



Courageous Conversations Training Program

Customizable in length and duration

Do members of your team struggle with inconsistent performance, broken commitments, and unmet expectations? When leaders notice performance problems like inconsistent follow-up, poor attention to detail, and missed deadlines, they are often hesitant to address these challenges head on.

The lag time between identifying and discussing problems is often due to a lack of assertiveness skills, fears around being conflict-avoidant or unsympathetic, and being perceived as a micromanager.

Even when leaders do address the perceived problems head on, they often have repeat conversations because they solve the wrong problem, tap-dance around the real issues, and struggle to motivate a team member to behave differently.

Our eight-part Courageous Conversations program teaches leaders to develop essential dialogue and influence skills to proactively hold difficult performance conversations and close the gap between actual and expected behaviors.

Modules:

- Master Your Mindset
- Practice Assertiveness
- Get to the Root Cause
- Manage Emotions
- Create Psychological Safety
- Lead with Empathy
- Execute the Conversation
- Make It Stick

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Behavioral Outcomes:

- Create a culture of trust and open dialogue
- Know the right questions to get to the root cause(s) of the actual problem
- Respond to deflections and excuses
- Facilitate a conversation that creates cooperation and doesn't force compliance
- Understand what motivates people to change beyond consequences and rewards
- Prepare for difficult conversations
- Diffuse heightened emotions and build empathy and rapport
- Learn the success template for psychological safety
- Practice a four-part template for giving feedback
- Solve the root cause problem and avoid repeated conversations
- Employ a Plan B strategy when people have setbacks or lapses in behavior
- Practice assertiveness to hold anyone accountable regardless of power, position, or temperament
- Eliminate silos between departments and help employees resolve conflicts with peers and supervisors
- Reduce grievances that previously clogged your HR and administrative system
- Turn each accountability discussion into a course of action that leads to results

Challenges

- Listening to reply instead of to understand
- Going into solution mode too quickly
- Offering help without understanding the root cause of the problem
- Seeking compliance instead of cooperation
- Not understanding if team members are truly motivated to change their behavior

Skills Certifications

- Asking Questions
- Listening to Understand
- Negotiation
- Conflict Resolution
- Tone and Word Choice

Delivery Options:

- Live In-Person
- Virtual
- Hybrid

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Who Will Benefit:

- All levels of leadership
- Sales, Client Services, Finance, IT/Technology, and Operations teams
- First-time or inexperienced leaders
- HR Directors and teams
- High-potentials
- Those who struggle to be assertive
- Anyone who wants to improve their communication skills, resolve conflicts quickly and respectfully, and expand their influence

Module 1: Master Your Mindset

How often do you know what you need to do, but you just can't get yourself to do it? So often, we put off or avoid entirely courageous conversations, because we aren't willing to feel the discomfort they may cause.

Peter Bregman once said, "If you are willing to feel everything, you can do anything." This module will help you get in the right mindset for holding a courageous conversation, so you can approach the interaction with curiosity, empathy, and compassion and move toward a mutually empowering outcome.

- Learn how to mentally prepare for difficult conversations
- Recognize what you can and can't control and influence
- Move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset
- Set yourself and your colleague up for mutual success

Module 2: Practice Assertiveness

Do you often feel as though you fail to get your opinions heard, or that people readily dismiss or undermine your views when you are managing up or across? Maybe you have a habit of handling situations aggressively when managing your team, or perhaps you lack the confidence to speak up in key situations?

Assertiveness is the key to better managing yourself, people, and situations. In courageous conversations, it can help you to influence others in order to gain acceptance, agreement, or behavior change. It is the single biggest factor in determining an individual's leadership potential – and it can be learned.

This module trains leaders to find a balanced, assertive management style that maximizes productivity, efficiency, and employee engagement.

