

THIS MIGHT BE AWKWARD

Real skills for saying
what needs to be said



PLUGGED IN
training | coaching | consulting

AT THIS END OF THIS SESSION, YOU WILL HAVE LEARNED HOW TO...



1. **Unpack the Awkward:** Normalize the Discomfort of Feedback
2. **Understand the Consequences of Staying Silent**
3. **Spot the Bias:** How Assumptions & Prejudice Color Feedback
4. **Get the Tools:** Build a Personal Feedback Toolkit - PLUG IN, SBI, FBI
5. **Practice Across Contexts:** From the station life to home life
6. **Learn to Lead with Curiosity,** Not Judgment

Welcome!

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Founder/Presenter, Plugged In Training | Coaching | Consulting

Learner ♦ Relator ♦ Developer ♦ Individualization ♦ Analytical



We help leaders and teams get Plugged In:
People Skills for High Stakes Leadership



**I discovered the secret to avoiding
difficult conversations.**

Don't have relationships with other humans.

Unfortunately, that creates some other problems.

Quick confession

Put a finger down...

- Avoided the conversation you knew you had to have?
- Rehearsed an argument in your head?
- Written and deleted the text?
- Said “I'm fine” when you were absolutely not fine?
- Created the perfect comeback three hours later?



We will tolerate weeks of discomfort...

to avoid ten minutes of awkward.

**Avoiding it doesn't reduce the tension,
it gives tension somewhere to live.**

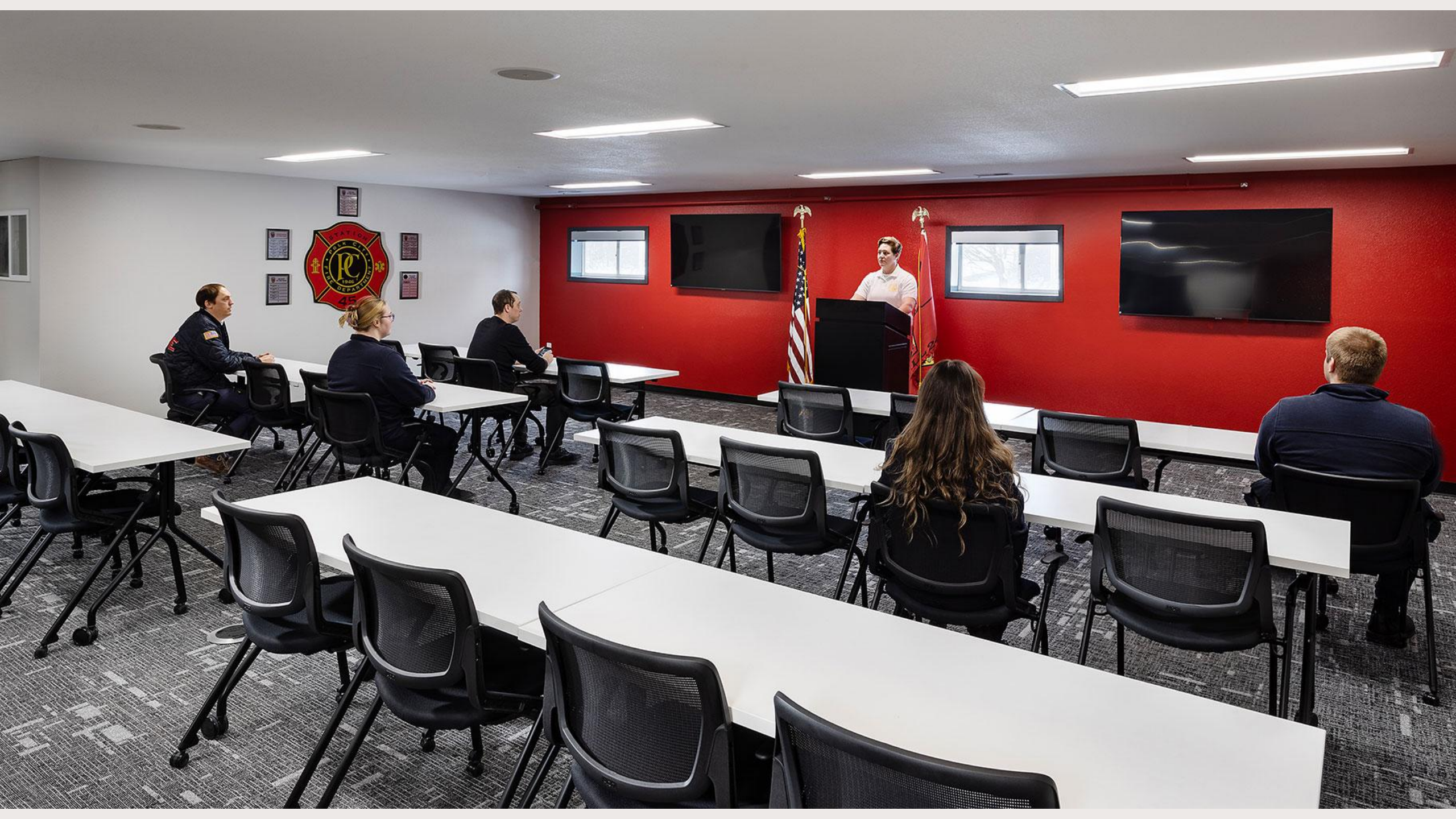
“Your job as a leader is to see smoke and go address it before it turns into a fire. You have to experience a little bit of preemptive suffering and discomfort to avoid everybody else experiencing a lot of suffering and discomfort.”

Patrick Lencioni

At The Table Podcast







A small tale

Taylor walked into the room about ten minutes late. The meeting had already started. As Taylor found a seat, Jordan looked up, stopped talking for a moment, and then continued. Taylor didn't say anything.

A few minutes later, Jordan asked the group for an update on a project that Taylor had been working on. Taylor responded, “I sent everything yesterday.” Jordan said, “Okay. I haven't seen it.” Taylor looked down at the table and didn't respond. The meeting continued.

When it ended, everyone started gathering their things. Jordan walked out of the room without saying anything to Taylor. Taylor stayed behind for a few minutes.

Later that afternoon, Taylor received a message from Jordan:

“Can we talk?”

- 1. What do you think is happening between Taylor and Jordan?**
- 2. Why was Taylor late?**
- 3. Why did Jordan stop talking when Taylor entered?**
- 4. What did you think Jordan meant by, “I haven't seen it”?**
- 5. Why did Taylor look down and stop responding?**
- 6. Why did Jordan leave without speaking to Taylor?**
- 7. What do you think “Can we talk?” means?**
- 8. What do you predict happens next?**

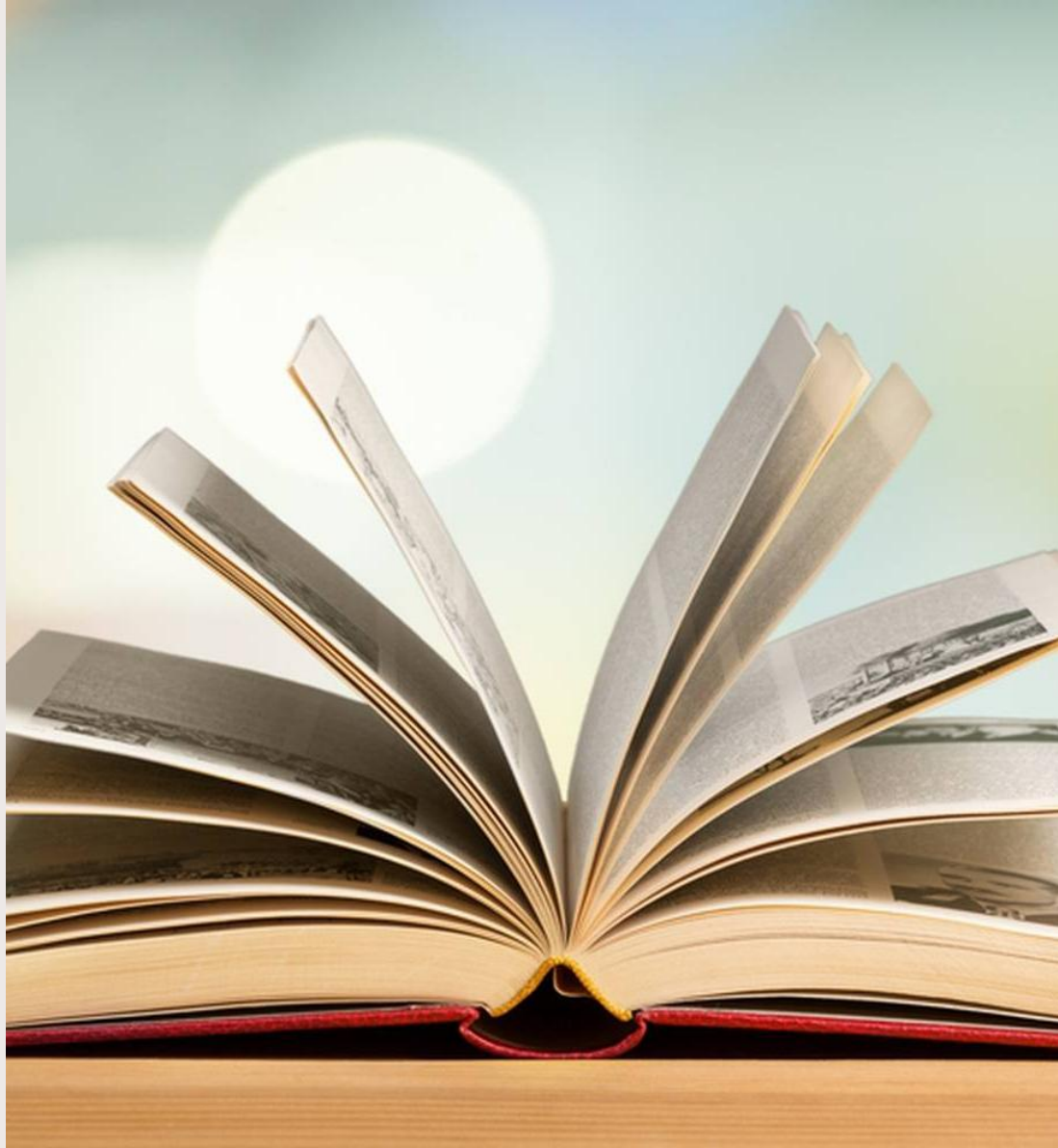
Our brains hate missing information.

So they fill in the blanks.

Sometimes with a full Netflix series.



**WHAT AM
I MISSING?**



We don't just respond to what happened...
We respond to **the story** we've created
about what happened.

What
actually
happened



How much is **the
story your brain
created** to
explain it?

Fact or Story?

FACT

“She walked past me without saying hello.”

STORY

“She is mad at me.”

FACT

“He didn't answer for three hours.”

STORY

“He doesn't care.”







Where are you on the scale?



CALM



OK



ANNOYED



ANGRY



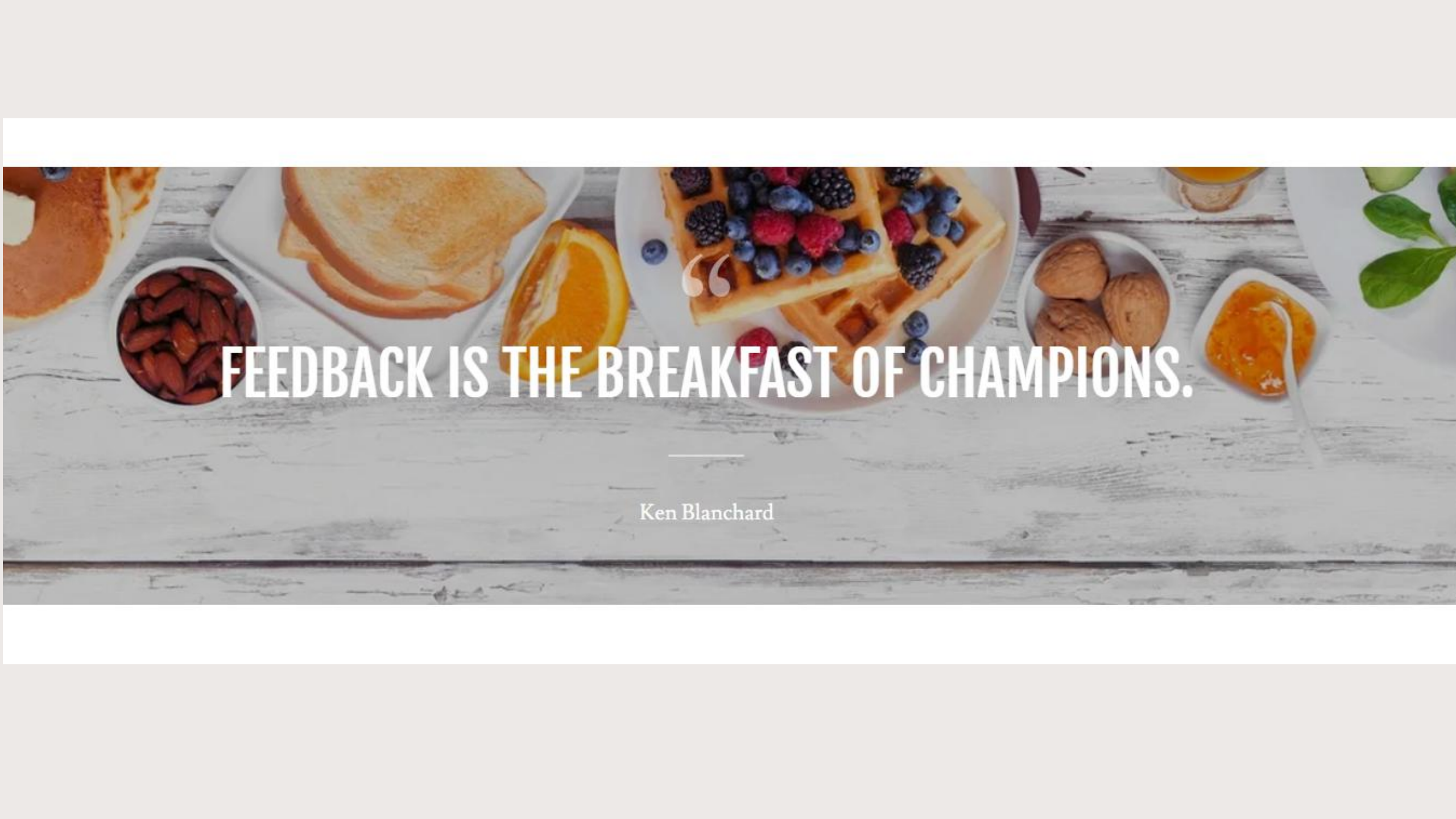
FURIOUS

I don't think you meant for it to land this way...

I'm guessing there is something I'm missing...

**Before I make assumptions, can I check
something with you...**

The story I've been telling myself lately...



“**FEEDBACK IS THE BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS.**”

Ken Blanchard





**UNSPOKEN
EXPECTATIONS**

———— are ————

**PREMEDITATED
RESENTMENTS**

NEIL STRAUSS

Start the conversation

Take ownership

Acknowledge the awkward

Reinforce the relationship

Tell your intent



“There's something I think we need to talk about. I know I've waited longer than I should have to bring it up, and I may not get all the words right. But I really value working with you, and my goal is to figure this out before it starts affecting our relationship.”

1.



SITUATION

2.



BEHAVIOR

3.



IMPACT



COMMON FEEDBACK

(HOW IT OFTEN SOUNDS)

“You’re always on your phone at the station. You’re not present with the crew.”

WHY IT’S HARD TO HEAR

-  Feels like a personal attack
-  Vague and general
-  Can create defensiveness



SBI APPROACH

(SAME MESSAGE, CLEARER IMPACT)



SITUATION

When we’re at the station (during downtime or between calls)...



BEHAVIOR

...I’ve noticed you’re often on your phone instead of engaging with the crew...



IMPACT

...and it makes it harder to stay connected as a team and can send the message that you’re not fully present.



“I’m sharing this because I value you on this crew and want us all to be engaged and ready when it matters most.”

The Gottman Soft Startup

The way we begin a conversation sets the tone for how it goes.
A Soft Startup helps your partner feel safe, not attacked.



Speak to your partner with
RESPECT



Be kind and considerate in your tone and words.

Try saying:
"I'd like to talk about something that's important to me."



Stick to
OBSERVATIONS



Share the facts without blame or assumptions.

Try saying:
"When the plans changed last minute..."



Share your
FEELINGS



Own your emotions using "I" statements.

Try saying:
"I felt disappointed and a little sad."



Take
RESPONSIBILITY



Own your part without over-explaining.

Try saying:
"I could have communicated sooner."



Make a request that is **CLEAR** and **POSITIVE**



Ask for what you need in a specific, respectful way.

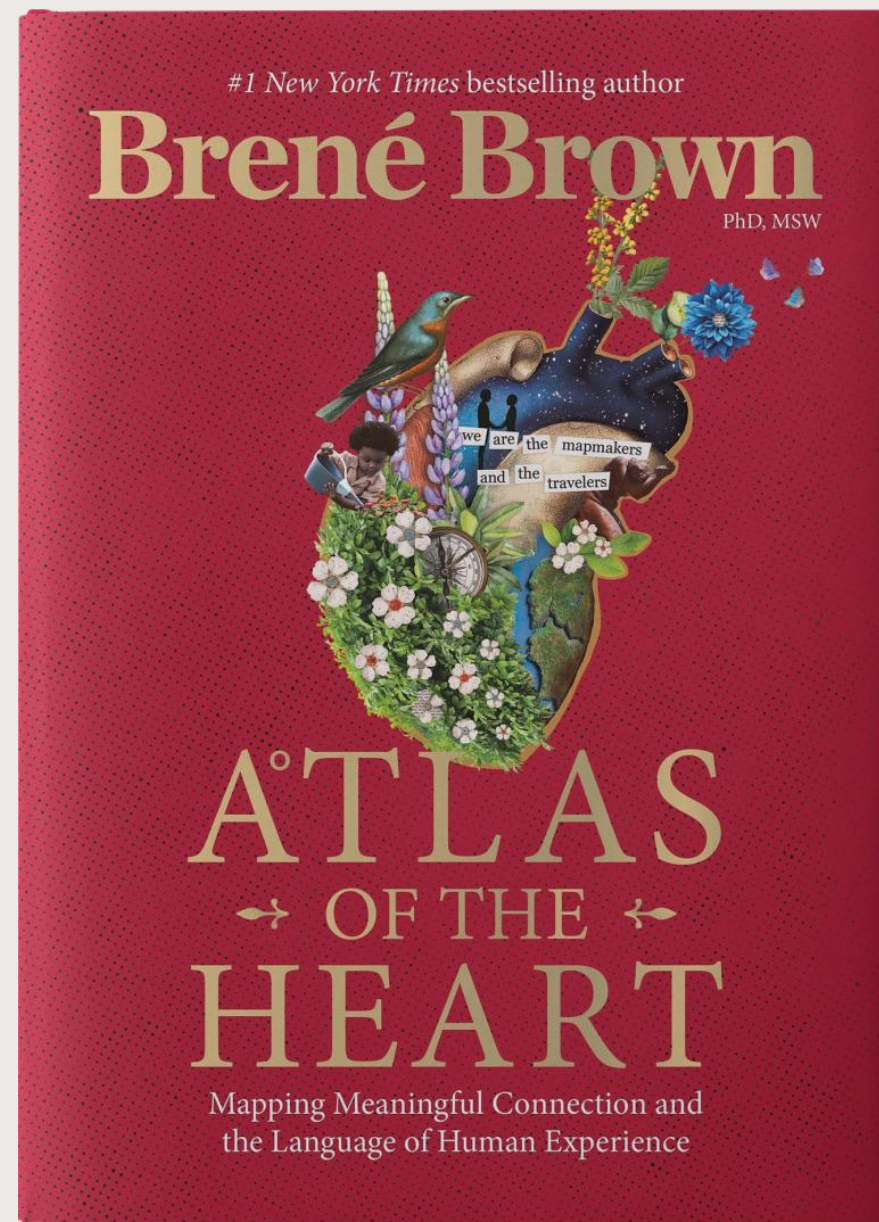
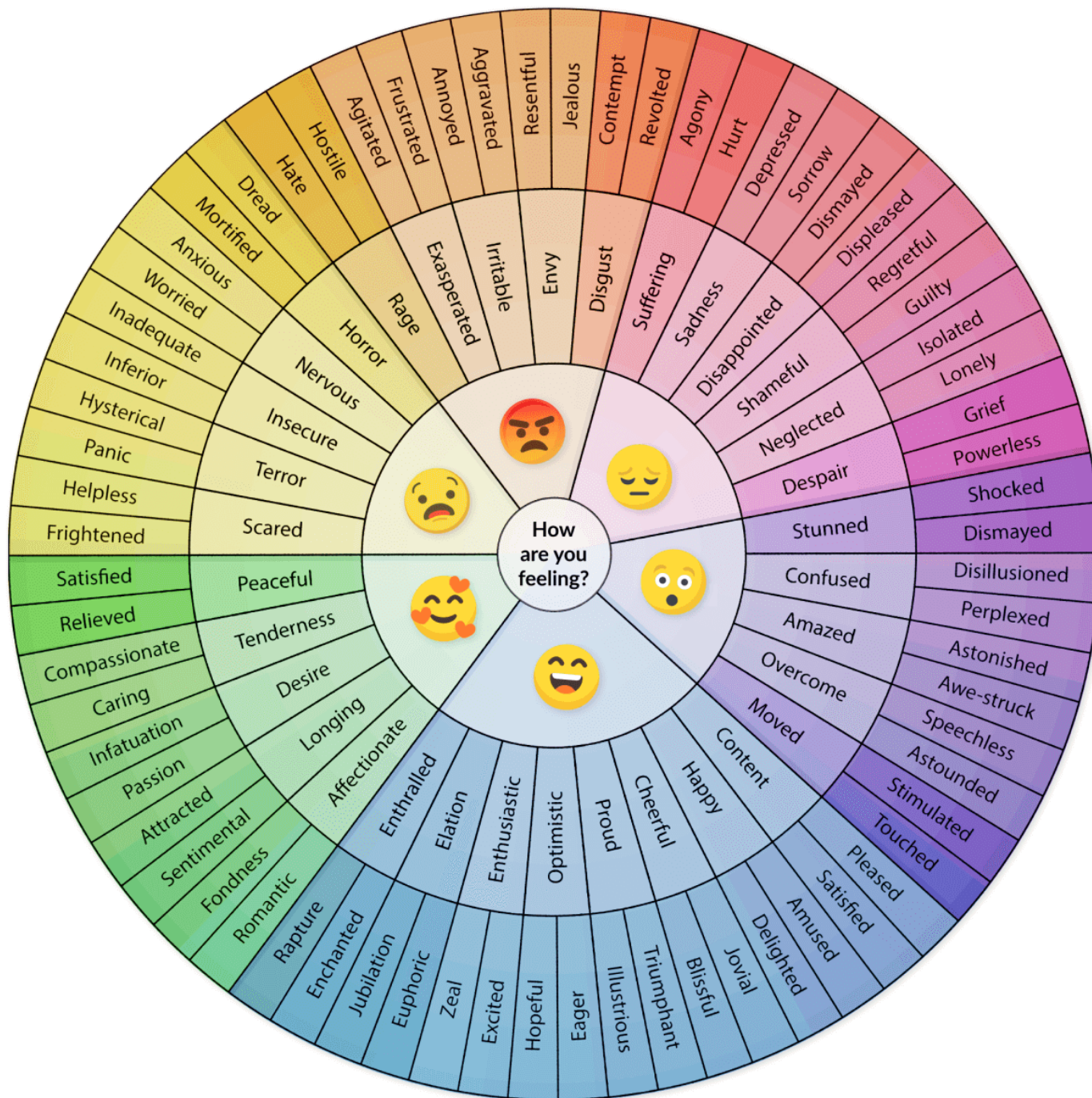
Try saying:
"Can we check in earlier when plans change?"



A Soft Startup isn't about being perfect—it's about turning toward each other, even when it's hard.



Better starts lead to better conversations.



SAME CONVERSATION. A CLEARER WAY.

PEOPLE
CONVERSATIONS
CULTURE
CHANGE

SBI

SHARE
OBSERVATIONS.
CREATE UNDERSTANDING.

A simple, non-judgmental way to provide feedback that's clear, respectful, and focused on what happened.



SITUATION

Be specific about when and where.

"In yesterday's shift huddle, when we discussed restocking the truck..."



BEHAVIOR

Describe what you observed.

"...you said you would take care of it, but the supplies are still not restocked today."



IMPACT

Share the impact it had.

"...and it creates extra work for the team and makes us less prepared for the next call."

FACTS LEAD TO BETTER CONVERSATIONS.

FBI

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE.
INVITE DIALOGUE.
BUILD CONNECTION.

A simple, respectful way to express how you experienced something and invite the other person's perspective.



FEELING

Share how you felt.

"I felt frustrated..."



BECAUSE

Explain what contributed to your feeling.

"...because the supplies weren't restocked after you said you would take care of it."



INVITE

Invite their perspective.

"I'd love to understand what got in the way and how we can make sure it gets done."

CURIOSITY TURNS CONVERSATIONS INTO PROGRESS.

CONNECTION **CREATES CHANGE.**



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P

Pause &
Prepare



L

Lead with
positive
intent



U

Use the
right
approach



G

Get
curious



I

Invite their
perspective



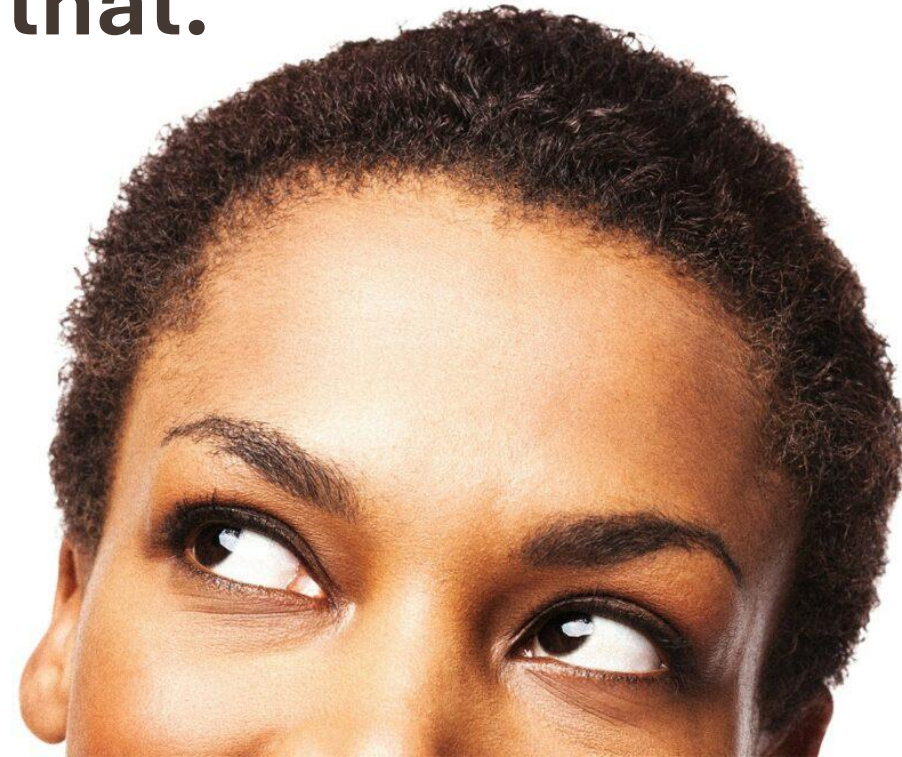
N

Name the
next
step

Get Curious

What am I missing?

Tell me more about what led to that.

