

Dr. Robert Avossa July 25, 2025



SCAN ME

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The Forum for Educational Leadership

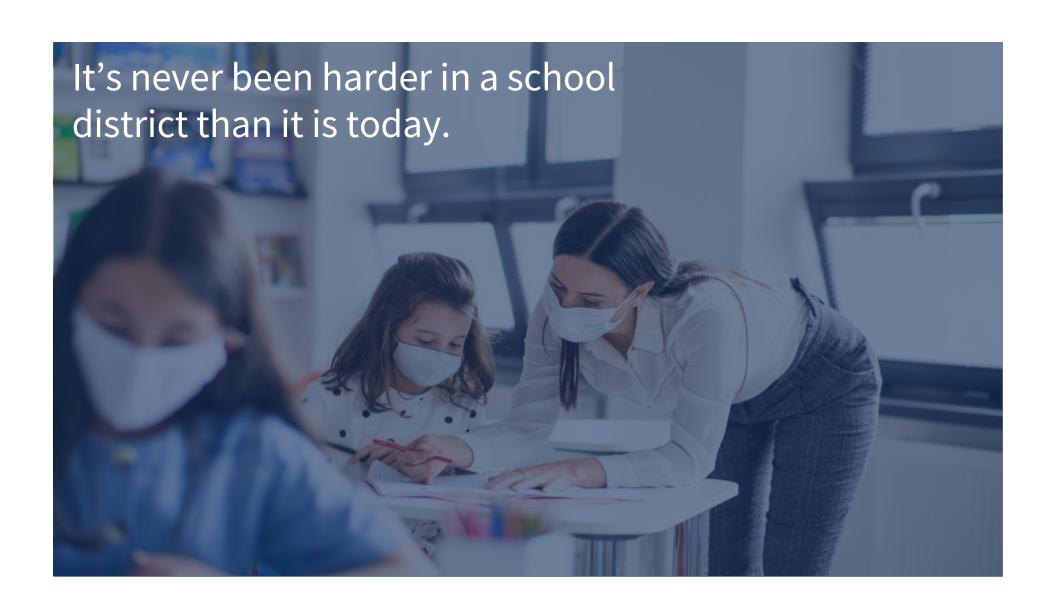
The Forum for Educational Leadership (The Forum) is a collaborative, **collective effort to create the space for diverse, highly effective and passionate education leaders to prepare for their pathway to the top role in a district or state agency.** The Forum aims to show that we can transform the odds of who is in the top job while sustaining them once they get there.



of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 participants became a Superintendent or were promoted to a senior leadership role within 1 year of graduating from the Forum