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- Overcome what holds you back from being assertive
- Identify key differences between aggressive, assertive, and passive communication
- Recognize ways to focus on issues — instead of personalities — to get the job done right the first time
- Establish connection and rapport and create an environment of trust

Module 3: Get to the Root Cause

Often, your team may appear to have similar challenges: disorganization, poor time management, missed deadlines, disengagement, negative morale, etc. Yet these symptoms often point to a deeper root cause.

Two employees who are displaying signs of burnout may be experiencing it for completely different reasons – one might be up late every night answering emails, even though you never explicitly set that expectation, and is exhausted from feeling always on. The other may be struggling to stay organized and feels overwhelmed by additional work she’s recently taken on.

This module will help you identify what is causing the gap between your colleague’s expected and actual behavior, so you are solving problems at the source.

- Address issues at the source, so they don’t repeat themselves
- Create psychological safety so people feel comfortable speaking their truth
- Default to curiosity and use dialogue techniques to develop critical thinking
- Get alignment and understand what would drive someone to behave differently

Module 4: Manage Emotions

One reason performance and accountability conversations fill us with dread is that they often turn emotional, with one or both parties feeling angry, defensive, or intimidated. If we’re not careful, what we say and do in these heightened emotional states has the potential to damage trust and weaken our relationships.

In this module, you’ll learn a powerful tool for diffusing emotion, showing compassion, and building rapport, even while discussing difficult topics.

- Discover how to handle irrational thinking and overcome negative emotions
- Respond and don’t react when you get triggered
- Learn and master a 4-step process for shifting people’s emotions
- Keep composure when feeling angry, defensive, or intimidated

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Module 5: Create Psychological Safety

Dr. Amy C. Edmondson, the scholar and Harvard Business School professor who coined the term psychological safety defines it as “a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.”

Creating psychological safety in courageous conversations is essential, so your colleague has the space to talk and work through the challenges they are facing. Our choice of words, tone, body language, and listening to understand versus respond all contribute to or detract from the psychological safety we create in a conversation.

- Learn the success template for psychological safety
- Chose words, actions, and emotions that build rapport with others
- Take steps to rebuild safety when others get defensive
- Talk with almost anyone about almost anything

Module 6: Lead with Empathy

The way you set up and begin a courageous conversation sets the tone for the interaction. No one wants to receive a 15-minute meeting invite with no agenda from their manager for 4pm on a Friday...hello, anxiety.

This module will teach you how to set the tone for a performance conversation while minimizing anxiety on the part of your colleague. It will also cover how to kick off the conversation in a way that fosters connection and goodwill.

- Listen empathically to signal respectful communication
- Clarify ideas, emotions, and needs non-judgmentally
- Discern the feelings behind the needs and wants of others.
- Build cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork with your employees using empathy as a tool of influence

Module 7: Execute the Conversation

Now that you're in the right mindset, know how to manage emotions and create psychological safety, and have kicked off the conversation with compassion, you need to actually say what you came to say. So how to do it?

This module provides a template for speaking honestly and respectfully without blaming or shaming others. It invites your colleague to genuinely empathize with your own feelings and needs and observe how their behaviors may be playing a role.

- Remove hierarchy using the permission method
- Learn a 4-part template for giving feedback

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- Prepare and effectively respond to deflections and excuses
- Motivate change cooperatively, rather than forcefully
- Set, manage, and align on expectations

Module 8: Make It Stick

Even when people have the best intentions, changing habits and behaviors is tough. That's why getting agreement from your colleague to change their behavior is not enough. You need a plan that will help set them up for success.

In this module, you will learn how to help your colleagues overcome barriers and setbacks to make change easier and more effective. This training will help you turn each courageous conversation into a course of action that leads to results.

- Reduce barriers to keeping commitments
- Understand motivators and benefits
- Set goals and create an action plan
- Overcome setbacks and create Plan B's
- Follow up to sustain habits

For more information on any or all the modules in the Courageous Conversations Program, please email info@mindsetgo.com or call Mark Altman at 978-793-1159.

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