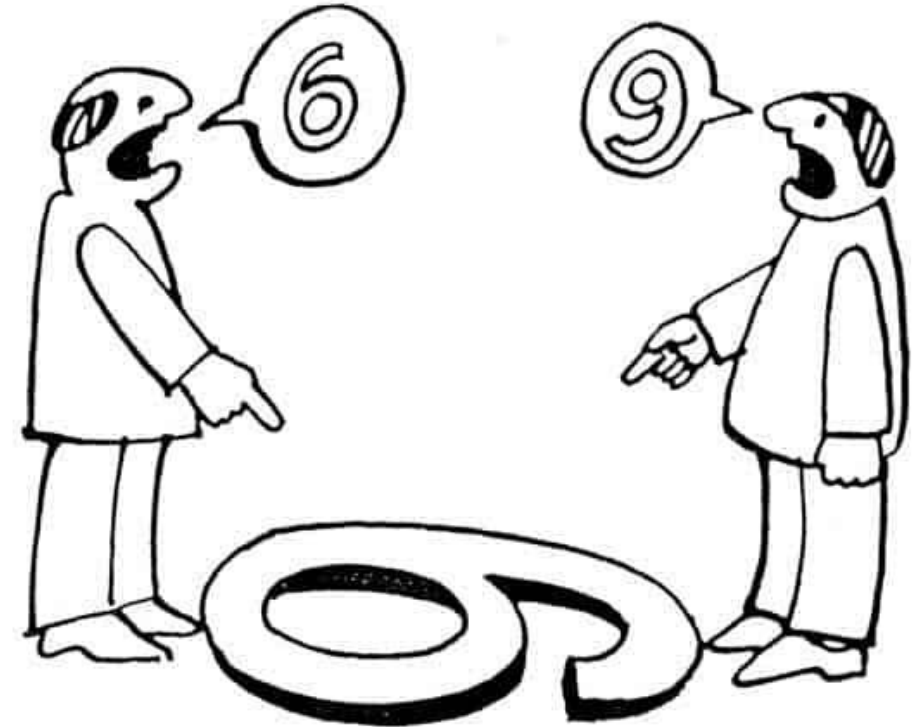


Invite their Perspective

I want to hear how you experienced this.

What does this look like from your side?

**I've shared how I see it.
I'd like to hear how you see it.**



Next Steps

Here's what I need going forward...

What would work better next time?

Let's agree on what we'll each do differently from here.



overcoming **DEFENSIVENESS**
in our relationships





I can feel myself making some assumptions.

Can we back up for a minute?

I don't want us to solve this while we're both frustrated.

Can we take a break and come back to it?

I know we both want a good outcome here.

Can we reset and start from there?

I think there might be something I'm missing.

Help me understand what this looks like from your side.