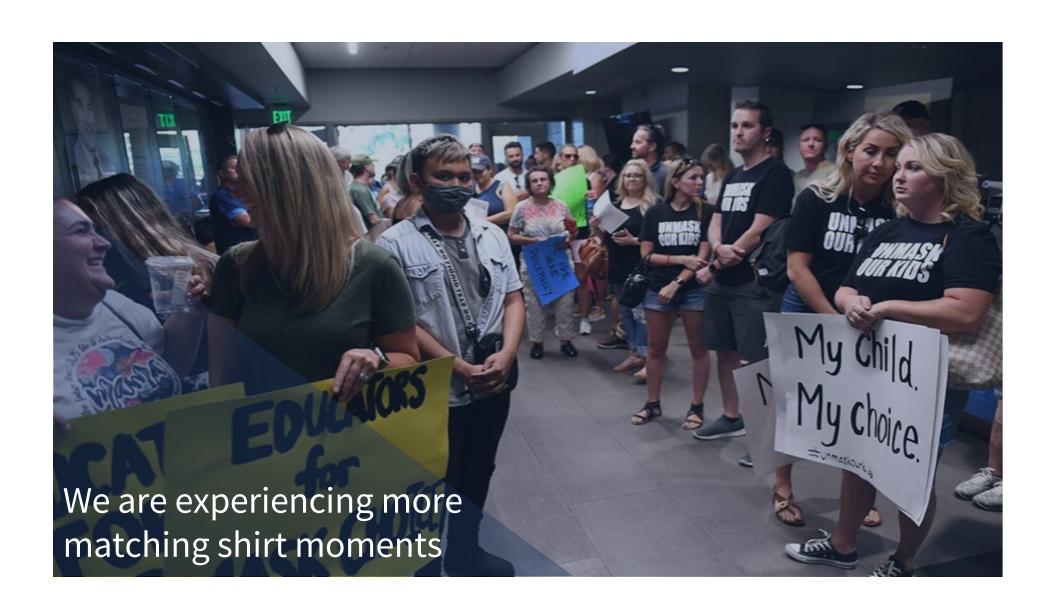






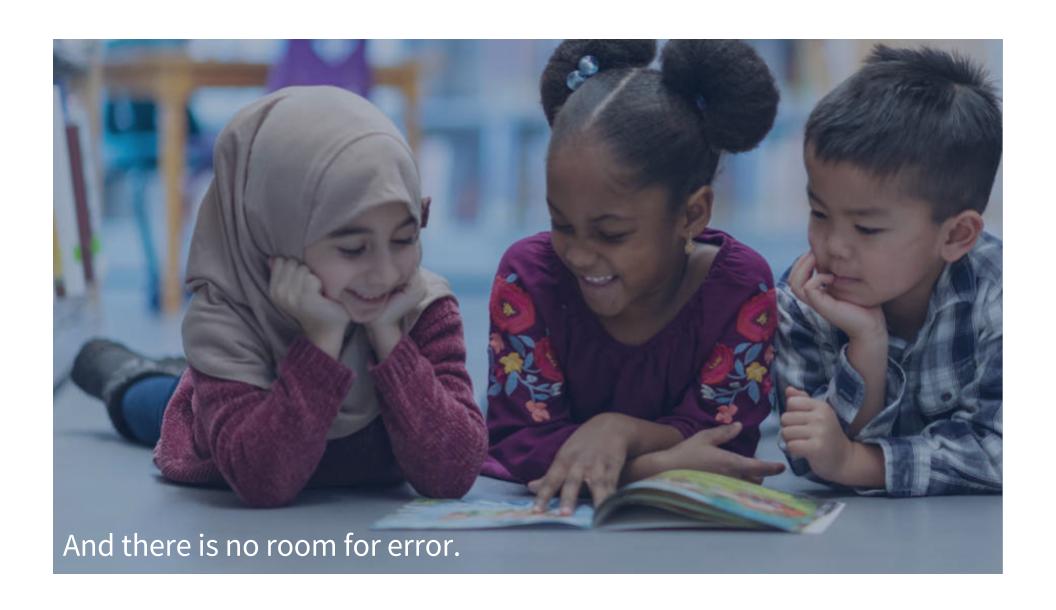
Which of these is symbolic of our schools today?





All of this is happening, rightly so, in an environment of continued high expectations.





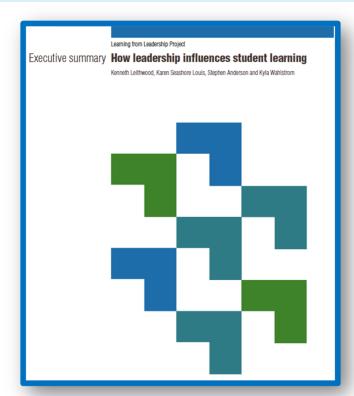


Much of the best research on leadership in school districts and schools has been conducted by the Wallace Foundation.

How Leadership Influences Student Learning

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom

The Wallace Foundation



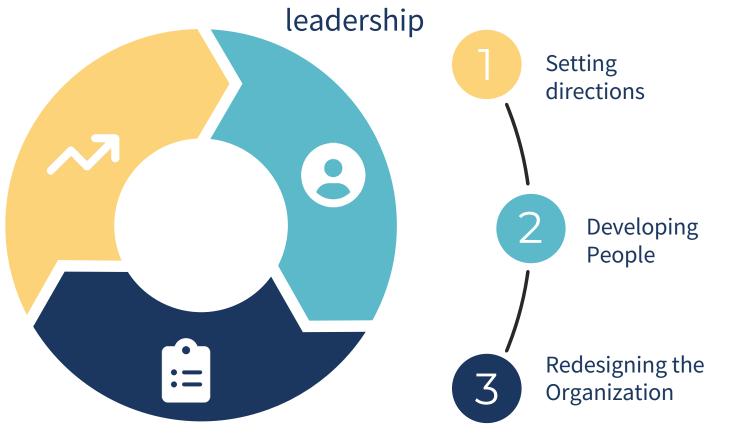


Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.



Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most.

Three sets of practices make up this basic core of successful





Setting direction

- Develop shared understandings about the organization and its activities
- Motivated by goals
- Make sense of work, find a sense of identity for themselves within their work



What leadership practices do you utilize to set direction?



2 Developing People

Specific sets of leadership practices significantly and positively influencing these direct experiences include:

- Offering intellectual stimulation
- Providing individualized support
- □ Providing appropriate models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization.



What leadership practices do you utilize to set direction?



Redesigning the organization

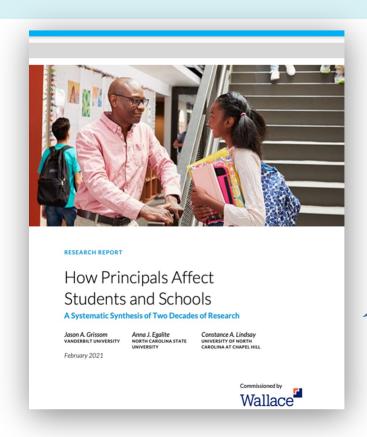
The purpose behind the redesign of organizational cultures and structures is to facilitate work and that the malleability of structures should match the changing nature of the improvement agenda

- ☐ Strengthening district and school cultures
- ☐ Modifying organizational structures
- ☐ Building collaborative processes.



What leadership practices do you utilize to redesign the organization?

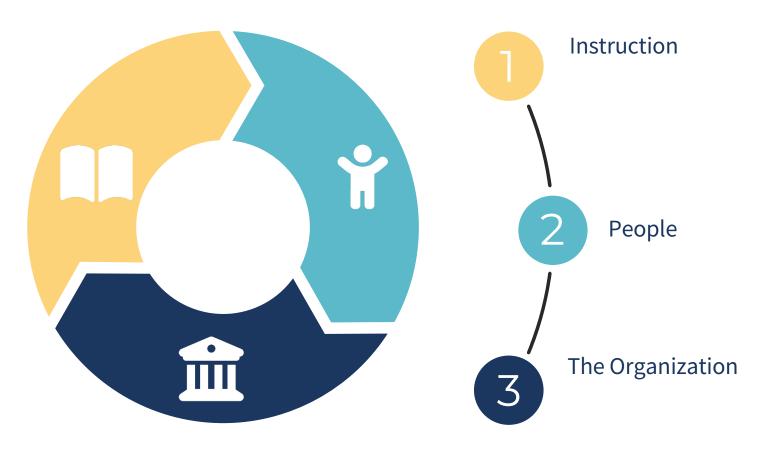
The Wallace Foundation has released new research specifically about principals.



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"Estimate that the impact of replacing a below-average elementary school principal (i.e., one at the 25th percentile of effectiveness) with an above-average principal (i.e., at the 75th percentile) would result in an additional 2.9 months of math learning and 2.7 months of reading learning each year for students in that school."

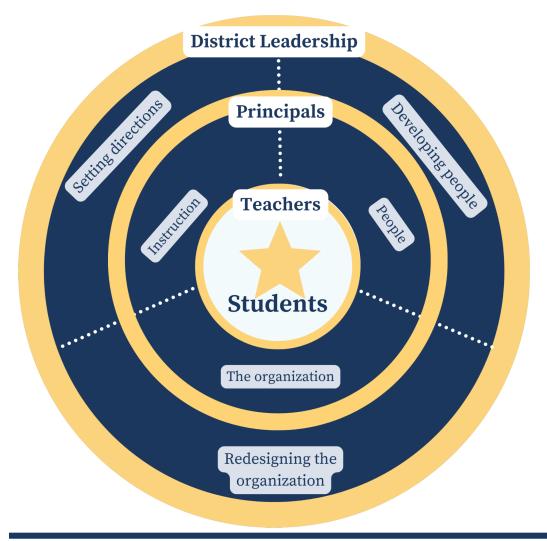
Three areas of skill and expertise school leaders need to be successful





These manifest in four classes of behaviors:

- 1. Engaging in instructionally focused interactions with teachers.
- 2. Building a productive school climate
- 3. Facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning communities.
- 4. Managing personnel and resources strategically.



