

How to Have Difficult Conversations

Emotional Strength Training for Healthcare Workers

An Online Workshop with Dr. Yvette Erasmus, PsyD

Foundations Workbook

In the Foundations video, we cover:

- The major paradigm shift from domination to collaborative and co-creative consciousness.
- Preparing for a successful conversation
- Emotional readiness and self-trust
- The 5 barriers to “getting through” to each other, combined with practical interventions and new moves to overcome each of them
- Locating the conversation – what are we “really” talking about?
- The magic question that redirects every disagreement
- An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication Tools

As you watch the video, please feel free to use this outline to take notes.

Introduction: 1:00 – 4:00

Why do we structure the course this way?

What is the real beauty of this course?

What do you have to look forward to in the live interactive sessions?

How will you get your zoom link?

What reassurance is offered about the live calls?

Creating a New Conversation: The Paradigm Shift (4:00 – 15:00)

What is the main paradigm shift?

As you listen to this section, fill in the characteristics of each of these two kinds of conversations

What question do you want to change up? From what question to what question?

What gets in the way of high-quality conversations?

What is the cost of submission? Why doesn't it work? (9:05-9:35)

What interpersonal dynamics contribute to burnout?

What does Dr. Erasmus mean by learning how to "Enjoy the anger, enjoy the pain..."? (14:30)

Opening the Conversation (15:00 – 21:30)

What 5 Questions do you need to ask yourself to assess your own emotional readiness for having a new conversation?

What needs to be more important than getting your way or getting agreement? (15:30)

Where do we recommend you placing your attention for a new conversation? (16:45)

Self-reflect:

As you think about your own struggles at work, who do you want to be? What values are you wanting to live into and to embody? How can you bring the very things that you are wanting more of in the world.

What skills would you like to develop? Where do you see yourself getting most triggered? What hooks you?

What would help you feel more empowered in these situations?

How aware are you of the power differentials inherent in your relationships?

As you open any conversation, which of the phrases about making your intention explicit resonates with you the most? (20:30)

What is “colonial consciousness” and what mindset/attitude helps to neutralize that? (21:00)

The Five Barriers to Getting Through to Others (21:30 - 38:00)

1. _____ (21:30)

What is the Status Quo Bias?

What can you do about it?

2. _____ (25:15)

How do most people “hear” your desire to change them? What is threatening to them?

What can you do about it?

What tools can help you translate and neutralize their attacks and accusations?

Note any scripts from the video that you’d like to use or remember

3. _____ (29:50)

What is confirmation bias?

What is the downside of team loyalty?

What can you do about this?

4. _____ (32:25)

What are some ways to address misinformation?

5. _____ (33:45)

What are some ways you can work WITH someone's worldview?

General tips for helping yourself and others work with differing worldviews:

Always end with a question

Plant seeds

Small asks

What is your central job in all these conversations?

The Magic Question (38:00)

Don't:

Do:

Why does this work?

Questions and Comments (42:10)

What are people needing in conversations these days and what is one of our main goals?

As you listen to some of the responses to questions, what key learnings emerge for you?

Introduction to Nonviolent Communication (48:10)

Dr. Marshall Rosenberg developed a communication model called Nonviolent Communication and this section gives you a basic introduction to the 4 main distinctions in this model. You can learn much more about this transformative communication model by watching all the free videos on [my YouTube channel](#) and by going to cnvc.org to learn more.

What is your intention as you start this conversation – to control or connect?

Why is it important to first create emotionally safe conditions in any conversation?

What is the new question we begin asking ourselves, instead of “what is wrong?”

Key Points

1. Choose to connect
2. Ask what would help
3. What two choices are giving people when we tell them they “have to” do something?

What 4 distinctions do we recognize and what capacities are we developing?

a. Observation vs. Evaluation - develop a witnessing self

What is the importance of neutral language?

b. Feelings vs. Thoughts - develop emotional literacy

What is the purpose of your feelings?

c. Universal Human Needs vs. Strategies - develop your needs literacy

What is a “need” in this context?

d. Requests vs. Demands - learn to ask for what we want (instead of talking about what we don't want)

What is the self-sabotaging impact of making demands?

What are the elements of a skillful request?

Reflection: Record some of your personal responses here.

How are you feeling about this content? What thoughts and “yes, but’s” come up for you? What questions might you like to ask Dr. Erasmus during the live session?

Take a moment to think about a situation, person or conflict where you might like to try out some of these skills. The more specific and micro-detailed the better. Try to identify a particular moment when you get hooked, triggered, angry, shut down etc.

Then, take a moment to answer these questions with that specific person and moment in mind:

1. Do you have power-over, power-with or are in a position of power-under with this person?
2. How much safety and security do you feel with this person/in this relationship
3. How much do you each like, trust or respect each other?
4. What specifically did this person say (or not say), do (or fail to do) that stimulated a negative reaction in you?
5. What do you believe is “wrong” with this person? What is your analysis of them?
6. What do you think they “should” have done instead?
7. How are you likely to speak and interact with them as you think in this way?
8. Pause for a moment, and shift gears.
9. What do you care about in this situation? What values of yours are at play and what matters to you about how this situation unfolds? (Use the universal human needs sheets to identify what needs of yours are at play.)

10. How are you feeling about yourself, this person and the situation in general?

11. What do you imagine they are feeling in this same situation?

12. What do you imagine they might be caring about? What is mattering to them about this? What is so deeply important to them about this? (Use the universal human needs sheets to identify what needs of theirs might be at play.)

13. What do you wish could happen next? What possible paths forward can you imagine that might care for both people in this situation?

14. How are you likely to speak and interact with this person as you think in this new way and place your attention on these additional factors?

Record any learnings or insights that you'd like to share or ask about on our live call.