Reframing Conflict as Opportunities to Engage in Crucial & Courageous Conversations

3 Elements of Conflict or Crucial Conversation

With these elements in mind, it is easy to understand why we often avoid situations like this. Keeping in mind that they exist and naming them can be great 1st steps. Below are some additional steps to guide the process of working with conflict and engaging in crucial conversations.

1. Start with myself and the reality of the situation
   - Focus on what you really want (for self, others, my relationships)
   - Reflect on what I am acting like I want? Do I need to change my behavior to align with my thoughts?
   - Stay attuned to what I don’t want and redirect my focus to what I DO want.

2. Witness, observe, and notice
   - Witness my behavior, thoughts, and emotions to look for signs of stress, reaction, acting out, or withdrawing?

3. Foster a sense of safety/openness
   - Be willing to apologize as needed - authentically
   - Find ways to articulate any shared meaning/understanding and mutual purpose
   - Tune into what the other person might be perceiving as my message(s) and clarify when needed – include naming process or style/be transparent

4. Master my own stories, experiences, and paths
   - Retrace my own path and take note of my own stories or life experiences and how they inform my feelings, thoughts, and actions in this situation
   - Own my experience and my opportunity to regulate and get grounded
   - Stay with the present conversation (avoid going to your “list”)– stay on track with what I really want

5. State my path and Explore the other’s path
   - Share my experience and what I see as the facts/the real issue
   - Check in with myself on whether or not I am feeling and acting like I’m open to the other person’s view – shift and open up as needed; consider checking in with the other person as well
   - Ask for the other person to share these same pieces

6. Move to action and maintenance
   - How will we make the decisions we need to make?
   - Who will do what and when?
   - Do we need to document anything?
   - What is our follow-up plan?
   - Will debriefing serve us? Now? In our follow-up?