Great Leaders:

- Set the direction focused on an aligned, data driven instructional system as the backbone of the work;
- 2. **Develop people** through hiring effective team members, providing instructional coaching and meaningful evaluations utilizing; collaboration and professional learning communities which leads to continuous improvement;
- 3. Redesign the organization by creating a productive climate marked by trust, efficacy, teamwork, engagement with data, leading to organizational learning, and;
- 4. Manage personnel and resources strategically around strategic staffing and allocation of resources where the needs are the greatest.

Key Takeaways – How Do You Manage and Lead

- Balancing pressure and support with psychological safety is critical for managing change – creating an atmosphere that it is safe for calculated risk-taking
- Felt accountability is how much people feel accountable for producing successful results
- Must have psychological safety and felt accountability for adults for students to thrive



Great leaders find a balance – pressure & support...

- What are examples of pressure in a school system and your department?
- What are some examples of support in a school system and your department?







Culture Matters...

One dead fish is a problem. A hundred dead fish? Check the water." When good people fail, check the culture.





Effective Teams

Think of the most effective teams you have been a member of, what were the characteristics of that team?



Ineffective Teams

Think of the least effective team you have been a member of, what were the characteristics of that team?



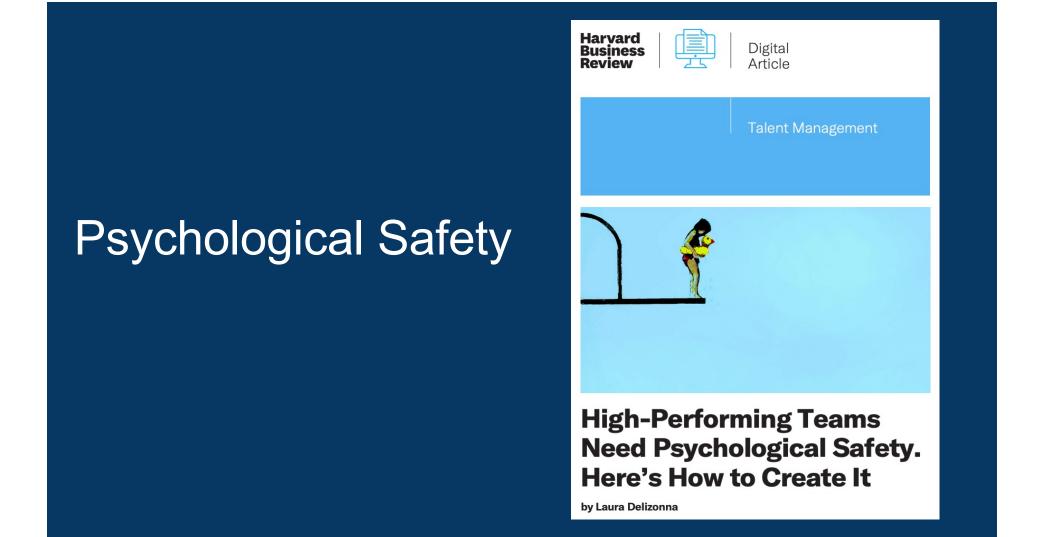


Psychological Safety

- Moderate risk-taking
- Speaking your mind
- Creativity
- Sticking your neck out







Psychological Safety

"Act first, think later"

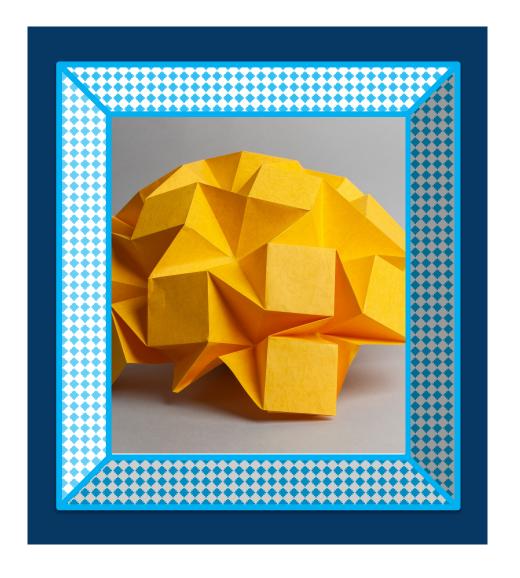




Psychological Safety

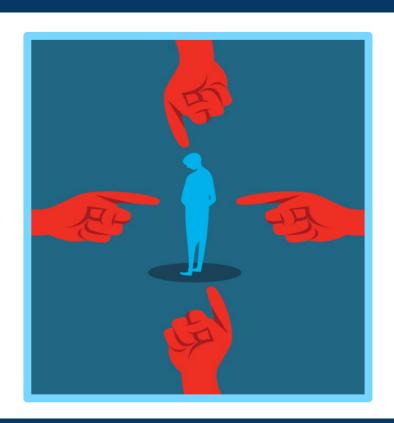
When teams feel challenged but safe, they thrive





