



Dealing with Difficult Discussions

A concentrated 2-day clinic on how to handle contentious conversations...

Designed and delivered by **Bill Cropper**



A step-by-step approach to convert destructive confrontation into constructive conversation

►► Difficult Discussions – managing the unavoidable...

Difficult discussions are a part of life... No matter how conversationally competent we are, we all have difficult moments when things just don't go 'right' no matter what efforts we make or conversational strategies we try.

Challenging, confronting or contentious conversations are something everyone has to learn how to handle. Often, it's the conversations we dread most that we handle the most clumsily. How do you shape up in managing those difficult conversational moments? Do you resort to blame, accusation, domination – or retreat into silence and hope it will all slide past?

Avoiding difficult discussions causes so much conflict and stress at work, it's a wonder we don't work harder on getting better at having them? Poorly handled or avoided, they detract from performance and erode relationships – trust goes, misunderstandings multiply, productivity plummets and teams turn toxic.

Sure, there's no set formulas or quick-fixes that work every-time, but there are tools that can help you conduct difficult conversations more confidently and constructively. You can do something about handling confrontation better, overcoming anxiety and managing your own responses to challenging situations more effectively... and that's what our clinic is all about.

►► What does our *Difficult Discussions* clinic do?

This 2-day coaching clinic equips you with a robust set of easy-to-use tools to navigate your way through those troublesome conversations more confidently. Practise a more methodical, controlled and step-by-step approach to convert destructive confrontation into constructive conversations. Discover new and different ways to handle a difficult discussion, learn how to approach them with more care, calm and confidence and get new insights into ways to deal with difficult people and tricky conversational moments. Topics we touch on include:

- ▣ Deciphering the dynamics of difficult discussions
- ▣ 3 E-conversations behind difficult discussions
- ▣ Blockers: Intentions, Blame and Assumptions
- ▣ Facing feelings - core of difficult discussions
- ▣ Tips for defusing difficult moments
- ▣ 5-stages in dealing with difficult discussions
- ▣ Replace blame/fault-finding with contribution
- ▣ 3ANTIX - starting a difficult discussion
- ▣ Dissecting differences and comparing stories
- ▣ Disentangling intent from impact
- ▣ Deal with defensive routines/strong emotions
- ▣ Re-scripting your difficult discussion

►► Who is this clinic for?

Difficult discussions come in all shapes and sizes. What's a difficult conversation for you? Dealing with dysfunctional behaviour at work? Handling a disgruntled customer or colleague? Dealing with an emotional employee? Conducting a performance appraisal? Telling people their work isn't up to scratch or letting someone know how they're affecting you or other team members? If you said yes to any of these – then this could be a 'must-do' clinic for you! Dealing with Difficult Discussions will benefit anyone who wants to increase their conversational mastery and learn specific tools and techniques for handling different kinds of difficult discussions more confidently and constructively – either at work, home or in the broader community... Managers, team leaders, committee members, project leaders, customer relations officers, community groups, teachers, facilitators, trainers...

"An excellent course of enormous benefit to anyone who supervises/ manages staff." Sandy Walsh, CQ TAFE *"Very worthwhile. Everyone could find something to improve on in this clinic."* Leanne Searle, Dept of Child Safety

Do you need to:

- ▣ Grasp the dynamics behind difficult discussions and how to use this?
- ▣ Identify common handling mistakes we make and how to avoid them?
- ▣ Find out ways to start a difficult discussion and raise hard topics?
- ▣ Deal more confidently with difficult conversations?
- ▣ Reduce tension and take the heat out of difficult discussions?
- ▣ Practise ways to defuse difficult discussions or control the damage?
- ▣ Practise tools to defuse difficult situations and resolve differences?

What others say about this clinic

- *Well worth it. Very good value. Training was of a very high standard.* Ken Day, DLGP
- *Great structure and content, presented in everyday language with an easy-to-follow guidebook.* Bill Ohl, DET
- *"Excellent... Tips on how to start a difficult discussion most beneficial... Fantastic presenting...easy to learn..."* Stephen Dendle, Sport & Recreation Qld
- *Brilliant! Really feel much more capable of handling difficult discussions now.* Dana Farrell, BlueCare

Read up on Difficult Discussions?

Our free [FactFiles](#) feature topical tips on aspects of conversations, leadership teams and emotional intelligence. [Issue-11](#) of our [CCE-News](#) offers insights and tips on coping with caustic conversations. A step-by step approach can help take the heat out of those more challenging conversational encounters... [Read more](#)

In-House programs...

