

THE LEADER'S EDGE

*"Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning."
(Proverbs 9:9)*

Category:

Leadership Teams

Rating:

Content: A

Style: A

Memorable Quotes:

"Whoever said talk is cheap was mistaken."

"Never mistake talking for conversation."

"The most valuable thing any of us can do is find a way to say the things that can't be said."

"Life is curly. Don't try to straighten it out."

"The person who can most accurately describe reality without laying blame will emerge as the leader."

"It is better to fail at your own life than succeed at someone else's."

"If you're drilling for water, it's better to drill one hundred-foot well than one hundred one-foot wells."

"The experience of being understood, versus interpreted, is so compelling, you can charge admission."

"Learn to ask, 'How aren't you?'"

BOOK SUMMARY

Fierce Conversations by Susan Scott, Berkley Books, 2004.

Core Content

Our lives succeed or fail gradually, one conversation at a time. Susan Scott, seasoned executive coach, blends rich wisdom with practical common sense as she challenges her readers to engage in "fierce" (robust, strong, powerful) conversations. She contends that too many of us dodge reality, failing to surface issues that really matter. We defer to the "corporate nod", thinking one thing and saying another. Applying the insights discussed in this book could increase our effectiveness significantly, especially in these areas:

- Coaching conversations
- Board meetings
- Pastoral staff interactions.

Seven Principles of Fierce Conversations

Principle #1: Master the courage to interrogate reality.

No plan survives its collision with reality and reality has an irritating habit of shifting.

Principle #2: Come out from behind yourself into the conversation and make it real.

Principle #3: Be here, prepared to be nowhere else.

Participate as if it matters. It does!

Principle #4: Tackle your toughest challenges today.

The problem named is the problem solved. Stay current. Travel light, agenda free.

Principle #5: Obey your instincts.

Trust your internal radar. Test your hunches in the midst of your conversations.

Principle #6: Take responsibility for your emotional wake.

Learn to deliver the message without the load.

Principle #7: Let silence do the heavy lifting.

Memorable conversations include breathing spaces. Insights often occur in the gaps between words.

The Four Purposes of Fierce Conversations

1. Interrogate reality
2. Provoke learning
3. Tackle tough challenges
4. Enrich relationships

Mineral Rights Conversations

Step 1: Identify your most pressing issue

Step 2: Clarify the issue

<p><i>“Burnout happens, not because we’re trying to solve problems, but because we’ve been trying to solve the same problem over and over.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Spanish word ‘con’ means ‘with’. To confront means to ‘be with someone, in front of something. Many people do not have conversations. They merely have ‘versations’.”</i></p> <p><i>“Would you prefer to continue limping, or are you ready to remove the stone from your shoe?”</i></p> <p><i>“There are things our gut knows long before our intellect catches on.”</i></p> <p><i>“The more emotionally loaded the subject, the more silence is required.”</i></p> <p><i>“Anyone can play the notes. The magic is in the intervals, in the phrasing.”</i></p> <p><i>“The conversation hasn’t ended just because the conversation has ended.”</i></p>	<p>Step 3: Determine the current impact Step 4: Determine the future implications Step 5: Examine your personal contribution Step 6: Describe the ideal outcome Step 7: Commit to action</p> <p>Preparing an Issue for Discussion THE ISSUE IS: Be concise. In one or two sentences, get to the heart of the problem. IT IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE: What’s at stake? What is the future impact if the issue is not resolved? MY IDEAL OUTCOME IS: What specific results do I want? RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Summarize with bullet points. WHAT I HAVE DONE UP TO THIS POINT: What have I done so far? What options am I considering? THE HELP I WANT FROM THE GROUP IS:</p> <p>Your Stump Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + This is where we’re going + This why we’re going there + This is who is going with us + This is how we’re going to get there <p>Questions for One-to-One Conversations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has become clear since we last met? 2. What is the area that, if you made improvements, would give you the greatest return for your investment? 3. What’s the most important decision you’re facing? What’s keeping you from making it? 4. What topic are you hoping I will bring up? 5. What area under your supervision are you most satisfied with? Least satisfied with? 6. What conversations are you avoiding right now? 7. If you were hired to consult with your organization, what you advise?
<p><i>“Nothing is more dangerous than an idea, when it’s the only one you have.”</i></p>	<p>Discussion Starters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which of the Seven Principles of Fierce Conversations would you personally benefit most from applying? 2. Which of these principles would most improve discussions with your board? Which your staff? 3. Are there any “undiscussables” with your ministry team? What topics do your tend to avoid? 4. What would enable everyone on your team to contribute more aggressively?