How Can You Increase Psychological Safety

Replace blame with curiosity





How Can You Increase Psychological

Speak Human to Human

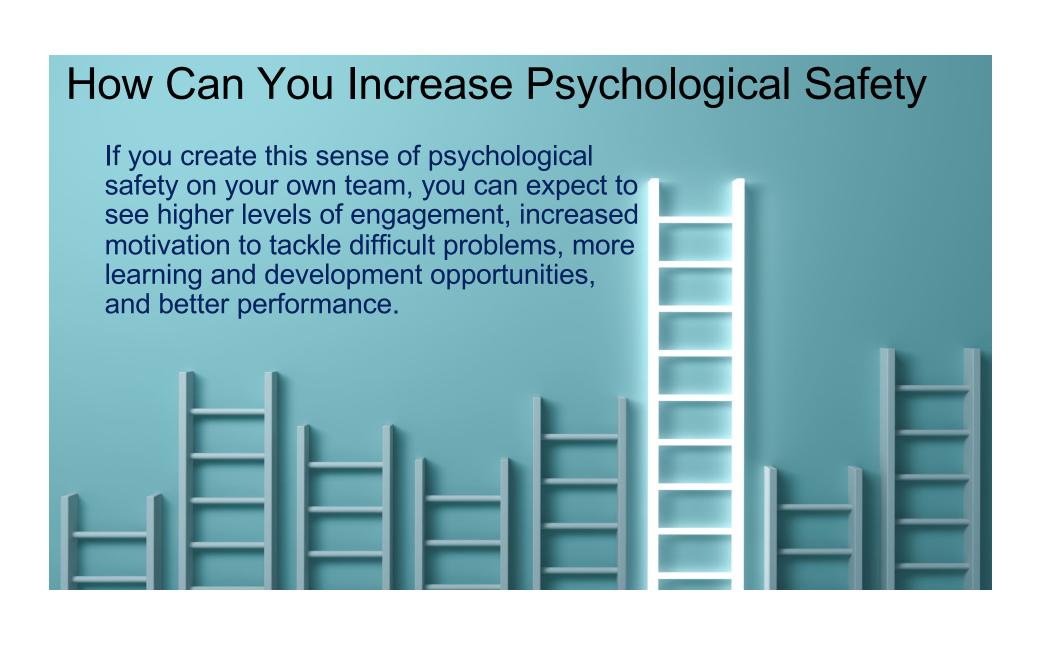


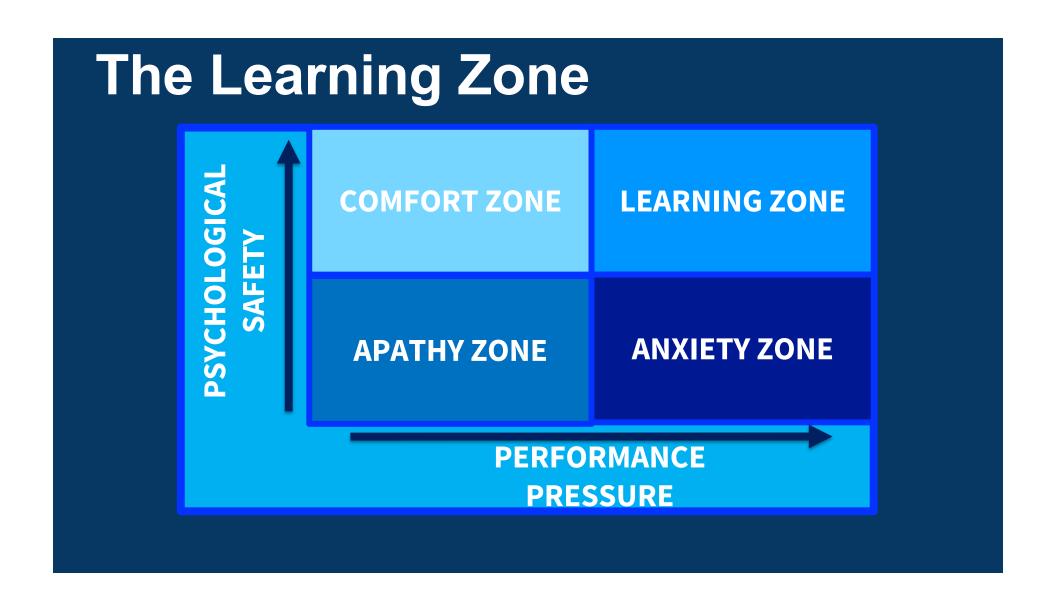
How Can You Increase Psychological Safety

Measure psychological safety

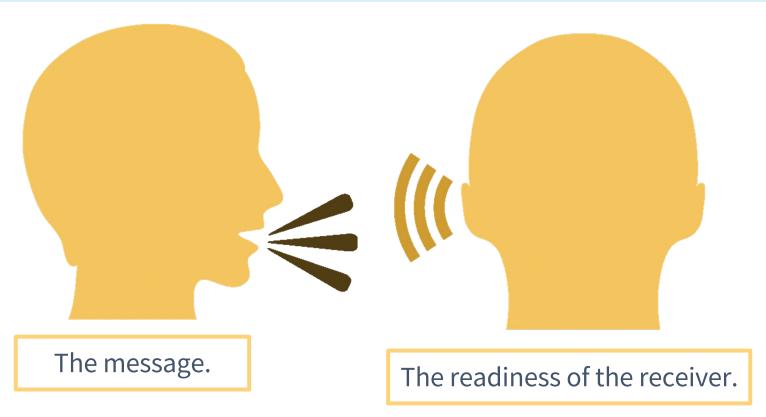


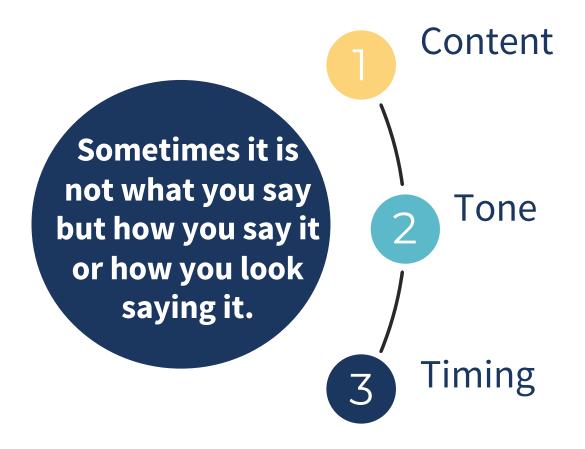














The Axe forgets.

The Tree remembers.



Keyboard Courage



Conflict happens.

Drama is a choice.