Integrate our learning programs into your leadership or organisational capacity-building strategies: conduct them in-house – in standard format or customised to suit the particular needs of your workplace or team. In-house clinics enhance shared understanding, strengthen relationships and increase the likelihood of people applying new ideas productively in 'real-time' back in your workgroup or management team.

Tel: 07-4068 7591 **Mob:** 0429-687 513
Email: billc@thechangeforum.com



A 1-day clinic on the personal side of change & what leaders can do to prepare people

►► Preparing People – Key to Change Success...

Systems and structures don't change unless people do. How people personally respond to change is critical in determining how much, how fast, how well or even whether they'll change at all. The first step in any well-run change program is preparing people for it. It's often glossed-over, but when asked what they'd do differently if they had their change-time over again, many leaders say: "prepare people better for it."



- For the change-ready, it's helping them learn how to engage constructively, find ways to influence, have a say, be more change-adept.
- For the change-uncertain, it's helping them develop coping-skills to think clearly, understand the dynamics of what goes on with change, keep emotionally balanced and increase their level of personal 'change-ability'.
- For the change-fatigued, it's helping them stay afloat and functional – to handle emotional turmoil, confusion and change instability with minimal damage to their blood pressure, career, relationships or confidence.

Such personal needs often get under-played, if not entirely overlooked, in many organisations. Any way you look at it though, people need tools to help them learn how to change, how to engage with it and how to best make it work for them – and that's what *Preparing People for Change* is all about.

►► What does *Preparing People for Change* cover?

One reason change efforts fail is we don't consider change from a recipient's perspective or bother to address their concerns about it. 'If you want change to work, put people at the centre of it'. Many organisations don't. They fixate on planning all the details of the new procedures, the new technology or the new tasks needed to implement the change itself – and neglect the most important element: people.



This action-based clinic looks at the personal side of change and what leaders can do to handle the emotional

dynamics behind change and better prepare people as a prelude to leading them through it. It's about exploring how people respond to change and learning some personal strategies and tools to help you help them handle it better. Often this can also include preparing yourself. Here's just some of the topics we touch on:

- How people change – and why we hate to
- Why change is difficult: facts, fears, fantasies
- Personal attitudes: how people respond to change
- Assessing change-fatigue & building resilience
- Change-ability: personal factors & challenges
- Preparedness: taking the change temperature
- 'PAVERS' model - change preparation steps
- Thinking change – impact of mental models
- Change limiting and empowering beliefs
- The emotional side: feeling around change
- Dissecting reasons for resistance/reluctance
- Getting engagement: models and strategies
- Change conversations: part they play to engage
- Changing mindsets – unblocking the culture

In-House Clinics & other change support...

This clinic can be run in-house for groups of 10+ and tailored to your specific change context. Need a helping hand with change? Our [Change Services Profile](#) provides a snapshot of various ways we can help with change. Contact us for a free conversation about your change challenge or use our enquiry form [on-line](#).

Do you want...

- Smoother change take-ups?
- More change resilience and less resistance and change fatigue?
- People to more mindfully manage their emotional change reactions?
- More constructive change cultures?
- To increase change-ability and get more positive responses to change
- Convert anxiety and reluctance into constructive change energy?

Course Features...

- Our unique and practical PAVERS Model to prepare people for change
- Bring along a real change challenge
- Take-away a 100-page guide with 30 change tools & activities to apply
- Set change-improvement goals with the Change-leader's Scorecard
- Develop your personal Preparing People for Change strategy checklist

What people say...

"This was a very beneficial workshop for a general overview of how people feel when there's change, and ideas to assist with helping them change. Course structure, content and methods were all great – as is the self-directed guidebook." Helen McKenzie Mackay Hospital and Health Service

"I'd recommend this clinic to others. It was very useful to learn some new strategies/techniques to support staff with the constant change we're facing. It was interesting to hear how different people are at handling change and it became obvious to me that if it's managed well, people can cope okay. I feel better prepared to ask some of the tricky questions we have all been wanting to know and encourage transparent communication about change." Hayley Farry, Toowoomba Hospital and Health Service

Reading about Change...

For insights on our approach to change, see our [FactFile: Looking at Change thru the lens of the 5 Disciplines](#): Peter Senge's *5 Learning Disciplines* provide a useful framework for building change capability as well as understanding the dynamics of effective change processes. Also [FactFile: Leading Change](#) – every manager's business: Big or small, the ability of businesses to manage change and make it happen rapidly and smoothly is one of the keys to keeping up your competitive advantage.

Registration & Enquiries...

