

145. The courage to have difficult conversations

Vanessa 00:00

Welcome to the Empowered brain, the only podcast using science, psychology and coaching to help you rewire your brain and create a life you love with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Harvard grad physician, master coach, and mother of two.

Hey, friends, welcome back to the podcast, we're talking about how to have difficult conversations today. And really from the eye of courage, how to have the courage to have difficult conversations. I've been speaking a lot about courage recently, because I, like I said last week, everything we want is on the other side of taking a courageous action, of having the courage to take action. And courage feels hard and uncomfortable because courage means you take action in the face of fear.

Now Fear Itself is subjective, all of us will have fears for different reasons. For some of us, having a difficult conversation isn't scary at all. But for others, it can be it can be really scary. And so the inspiration for this podcast episode comes from all the times I have felt fear of having a difficult conversation, but also from one of my students. And so I'm going to tell you his story because I just find it so fascinating.

So this is a physician leader that I coach, who is very smart, resourceful comes out of the military is in the army, and very, like smart dude, who's leading his department. And he tells me when we're coaching, how he just avoids difficult conversations all the time. And I said, Why do you avoid difficult conversations? And he says, It's because he doesn't like, you know, the negative consequences. He doesn't like it when people are upset, he wants to keep the peace. And boy, can I relate to that? How many of you can relate to that, how you don't want to have a difficult conversation, because you're afraid somebody's gonna get mad, or angry, or you want to keep the peace or you like it when people's moods are, are great or are happy when people are vibing high. So if you can relate to that, welcome, you're in very good company, just like me, just like some of my students. But here's the thing, if you never speak up, if you never actually act on that courage to have that difficult conversation, you end up creating frustration, annoyance, and resentment, and it might not feel like that you might feel like everything is fine.

But something inside of you feels numb something inside of you feels like it's missing. And what that is, is your spirit. It's your soul saying, Hey, hold on, what about me? What about me? Because, my student, for example, that client I was sharing with you, the physician leader, was such a great leader. At work, he was fantastic. At home, he was great, a great partner at home. But there was always something missing, which was him because he never dared to speak up for what it was that he wanted. So he realized and the whole reason we started working together is that something inside of him felt like it was unsettled. And it was his spirit or his soul saying, hey, what about me? When you don't have

the courage to speak up, what happens? You don't set boundaries appropriately, which means you end up working later than you want it to be working. Or you end up doing things you don't necessarily want to be doing because you're afraid to speak up and get somebody mad. When you don't have the courage to have difficult conversations, you get annoyed because you start noticing the same people making the same mistakes over and over again.

You've already counseled them once, why can't they fix their problem? Maybe it's because you didn't have a difficult conversation with them to begin with. And all of this eventually starts to build up and the resentment starts to grow. And eventually, you will notice that something is missing, because you're not living a life true to you. And eventually, your body, your mind, your spirit will remind you, it will remind you you will feel something inside of you. sadness, disappointment, rage, maybe it's burnout, maybe it's up fuming or numbness like my student. So again, let me remind you this, this podcast episode is called the courage to Have Difficult Conversations because if the conversations weren't difficult, then it would just be a conversation.

But when they are difficult when they feel uncomfortable to us, that's when we need to step in and come from courage. So how do we do this in a way that's true to us? So the first thing I like to think about when I think about preparing for these difficult conversations is first prepare your mindset. And I like to do this by doing this practice called Finding refuge. So when you think about having a difficult conversation, one of the things that gets in the way for you is how the other person might react are we going to upset them are you know are we going to disturb the peace? That definitely holds us back from speaking our minds and being true to ourselves. And one of the things that you can do ahead of time is find refuge. So refuge is a place you go to for safety. So when you're thinking about a difficult conversation, the way I like to teach my students is to think about, find refuge in You come from find refuge in You know, what your intention is, because most of you listening, all of you listening, I assume, have integrity. All of you listening want the best thing for, you know, the highest and greatest good of all, you all practice unconditional love. And hopefully, you've been listening to this podcast enough to know that loving yourself unconditionally is incredibly important. And holding that space and love for other people is also important. So you can find refuge, when you're having a difficult conversation in your conference.

And the fact that you are a person of integrity, you are a person that wants the best for all, you are a person that follows and practices unconditional love for yourself and for others. And when you start from that place, and you say, Yeah, this is going to be difficult, but my intention or my come from, or I can find refuge in knowing that this conversation is grounded in integrity, that this conversation will lead to the best for all. So the physician I was mentioning my student, I had him find refuge and know that when he really sat down to have these difficult conversations, it was the best thing for the entire department. The other thing you have to prepare for is how the other person will react. So they may not be happy with what you have to say they may, they may have their own thoughts and feelings. And so when you think about preparing for how they may react, what you want to think about is, that they may be upset, they might get angry, but who do I want to be when that happens? And when you think ahead of time, and you think intentionally about how you want to show up, regardless of how they show up, when you think about that ahead of time that really supports you and saying, okay, they might get

upset. And when they do, I'm going to hold my ground, and I'm gonna remain calm, they may get upset. And when they do, I'll give them the space to have their own emotions.

And I'll remind myself of my confirmation of my refuge of my integrity. And you get to decide in that moment who you want to be. Depending on how they react, they may get really upset, they may get angry, or they may not. But you are prepared for the worst outcome. And the last thing is you want to make sure you're preparing for time. One of the things that really sort of sabotages us in having these difficult conversations is when we don't create enough time. If you're trying to do this in a space where you're going to be rushed, then it's not going to create enough time and you're not going to be able to be calm and patient and allow yourself to create that space for them to have their own react their own emotions, their reactions. So you want to make sure you're preparing for time so that you're not rushed.

So again, let's review the steps. First, prepare your mindset by finding refuge. And when I say finding refuge, I mean, find refuge where do you go for safety when you're going to have a difficult conversation? And you can always go find refuge in your comfort zone in that you're coming from a place of integrity, that you're coming from a place of love that you want the best thing for the highest and greatest good of all. The second is you want to prepare for how they may react by thinking ahead of time of who you want to be when they react in a certain way. If they react with anger or hurt or if they're upset, who do you want to be in that instance, you want to be someone who's able to hold space for them, to be calm to remind yourself that this is a conversation-based in integrity, that they may not be happy with this conversation. But really, it's the best thing for all.

And lastly, you want to make sure you're preparing for time, you want to make sure you're having this conversation in a space where it's not going to feel rushed. Don't do it in between meetings. Don't do it right before the end of the day or before you have to rush home for something. Make sure you're creating enough time. Alright, sweet friends. So we just talked about how to have the courage to have difficult conversations, why it's hard for some of us to have them why it's so important to do it, and how to prepare for it. I wish you all the best have a wonderful week

Vanessa 09:46

Hey, sweet friends, if you love what you're learning, and then you've got to join us in the journey. It's my all inclusive program and the best community out there giving you the education you never knew you needed to help you create a life you love. Join us Have Vanessa Calderon md.com forward slash join I'll see you there