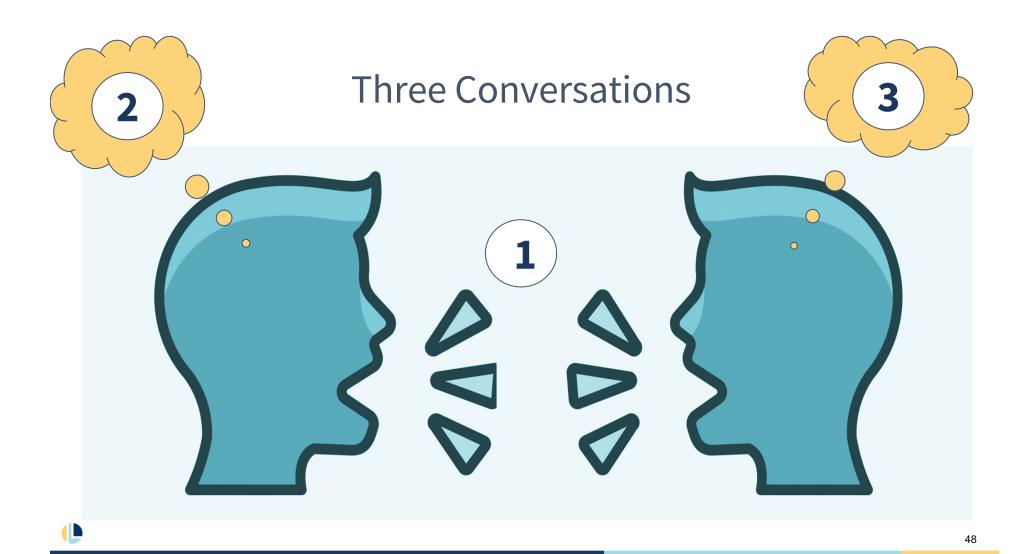
Meaning people are waiting for their turn to talk instead of listening.



Stephen Covey:

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."





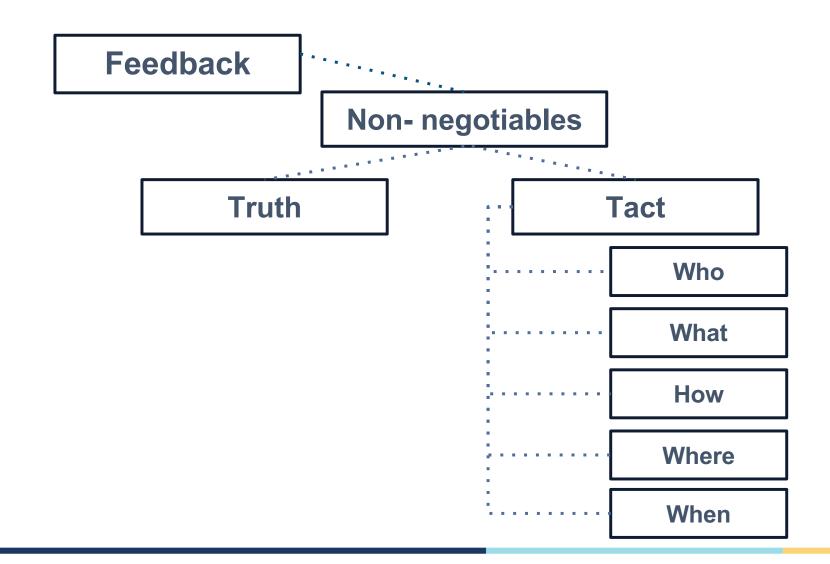
The Core Concept:

This principle recognizes that effective feedback requires balancing two essential but sometimes competing elements:

<u>Truth (Honesty/Directness)</u>

<u>Tact (Care/Diplomacy)</u>





Kim Scott:

Truth without Tact becomes – "brutally honest" or "obnoxious agression" it can humilate people and damage relationships



Kim Scott:

Tact without Truth becomes "Ruinous Empahthy" being so concerned about hurting feelings that you avoid giving the necessary feedback, which ultimately harms both performance and the relationship.



Three things to ask yourself before you say anything:

Does this need to be said?

Impacted by the person you may give the feedback.

Does it need to be said by me?

Who is the best person to ask? Impacted by the topic.

Does this need to be said now?

When and where is the best place to ask? Impacted by the place.

Beware of false praise!







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