



successful executive

Building Enduring Capability

Seven Principles of Fierce Conversation

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. Nothing is constant. Everything changes, all the time. Not only do we neglect to share changes 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” conversations, it is the unreal conversations that should scare us to death. Unreal conversations are expensive, for the individual and the organisation. You will accomplish your goals in large part by making every conversation you have as real as possible.

Principle 3 – Be here, prepared to be nowhere else:

Our work, our relationships and 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:

Burnout doesn't occur because we're solving problems, it occurs because we've been trying to solve the same problem over and over. The problem named is the problem solved. Identify and then confront the real obstacles in your path. Stay current with the people important to your success and happiness. Travel light, enjoy the freedom!

Principle 5 – Obey your instincts:

Don't just trust your instincts, obey them. How many times have we gone against our intuition, our gut feel only to regret it? Your radar screen works perfectly, tune into it and let it help you.

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Principle 6 – Take responsibility for your emotional wake:

For a leader, there is no trivial comment. Something you don't remember saying, may have had a devastating impact on someone who looked to you for guidance. Remember, conversations form the basis for relationships. All relationships are built one conversation at a time. Learning to deliver the conversation without the "load" allows you to speak with clarity, conviction and compassion. This requires self-awareness.

Principle 7 – Let silence do the heavy lifting:

When there is a whole lot of talking going on, conversations can be empty. Meaningful conversations include breathing space. Slow down the conversation, so that insight can occur in the space between words and you can discover what the conversation really needs to be about.

Source: Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott