



**High Performance Academy**  
**Module 2: Tough Conversations**

**A key part of the coaching role is having challenging conversations when you need to. We prefer to be liked, but it's much more important to be respected! At the same time it's critical to have these tough conversations skilfully - being clear and strong whilst protecting the relationship. This is a work-on for many of us.**



- 1. How would you rate your skill and willingness to have the tough conversations when you need to?**
- 2. How would your players & colleagues respond if they were asked the same question about you?**

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**(Watch this video on the module's passport page before answering below question)**

**3. Refer to the video on the website of the online module. What is your take on this clip?**

**4. In your experience, what do you most worry about when know you need to have a tough conversation? (Select multiple options)**

The other person will get defensive

You will get defensive

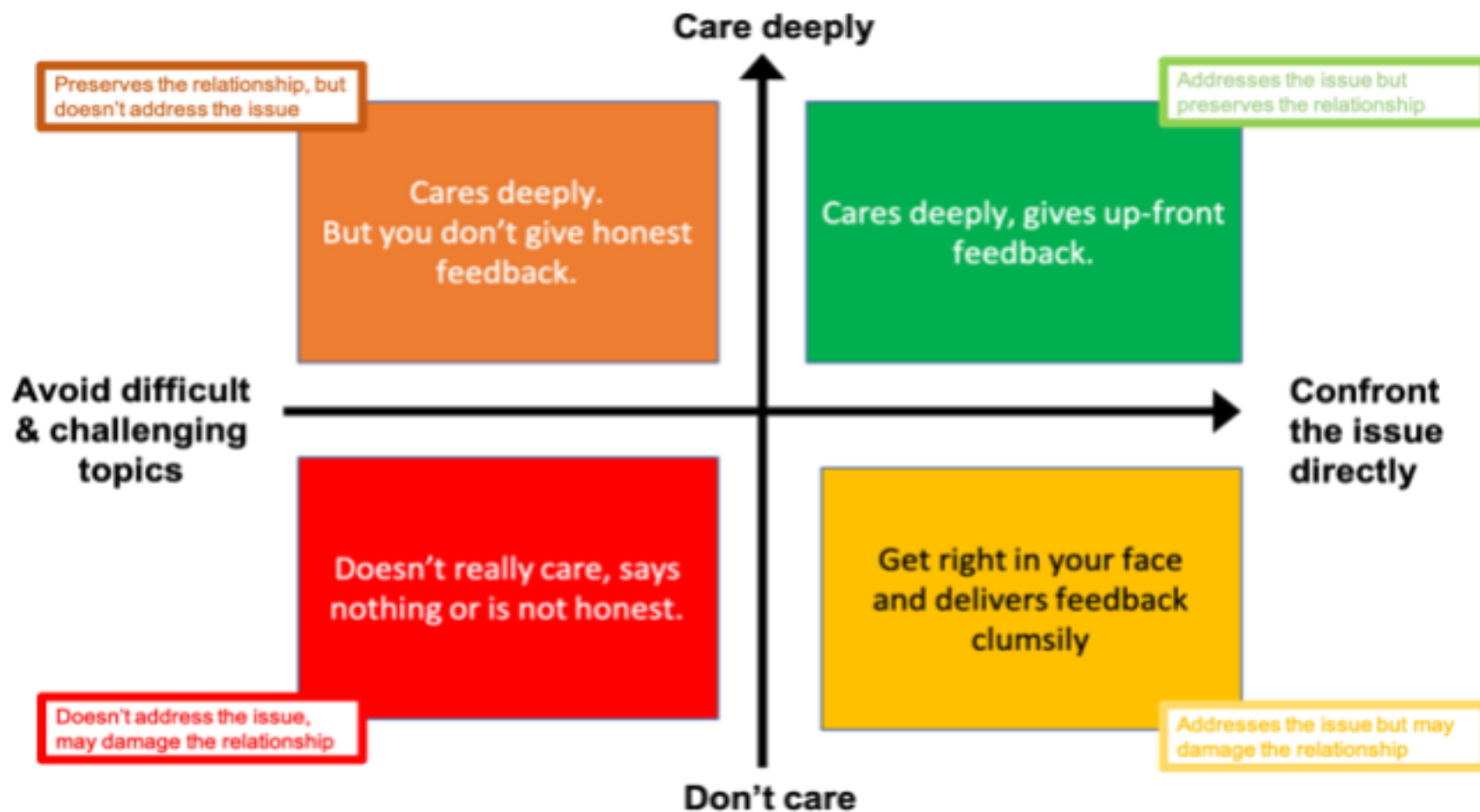
It can become personal

You will “water down” the message

You will back out of it

It will elevate into being emotionally charged

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**5. Of the 4 quadrants displayed on the model, which one do you typically default to?**

**6. If you struggle having tough conversations, what do you feel holds you back from being more effective?**

## **Tough Conversations - Planning Them (key Points)**

### **1. Approach it as a conversation, not a lecture!**

None of us like to be told what to do. A conversation requires us to listen – not just talk.



### **2. Keep your purpose clear in your mind.**



Why do you need to have the conversation?  
What are you trying to accomplish, and what would this look like?

### **3. Pick your battles.**

Some actions require immediate action, some are less urgent. We can only realistically change one or two behaviours at a time.



### **4. What impression do we want to leave them with?**



Remember: people judge us by our actions not our intentions (no matter how good). Good intentions don't negate bad impact.

### **5. Gain perspective.**

The ratio of positive to negative feedback is essential in increasing Employee Engagement and building relationships.



### **6. What assumptions are you making?**



Their action does not necessarily equal their intent. The easiest way to clarify this is to ask. Are they aware there is a problem?

### **7. What is your attitude toward potentially difficult conversations?**

How we feel about the conversation can influence our perception of it, and more importantly change our body language and tone.



### **8. Are you a contributing factor?**



Sometimes their behaviour, attitude or performance stems from ineffective communication, training or support.

### **9. Ask for permission to give feedback.**

A willing audience is always easier to engage than a hostile audience.



### **10. Seek mutual solutions.**



A solution they propose is more likely to succeed than one thrust upon them.



**7. Select the two/three options that you will focus on to be more effective when next having a tough conversation?**

Treat the discussion as a conversation

Get clear on purpose

Pick your battles – and then engage

Leave the impression you want

Learn about their perspective

Examine the assumptions you are making

Refine your attitudes towards the conversation

Being part of the problem

Get permission to give feedback

Create a win-win

**8. It is important to consider this model - sometimes in tough conversations things get emotional. If the brain stem or the limbic system is dominating, it's hard for people to think and problem solve. Can you recall this happening to you?**

Yes

No

**9. How would you rate this learning unit on Tough Conversations?**

Excellent

Good

Okay

Needs Work

Poor

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