

# CROSSING THRESHOLDS MODULE 4

Communicating with Impact



Thresholds

# ZOOM LOGISTICS AND ETIQUETTE

The functionality of Zoom is best if you can download the App and use a laptop. If you use the web browser version or a phone/tablet you will be able to participate fully but some functions won't be available. Please download the **Zoom.us** App or log on via your Web Browser in advance of the day so you can test your device and connection.

Here are some Zoom tips to help you get the most out of the virtual session:

- There are two views, Gallery View and Speaker View - top left. Gallery is for when you wish to view everyone and speaker view is useful when you want to see the facilitator on a bigger screen.
- Please keep yourself on mute when you are not speaking - the facilitator will mute you if you forget. Hold down the space bar to speak.
- Children and others in the background is totally fine - we appreciate the challenges working at home can present during this unprecedented period.
- We can't guarantee confidentiality - Be mindful there might be others who can hear our call, if you aren't wearing headphones others can hear what is being said. Our advice is to only say what you are comfortable to share.
- If you want to contribute, comment, or get the facilitator's attention, you can raise a hand using the icon or just put your hand up in real life.
- We have the facility to put you into breakout rooms so this virtual session will pretty much mirror the face-to-face version but without the risks of travelling.
- When in breakout rooms the facilitator will be able to send messages, which can be seen at the top of your screen. You will be called back when it is time to return and you will re-join the main group automatically.
- In the main room you can use Chat for any questions or points you want to make to the facilitator or the rest of the group, if you don't want to interrupt who is talking. There is the option to chat to everyone or just one other individual. The Chat function in the breakout rooms works just for that room.
- Don't hang up during breaks - just mute and turn your camera off.
- Please come and go as you need - don't feel you need to let the group know.
- If your connection drops out or for any reason you leave the meeting just use your link again - if this doesn't work, please let somebody in the group know so we can help you get back on to Zoom as soon as we can.
- We will take frequent breaks and an hour lunch break (rather than the 45mins we usually take on a face-to-face module). Please take the opportunity to move around as its tiring sitting in front of a computer all day.

# AGENDA – COMMUNICATING WITH IMPACT

## Day 1

### Morning

- Individual progress updates
- The 1-2-3 of communication
- Using structure and headlines
- Undermining language habits

### Afternoon

- Thinking on your feet
- Giving difficult feedback
- Practice session in small groups
- Next steps and review of the module

## Suggested self-directed activities for day 2 and beyond

### Individual Activities

Think about who you need to give difficult feedback to and think about what you want the feedback process to achieve.

Practise using the 1-2-3 of communication for a piece of written communication.

Find 3 opportunities to use headlines in the next week.

### In Peer Groups

Deliver your 3 minute presentation to your peer group and get feedback.

Role play difficult feedback scenarios, with different people playing different roles. Reflect on what did/didn't work and how it feels to be on the receiving end of difficult feedback.

Challenge each others' undermining language habits

### When you have time

Shadow people in different kinds of meetings and talk to them about what they have learned about being effective in meetings.

Seek feedback about your impact in meetings from people whose opinions you respect.

**These are our suggestions – if you have other ideas, either individually or as a Peer Group, please feel free to pursue them**

# CREATING IMPACTFUL MESSAGES – 3 TOP TIPS

Every time you communicate...

## 1 Laser-like focus on the result you want

Instead of starting with “what is all the information I want to give” we suggest focussing first on **what is the outcome** you want from this specific communication. Break it down into chunks.

Think about the **action** you want the audience to take as a result of your communication

Your desired impact: think about something that is measurable – how are you going to know if you’ve achieved it?

## 2 Obsess about your audience!

Your messages can get tainted with assumptions and feelings about yourself and/or the audience. **Be curious!** Who are they? What’s their background? What do they want? What knowledge do they already have? If you want them to take action - what influence or authority do they have?

**Make it specific to them** If you want people to make a shift or take action, consider the questions/objections they are going to have – what genuine reasons do they have to object? Time/resources/ability

**Get inside their head** Connect with people’s interests. Address their real concerns and needs. Relate to them as people. Get inside their heads to move them towards your goal. Share your passion!

## 3 What key messages will take your audience to your desired outcome?

Give your audience useful information upon which to act effectively. **Keep it simple!** Avoid vague language, jargon and abstract concepts.

**Use structure** Have a punchy, attention grabbing start, know where you are going. Keep focussed on the key points. Leave your audience in no doubt about what action they need to take.

Remember - your communication is a gift you are giving to your audience. Just like you, they want to do a good job. **Don’t beat about the bush or shy away from tough messages.**

# APPLYING THE 1-2-3 OF COMMUNICATION

**1** **Desired impact** (what specific outcome do you want this communication to have?)

**Your 3 key messages**

↑

**3**

**Facts about your audience** (in relation to the outcome/impact you want to have)

**2**

# PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

## Headline

## Strapline

## Key messages

1

2

3

## Call to action

# THE FIVE TYPES OF HEADLINE

## 1 The Question

e.g. 'When there is so much to say, how do you choose what's important?'

