

## **A Safe Place for Dangerous Truths**

### **When, Where, and How to tell the TRUTH.**

#### **What “truths” are dangerous ? (results of an informal poll)**

- 46% A certain person isn't performing but no one will say it out loud.
- 22% A certain person is making decisions for self rather than for the larger good.
- 19% No one knows what we are doing or where we are going.
- 8% A certain practice is unethical but no one is willing to speak up.
- 5% We collectively ignore bad news because we fear repercussions.

#### **Two Main Reasons we don't DIALOGUE**

1. Bias for Action
  - addicted to action plans (valium)
  - busy as a status symbol
2. Dialogue is FRUSTRATING
  - fear of repercussions
  - control vs. participation
  - cattle chute facilitation
  - root cause analysis = blame

**TELLING THE TRUTH MAKES A PROBLEM  
PART OF THE PAST,**

**AVOIDING THE TRUTH MAKES A PROBLEM  
PART OF THE FUTURE**

# **We need help!**

## **When, Where and How to Create a Safe Place for Dangerous Truths**

### **1. Assume Positive Intent**

Enter a conversation understanding that TRUTH has many interpretations  
(on average 5.3 points of view to every problem)

### **2. Make a Distinction Between Regular and Extra Strength Conversations**

#### **REGULAR**

- Get stuff done
- Efficiency
- No time
- Truth might destroy the relationship

#### **EXTRA STRENGTH**

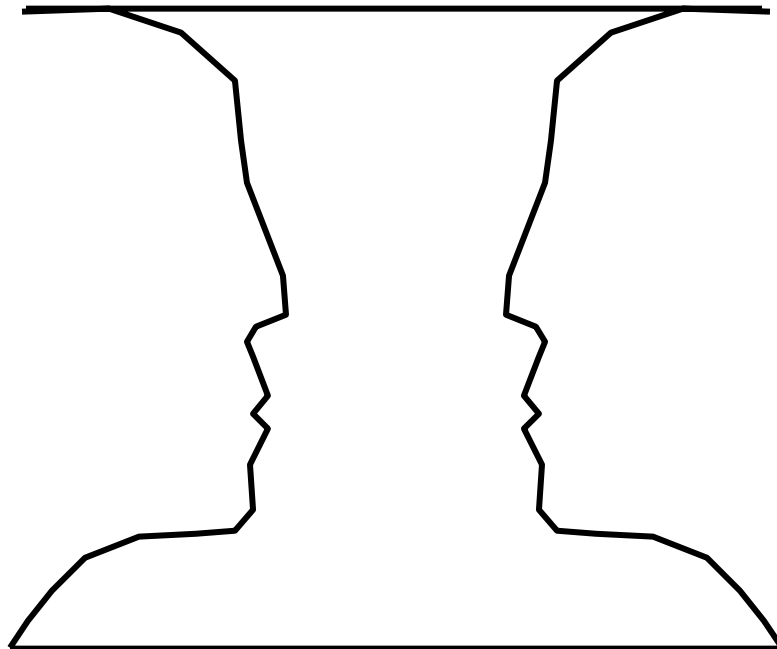
- Plenty of time
- Lots of room for interpretation
- No decisions or action needed right now
- Use rarely - only when you can make the time and safe space

### **3. Make time for dialogue (two hours) and make space for learning**

Time and space are subjective evaluations – shift the perspective.

### **4. Manage Expectations (don't just "throw a posse together")**

### **5. Increase your ability to tolerate ambiguity and frustration**



**What YOU SEE:**

**My Intention** His/Her Intention

My Actions **His/Her Actions**

My Impact **His/Her Impact**

**(anyone can see I'm RIGHT!) (anyone can see He/She is WRONG!)**

**What THEY SEE:**

Your Intention **His/Her Intention**

**Your Actions** His/Her Actions

**Your Impact** His/Her Impact

**(anyone can see YOU are WRONG!) (anyone can see He/She is RIGHT!)**

**FIVE Definitions of FAIR:**

We all share equally.

Whoever has been here the longest gets the most.

Whoever works the hardest gets the most.

The people who contribute the most, get the most.

Those who need it, get the most.

## Possible Rules for Dialogue

<b>No Leader*</b>	<b>Act As Colleagues</b>
<b>No Agenda*</b>	<b>Listen and speak without judgment*</b>
<b>No Decisions*</b>	<b>Acknowledge each Speaker</b>
<b>No Task*</b>	<b>Respect Individual differences*</b>
<b>Suspend Certainties*</b>	<b>Suspend Roles and Status</b>
<b>Listen to Your Listening</b>	<b>Balance Inquiry and advocacy</b>
<b>Slow Down the Inquiry*</b>	<b>Avoid Cross-talk</b>
<b>Be Aware of Thought</b>	<b>Focus on Learning*</b>
<b>Maintain Peripheral Attention</b>	<b>Seek the Next Level of Understanding</b>
<b>Suspend Assumptions</b>	<b>Maintain a Spirit of Inquiry*</b>
<b>Befriend Polarization*</b>	<b>Devalue Consistency</b>
<b>Observe the Observer</b>	<b>Be Vulnerable</b>
<b>Speak Personally*</b>	<b>Embrace the Painful and the Pleasant</b>
<b>Avoid Generalizations</b>	<b>Speak when “Moved”</b>
<b>Don’t Fix or Convert Others</b>	<b>Release the Need for Specific Outcomes</b>

\* Recommended “Core” Rules of Dialogue

Adapted from Scott Peck’s The Different Drum, William Isaacs’ Dialogue Project and The Dialogue Group