**I'm giving you these comments
because
I have very high expectations
and
I know that you can reach them.**

RUPTURE & REPAIR

NOT KNOWING
how to repair
leads to



& to SHALLOW,
UNSATISFYING
RELATIONSHIPS



REPAIR
IS MORE
THAN



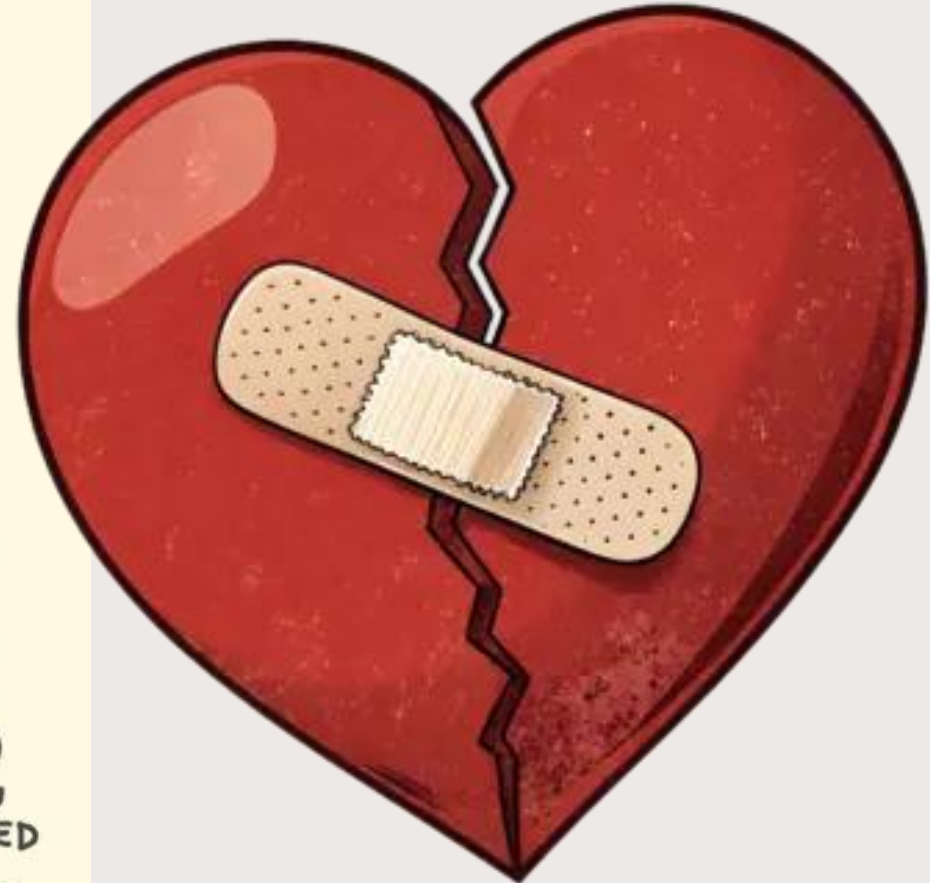
IT'S ALSO

- NAMING IT HAPPENED
- OWNING OUR ROLE
- NAMING THE IMPACT (& listening to their version)
- WONDERING HOW IT WAS CO-CREATED
- PLANNING A WAY FORWARD



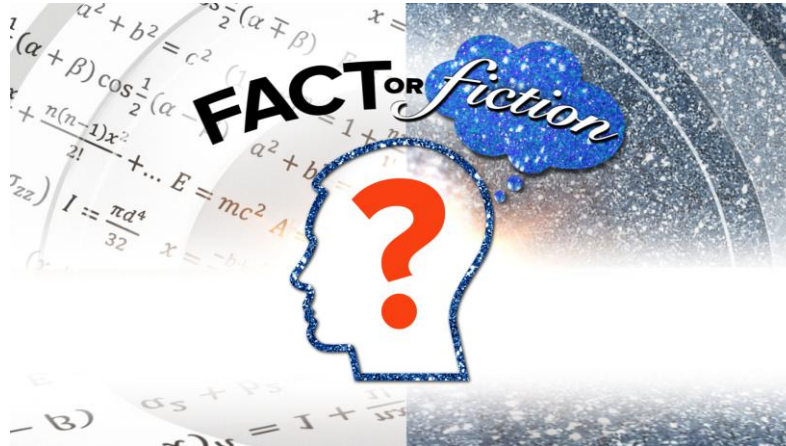
REPAIR MIGHT
FEEL LIKE A MYTH
because it's so rare

BUT IT'S REAL!



THE ART OF RECEIVING FEEDBACK

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS



**NOW
WHAT?!**
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

“

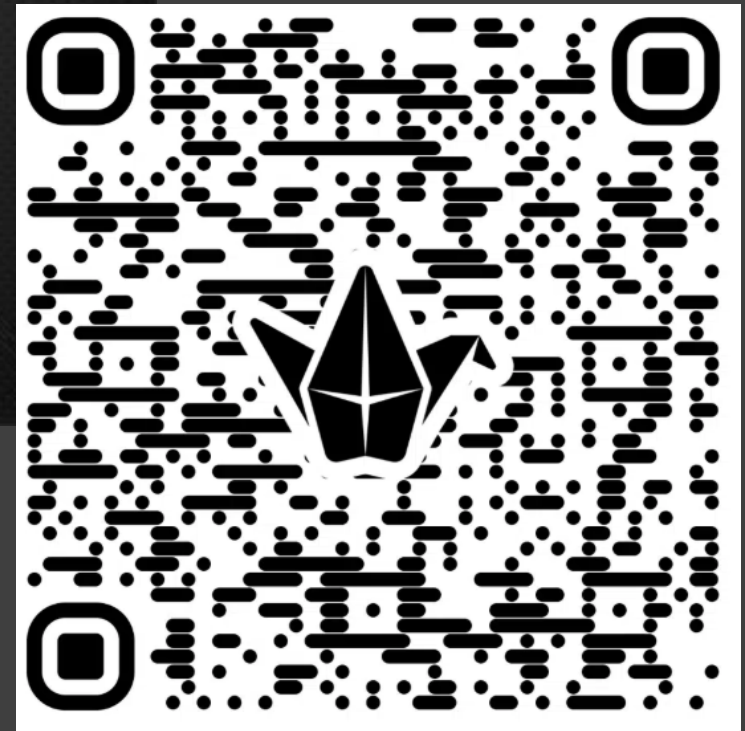
Hard conversations don't have to be mean conversations. They don't have to take on a detached or authoritarian tone. Holding people to their greatness is perhaps one of the most loving actions we can take. Real accountability isn't a 'gotcha.'

It's an 'I see you.'

—Amy Fast



**“The single biggest problem in
communication is the illusion that
it has taken place.”
– George Bernard Shaw**





THANK YOU



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