**Your example:**

## 2 The Controversial Statement

e.g. 'You have been wasting communication opportunities all your life'

**Your example:**

## 3 The Metaphor

e.g. 'A communication without purpose is like a ship without a destination'

**Your example:**

## 4 The Teaser

e.g. 'I'm going to reveal the secret to effective communication'

**Your example:**

## 5 The Striking Statistic

e.g. '33% of employers say they would avoid hiring a woman of childbearing age ([www.pregnantthenscrewed.com](http://www.pregnantthenscrewed.com))'

**Your example:**

## UNDERMINING LANGUAGE

**Using shrinkers:** “just” “actually” and “almost” This is when we attempt to make ourselves smaller to take up less space or reduce the impact for fear of the response. When you have a question, you might feel the need to reassure the listener the question has no aggressive intentions. But ‘just curious’ diminishes our real thoughtful reason for asking.

**Unnecessary apologies:** “Sorry to bother you but,” “Sorry if this is a silly question...” A great feminine strength is the ability to apologise but this is when we take it too far and are apologetic for existing, for taking up space, for having an opinion. There’s nothing wrong with apologising when you have a regret but apologising for talking can become self-diminishing habit for some.

**Implying you are not coherent:** “Does that make sense?” “Am I making sense?” or “Do you know what I mean?” Generally these are used when you are trying to ensure your audience has understood your point which is a great intention and shouldn’t be dismissed, but you can find out if they have questions without implying you haven’t expressed yourself well.

Say instead: “Is everyone clear what they need to do?” “I look forward to hearing your thoughts” or “Let me know if you have questions about this.”

**Undermining qualifiers:** “I’m just thinking off the top of my head, but...”, “I’m no expert in this, but...”, or “You clearly know more about this than I do but...” We do this because of our conditioning to be ever humble, or perhaps our thinking IS in process. Delete the qualifier and just say what you have to say.

Say instead: “How did that land with you?” “What are your questions/thoughts?”

**Hiding your point of view behind a question:** “Does everyone feel sure about this direction?”. Sure, sometimes, we use questions instead of statements for strategic reasons – to be diplomatic or non-threatening, but more often we do so because we are afraid to take a stand or are afraid of being seen as unlikeable if we rock the boat. By all means use questions as replacements for more explicit statements when it’s strategic – but not as a way of hiding your ideas.

Say instead: “I’d like to give this more thought” “ I don’t agree with this direction”

**Fillers:** “Sort of”, “like”, “Umm”, “kinda”, etc... Perhaps the most common verbal tic we encounter. These can be some of the most unconscious undermining language habits but taking the time to become conscious of them will be worth the effort and improve your credibility.



# DELIVERING WITH IMPACT – 3 TOP TIPS

## 1 Think about your language:

Avoid jargon and abstractions as much as possible. Paint memorable pictures with descriptive language and metaphors. Use personal stories to bring your content to life and help people to relate, thus creating empathy. Use numbers and statistics to make a powerful case. Instead of long meandering sentences, speak in bite-sized chunks of no more than a dozen words.

## 2 Use your body:

Take into account the environment you are in and use the space wisely. Consider sight lines, avoid hiding behind tables and flipcharts and use props thoughtfully and effectively. Don't be afraid to move about the space, this will help to engage the audience and keep their attention while conveying that you have the confidence to own to it.

If you are naturally expressive, work with this to enhance your language. If, however this is not the case, calm and stillness can also be very effective to draw the audience in. If you feel comfortable your audience will be at ease and thus more receptive to your messages.

Be aware of your posture and the non verbal messages that you convey, for example, standing with your legs crossed could be interpreted as childlike or defensive. Instead stand tall and strong with poise.

## 3 Use your voice:

Warm up your vocal cords and your facial muscles before you speak. This will make you far less likely to get tongue tied and you will have better projection and diction.

Speaking slowly and pausing gives people time to digest what you've said – particularly if it's new or complex information. Make eye contact as you deliver each section, make each audience member feel as though you are speaking to them as individuals.

Consider your tone and pitch, vary this to bring the words to life. There is nothing worse than someone speaking in monotone. Really think about the meaning of what you are saying and where to put the emphasis.

Get feedback about all of this – and work on areas for development.

# DIFFICULT FEEDBACK SCENARIO WORKSHEET

**1 Who do you want to give the feedback to?** (e.g. line manager, team member etc)

**2 What is the feedback you want to give them?**

**3 In a nutshell, is the feedback about their performance or their behaviour?**

**4 What are your feelings about this situation?**

# PRE-REQUISITES FOR GIVING DIFFICULT FEEDBACK

## 1 Be clear about the outcome you want:

Pause for a few moments and think about the best outcome you could possibly have in this situation.... Now think again and aim even higher! If you started out thinking you just want the other person to be **aware** of the impact they are having on others..... wouldn't you actually like them to have a **positive** outcome on others?

Focusing on what you **want** rather than on what you **don't like** gives the conversation a positive focus and will help keep the discussion on track.

## 2 Be genuinely curious:

We tend to assume that our picture of reality is full and accurate, and our feedback is often a one-sided monologue! We may be missing important pieces of the picture... Be genuinely curious about what is actually going on for the other person. Ask real questions!

