

## **THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF FIERCE CONVERSATIONS**

### **PRINCIPLE 1: MASTER THE COURAGE TO INTERROGATE REALITY**

No plan survives its collision with reality and reality has a habit of shifting, at work and at home. People change and forget to tell one another - colleagues, customers, spouses, friends. We are all changing all the time. Not only do we neglect to share this with others, we are skilled at masking it even to ourselves.

### **PRINCIPLE 2: COME OUT FROM BEHIND YOURSELF, INTO THE CONVERSATION, AND MAKE IT REAL**

While many fear "real", it is the unreal conversation that should concern us. Unreal conversations are incredibly expensive, both for the individual and for the organization. No one has to change but everyone has to have the conversation. When the conversation is real, the change occurs before the conversation is over.

### **PRINCIPLE 3: BE HERE, PREPARED TO BE NOWHERE ELSE**

Our work, our relationships, our lives succeed or fail one conversation at a time. While no single conversation is guaranteed to transform a company, a relationship, or a life, any single conversation can. Speak and listen as if this is the most important conversation you will ever have with this person. It could be. Participate as if it matters. It does.

### **PRINCIPLE 4. TACKLE YOUR TOUGHEST CHALLENGE TODAY**

The problem named is the problem solved. Identify and confront the real obstacles in your path. Today is the day to have the conversation you have been avoiding. All confrontation is a search for the truth. Stay current with the people important to you. Travel light. Agenda free.

### **PRINCIPLE 5: OBEY YOUR INSTINCTS**

Don't just trust your instincts. Obey them. Your radar screen works perfectly. It's the operator who is in question. An intelligence agent is sending you messages every day, all day. You hear them in your head, feel them in your gut, and discern them in your heart. Tune in. Pay attention. What we label as illusion is the scent of something "real" coming close.

### **PRINCIPLE 6: TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL WAKE**

There is no trivial comment. Something you may not even remember saying may have had a devastating impact on someone who looks to you for guidance and approval. Learning to deliver the message without the load allows you to speak with clarity, conviction, and compassion. Remember, the conversation is not about the relationship; the conversation *is* the relationship.

### **PRINCIPLE 7: LET SILENCE DO THE HEAVY LIFTING**

When there is simply a whole lot of talking going on, conversations can be so empty of meaning they crackle. Insight occurs in the space between words. Memorable conversations include breathing space. Learn to love the sweet territory of silence, where an intelligent universe waits to engage you in a dialogue, the first word of which will take you farther than you could have imagined.