)**

- Dropping your agenda,
- Questions and Listening
- Non-verbal acuity

### **Break (2:30-2:45)**

### **Self-Management 2:45-3:45**

- Active Awareness
- Triggers, signals and skills

### **Resolve and Plan and Program Close (3:45-4:30)**

- Creating a plan with support and accountability
- Set-up post-workshop peer coaching exercise
- Outline follow-on support and debriefing call with facilitator

4:30PM Finish



## Agenda for 2-Day Challenging Conversations Workshop (14 hours of content)

Day 1 - 8:30 AM Start	Day 2 - 8:30 AM Start
<p><b>Program Introduction (8:30-9:00)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intros and expectations</li></ul>	<p><b>Day 1 Review (8:30-8:45)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review Activity</li></ul>
<p><b>Topic Overview (9:00-10:00)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Defining a Challenging Conversation</li><li>• Overview the Model</li><li>• What makes this so difficult?</li></ul>	<p><b>Explore Reality (8:45-10:15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drop your agenda</li><li>• Questions</li><li>• Active Listening</li></ul>
<p><b>Break (10:00-10:15)</b></p>	<p><b>Break (10:15-10:30)</b></p>
<p><b>Analyze and Prepare (10:15-12:30)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conflict styles</li><li>• Overarching purpose</li><li>• How do I want to be?</li></ul>	<p><b>Explore Reality cont. (10:30-11:15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-verbal acuity</li><li>• Restate and summarize</li></ul>
	<p><b>Manage Reactivity (11:15-12:15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing their reactions</li></ul>
12:30-1:00 PM Lunch	12:15 – 12:45 PM Lunch
<p><b>Analyze and Prepare cont. (12:30-2:15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the problem?</li><li>• What is their story?</li><li>• Saboteurs</li></ul>	<p><b>Manage Reactivity cont. (12:45-2:15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing your reactions</li><li>• Video analysis of errors and skills</li></ul>
<p><b>Break (2:15-2:30)</b></p>	<p><b>Break (2:15-2:30)</b></p>
<p><b>Opening Statement (2:30-3:15)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Components of an Opening</li><li>• Create an Opening from a scenario</li></ul>	<p><b>Final Preparation (2:30-4:00)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resolve and plan</li><li>• Create a real conversation plan</li></ul>
<p><b>Peer Coaching Exercise (3:15-4:30)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a real Opening</li><li>• Debrief and Day 1 Wrap Up</li></ul>	<p><b>Program Close (4:00-4:30)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Debrief exercise</li><li>• Final lessons</li></ul>
4:30 PM Finish	4:30 PM Finish