## 3 Assume goodwill:

Finally, our attitude towards the person and the situation will leak into the feedback. If we are feeling irritated, put-upon, frustrated, disrespected, etc, these feelings will come through our feedback, however much we try to script it. (Or perhaps because we try to script it, it will come over as impersonal or inauthentic.)

Do not give the feedback until you are able to assume goodwill on the part of the other person. They may well be trying to do their best, be unaware of the impact of their behaviour on others, or be unclear about what outputs or standards are expected from them.

# A STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS FOR GIVING DIFFICULT FEEDBACK

## Step 1: Agreeing what you both want

- Describe clearly and objectively what you want
- Ask if the other person agrees and discuss any points of disagreement

Once you have reached a shared agreement, you can move to **step 2...**



## Step 2: Agreement about the actual situation

- Describe the objective current situation in relation to this. Be specific and factual – have relevant instances or examples
- Ask open questions to find out what's going on for the other person

When you have reached a shared agreement, you can move to **step 3...**



## Step 2: Collaborate on the way forward

- Work together on the solution
- Agree who will do what
- Decide when and how you'll review

**Remember to focus on the outcome you want, assume goodwill on the part of the other person and be genuinely curious – there are two sides to every story!**

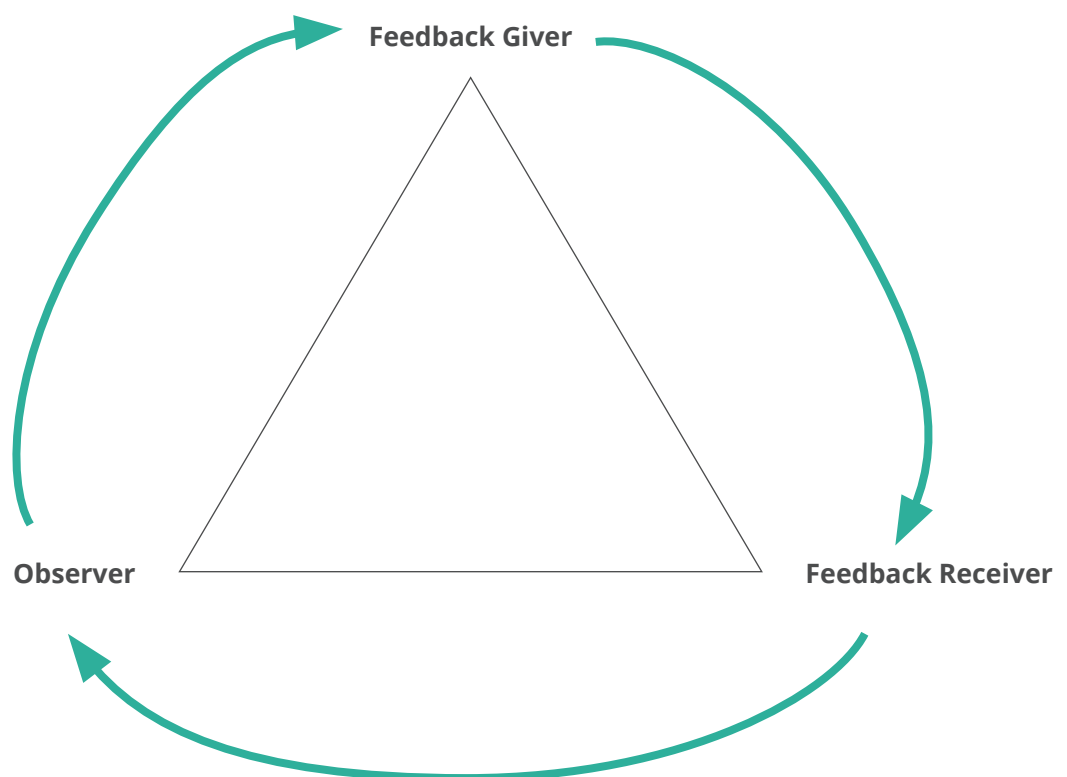
## GIVING DIFFICULT FEEDBACK PRACTICE – WORKING IN TRIOS

Spend no more than 3 minutes deciding whose scenario you want to real-play. This person is the **feedback giver**. Allocate the other two roles: **feedback receiver** (responds to the feedback as they would in real life) and **observer** (notes how the feedback giver is using the tips and structure and can interject, if helpful).

- 1 Spend a few (5-10) minutes with the **feedback giver** doing her best to put the suggested Giving Difficult Feedback process into practice. After 5-10 minutes each describes their experience/observations.
- 2 Staying with the same scenario, as soon as you get stuck or someone has a suggestion – move roles, as outlined below. After 5-10 minutes each describes their experience/observations.
- 3 Staying with the same scenario, move round once more so the original **feedback giver** now observes her scenario. After 5 minutes or so each describes her experience/observations.

### Optional (if there is time)

This time everyone goes back to their original roles (as in 1.), so that the original **feedback giver** has the chance to take all their new learning on board and put everything into practice to have the most positive possible outcome, then have a final review of how it went.



# THREE MINUTE PRESENTATION

## Headline

## Strapline

## Key messages

1

2

3

## Call to action