Difficult Conversations (Part I)

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Difficult Conversations
How to Discuss What Matters Most
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Today’s Objectives
- Define a difficult conversation
- Sort out the problem that makes a conversation difficult
What is a difficult conversation?

A difficult conversation is anything you find hard to talk about.
Sort out the conversation

• What is said vs. what is not said
• Think and feel without saying anything to each other
3 Conversations

1. The “What Happened” Conversation
2. The Feelings Conversation
3. The Identity Conversation
The “What Happened” Conversation

• The Truth Assumption
  ▫ I am right, you are wrong
  ▫ Conflicting perceptions
  ▫ Conversation is really about what’s important
  ▫ Move away from delivering messages to asking questions, views and perceptions
The “What Happened” Conversation

• Intention Intervention
  ▫ Conversation is about intentions - your and mine
  ▫ We assume we know the other’s intentions
  ▫ Our assumptions are much less accurate than we think
  ▫ Unfounded assumptions and be a disaster
The “What Happened” Conversation

• Blame Frame
  ▫ Talking about fault produces denial, disagreement and little learning
  ▫ Evokes fear of punishment
  ▫ Distracts from why things went wrong and how to correct them
The Feeling Conversation

• An Opera Without Music
• Stick to Business or Not
The Identity Conversation

Keep Your Balance
  ▫ Loss of confidence
  ▫ Does it make sense to move forward
  ▫ Try to make it better
Moving Toward a Learning Conversation

• Understanding the challenges and mistakes of each conversation
• Information to share and questions to ask
• Understand rather than persuade
• Work together to figure out a way to manage the problem going forward
• Changing stance- inviting others into the conversation
Upcoming Sessions

Part II  March 18, 2010 12:00pm to 1:00pm
• During this session, we will take an in depth look at the mistakes people make in the 3 conversations

Part III  April 22, 2010 12:00pm to 1:00pm
• During this session, we will look at the conversation itself and put it all together in a 5 step process