

How to turn communication fails around with courageous conversations.

When people are tired, stressed or under pressure things don't always come across in the way they are intended in email or messenger apps. Misinterpretations mean we can get triggered easily into fight, flight, or freeze mode, and as we are not in physical proximity with others then things can fester and go unresolved.

Firstly, here are the top three challenges I see when communication is breaking down:

- 1** - People start making excuses – using the language of “it wasn't my fault”
- 2** - They may start blaming others “X didn't give me the right information on time”
- 3** - Or thirdly, people go into denial, and they think to themselves “maybe they won't see it, or it's not that bad” so they ignore it

Do you know what these 3 all have in common? They keep us stuck in our own experience of communication failure and we completely miss or dismiss the impact of this communication failure on others.

As my good friend Kamal Sarma says when it comes to communication **“we need to take 100% responsibility for the message sent and the message that's received”** if we are going to resolve and create healthy, happy, and strong relationships in work but also in life.



How to turn communication fails around with courageous conversations.

So, what if we are prepared to do this and notice when communication has broken down and step in and have a more courageous conversation to resolve things?

Here are three key elements to plan for to help you step into a courageous conversation:

- 1** - Plan the outcome of the conversation you want by being clear on the intention you are taking into the conversation both at a rational and emotional level
- 2** - Unconditionally own your part in the communication breakdown, take responsibility for what you said or did that you think impacted the other person, and apologise. NB: for me to get to this place I really need to reflect on why I have behaved in this way – hint: it's always to do with where you are at and not down to the other person when you really boil it down
- 3** - Keep your expectations clean – just because you have got to this place does not mean the other person necessarily has. Take ownership for your part and set up the opportunity for the 'what's next' could be that the other person takes on board what you say and is ready to move on, perhaps they need time, and you can suggest a reconvene

The main aim is to get the communication lines back open and don't be afraid to ask what the other person needs.

