

BOOK PICKS

THE LEADERSHIP COMPASS TOP FIVE

***DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS:
HOW TO DISCUSS WHAT MATTERS MOST***

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen
ISBN: 014-02.8852X Reviewed by: Sandy Penrose

Having a difficult conversation gives most of us a surge of anxiety and although this book doesn't offer a "silver bullet" it's one of the most practical, insightful books I've read on managing this situation. Stone, Patton, and Heen provide a road map to help you understand the structure, elements, and process that comprise difficult conversations. They demonstrate, with a myriad of examples, how we contribute to the situation ourselves and then how we can modify our contribution and communication to get better outcomes. This is a very easy read using lots of examples to walk you through the process of getting a difficult conversation back on track.

A difficult conversation is anything you find hard to talk about. Most of them combine three different conversations, the "what happened" conversation, the "feelings" conversation, and the "identity" conversation. The real action, they point out, takes place in what people are thinking and feeling, but not saying. By drawing on a broad spectrum of concepts from social psychology, communication theory, and interpersonal communication skills, the authors present comprehensive and practical insights into difficult conversations.

By adopting a "learning approach" you improve your ability to determine if you even want to have the conversation in the first place. If you do want to have the conversation, then

you learn to move beyond just getting the facts right, to focus on what is really important. The material also looks at what is really happening when we blame others, or are blamed ourselves, and how we fall into the trap of assuming we know other peoples' intentions and react according to our assumptions. This book, which is also available on CD and tape, helps you shift your perspective to better understand yourself and to improve your interactions with others.

SAY IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

Loretta Malandro
ISBN: 0-07-140861-4 Reviewed by: Julia Cipriani

Say It Right the First Time is a guide and a phrase book to initiate the reader into the foreign territory and language of accountability in organizations. Loretta Malandro's principles and guidelines are presented clearly and logically. Her goal is to help organizations to build cultures of accountability. The payoff? Sustainable competitive advantage.

Malandro has found that the act of committing to accountability, and to the process of spreading the words and deeds of accountability throughout the organization, causes a major shift. The challenge is not for the faint-hearted or for those with short attention spans. It requires commitment and time. She places the responsibility for accountability on the shoulders of leaders, formal and informal, at all levels in organizations. A leader makes the choice to be 100% accountable and responsible for his/her impact. The next step is to co-create an environment in

which others do the same. Malandro makes a compelling business case for language that is clear, responsible, straightforward, and engages what she calls "the boundless energy of people."

While it is desirable to have the leader and everyone else in an organization commit to accountability, individuals who choose to go it alone will benefit from reading *Say It Right the First Time*. The author recommends strategies and techniques for managing and changing relationships with integrity. Recognizing that these are not failsafe, she suggests ways to recover and to get back on track. She promotes language that engages and acknowledges others. She is hard on the sloppy, tired phrases, annoying speech habits, and jargon that permeate much of the language of business.

The book is practical and accessible. It is well indexed, rich with examples, suggestions, tips, and cautions.

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank Farm Credit Canada for introducing me to Loretta Malandro's work.

...AND DIGNITY FOR ALL: UNLOCKING GREATNESS WITH VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

James Despain and Jane Bodman Converse

ISBN: 0-13-100532-4 Reviewed by: Laurie Hillis, MA

There is a theory that the best leaders are great storytellers. ...*And Dignity for All* is just that... a great story. It is, at first glance, a simplistic tale told by a street smart leader who rose from a shop floor sweeper with no college education to the executive ranks. It is also much more. It is a story about the culture, values, and leadership of Caterpillar Inc. The Track-Type Tractor Division was in dire straights... losing money, suffering from labour turmoil, and known as a place no one wanted to work. Through the author's leadership, he and his team rebuilt the 3,000-person division based on the values of respect, empowerment, civility, and openness. James Despain is brutally honest about how he had to change first as a leader and the difficulty organizations face when they truly lead from a place of values. The dawning of this new era at the Cat division has strong lessons we can all apply in our organizations. A detailed and practical framework is provided about how Cat was able to breathe life into their common values and their Leadership Guide specifies the seven key leadership responsibilities that support their common values. An inspiring and quick read.

LEADERS MUST LEAD – A PERSONAL PATH TO MASTERY

John O. Burdett

ISBN: 0-9687233-2-2 Reviewed by: David J. Lewis

In John Burdett's first book, *New Role, New Reality* (nominated for book of the year by the US Society for Human Resource Management), he explored, with his typical wit and practicality, the transitional journey leaders must face when they ascend to a new position in their career.

In his latest book *Leaders Must Lead*, Burdett takes us on the path of personal mastery leaders must take individually and organizationally to succeed in a globally competitive market.

Leaders Must Lead is a compelling read, a product of Burdett's many years of experience "in the field." His writing style is lively, engaging, and consistently pragmatic. For example, each chapter ends with a summary list of directional activities aptly entitled "Things to do differently on Monday." His use of models transcends the complexity of models used in traditional leadership development literature to a place of elegant simplicity.

If you are new to the sometimes confusing, exciting community of leadership, or a seasoned member, Burdett's contribution is full of learning, insights, and road signs that will guide your personal leadership journey.

His book is, almost as a bonus, sprinkled with thought-provoking quotes such as this one in the chapter on "Leaders Must Be Storytellers":

"To lead without accessing the power of story is to carry a quiver full of arrows but to have left the bow at home."

CO-ACTIVE COACHING: NEW SKILLS FOR COACHING PEOPLE TOWARD SUCCESS IN WORK AND LIFE

Laura Whitworth, Henry Kimsey-House, Phil Sandahl

ISBN: 0-89106-123-1 Reviewed by: Martin van den Akker

Coaching has become a well known term in today's complex and changing leadership world. The speed of change is on the increase, resulting in greater stress and confusion. To combat this, more and more leaders seek coaching as a way to achieve results, find more balance and clarity, and to create meaning in their work and personal life. With the ever-increasing demand for coaching, a variety of different coaching models have surfaced.

"Co-active coaching" (using the co-active coaching model), is a solution-focused approach that is founded on interactive participation and collaboration between coach and client. Rather than consulting or mentoring, the coach facilitates and empowers clients to draw on their own resources to find answers, achieve results, and sustain life-changing behaviour.

Although the content of the book is mainly targeted at individuals aiming to coach professionally, the tools and insights are valuable to anyone in a coaching role. The book guides you through the complete coaching process by defining the most important skills a coach should possess, revealing underlying dynamics, and explaining the structure of a successful coaching relationship. Furthermore, the book offers a variety of tools and exercises to help clients explore, learn, and get into action.

Co-active Coaching is a great tool for anyone wishing to help people make the desired changes in their life using this rewarding coaching method. ■