Contact **Bill Cropper**:

TEL: 07-4068 7591 MOB: 0429-687 513

EMAIL: billc@thechangeforum.com

WEB: www.thechangeforum.com

Positive Performance CONVERSATIONS

helping leaders tackle hard talks



A solutions approach to delivering difficult feedback

Designed and delivered by **Bill Cropper**

A 1-day coaching clinic on making tough performance conversations easier...

Poor performance conversations raise too much defensiveness

Dealing with poor performance, as most leaders will tell you, is one of the most commonly avoided and widely feared species of difficult discussions. It's not identifying performance issues that's the obstacle. *It's raising defensiveness* - giving difficult feedback to people where their reaction is emotionally volatile, and the conversational course you chart, unpredictable.

Defensiveness is an unnerving side-effect of difficult discussions. Conventional performance conversations centre on 'constructive criticism' but *criticism is criticism*. The person on the other end won't see it as constructive no matter how much we tell them it is. Many managers deliver pre-formed judgements on people's performance deficiencies. We see this as positively assertive; they see it as controlling and coercive. They're unlikely to open up, and far more likely to get defensive, triggering strong emotions that get in the way of hearing what you have to say, and the hope of getting a positive outcome evaporates.

Positive performance conversations – constructive confrontation

Positive performance conversations work on a simple principle: *focus on future positive performance rather than past negatives*. Focusing less on what's wrong and more on what's expected creates a different emotional climate that enables you to give difficult feedback in constructive ways. It helps to keep their dignity intact and their defensiveness at bay so they hear what you have to say.

Bypassing performance deficiencies and defensive reactions by describing the negative behaviour in positive terms, allows people to respond more positively and focus on the solution-finding and commitment conversation - the goal of giving critical feedback in the first place. Conversations with low performers will probably never be painless, but a few easy adjustments like this can make them less painful and more profitable to all parties.

What's Positive Performance Conversations about?

A special extension to our *Difficult Discussions* clinic, this 1-day practice-based program provides a step-by-step approach and carefully-crafted conversational formulas to make you feel more comfortable and competent to deliver difficult feedback and deal with low performers. You will learn about:

- SPECIFIC steps to make tough performance conversations easier
- Using non-judgmental, neutral language without diluting a difficult message
- Delivering difficult feedback that is more 'sayable' and 'hearable'
- Constructing performance conversations in more positive ways
- Turning performance conversations into mutual problem-solving sessions

Here's some topics we'll touch on during the day...

- 'De-vaguing' – being specific about the performance you envision
- Dissecting performance issues - giving clear, frank, fact-based feedback
- Putting negative performance issues across positively
- Saying what you need, why you need it and why they need it too
- 3ANTIX – starting a positive performance conversation
- SPECIFIC – a positive model for performance conversations
- Performance conversations as coaching dialogues
- Curiosity not criticism – finding out their story and telling yours
- Keeping discussion on track: focusing them on finding solutions
- Handling anxiety and other high-pitched emotions
- Anticipating objections – dealing with excuses, justifications and downplays

Do you want to...

- Feel more comfortable/competent about giving difficult feedback?
- Handle confrontations with poor performers more constructively?
- Deliver touchy messages in more constructive ways?
- Gain new skills/tools to manage performance discussions better?
- Say what you need to say in ways that will be heard and get action?

Readings on Conversations?

Our [CC E-News](#) e-zine **Issue 13** is focussed on the subject of performance conversations. It's filled with articles, tips, suggestions and tool extracts derived from the Guidebook to our conversations master class *Positive Performance Conversations*. [Download](#) a copy to review as preparation for this master class – or just to read and share with others. [Read more](#)

What people say...

"Very positive and useful PD, delivered with a good balance of input, practising and giving feedback." Roslyn Parkes, EQ

"I enjoy the way Bill facilitates and engages his audience – a relaxed format with well-organised structure and the Guidebook is brilliant." Kerry Russo, DET

Other Services...

The events outlined in this flyer are only part of what we do. We offer a wide range of other change consultancy, learning, coaching, team development and facilitation services and invite you to contact us (any time) to discuss your needs or issues, how we can help and arrange a quote. [Contact details follow...] Our current suite of leadership clinics and learning programs also includes: [Follow links to brochures.]

- Leading through [Conversations](#)
- Leading w. [Emotional Intelligence](#)
- Learning to [Lead](#)
- Learning to [Lead Change](#)
- Leading [Culture Change](#)
- Learning to be [Coaching Leader](#)
- Leading [Learning Schools](#)
- Fundamental [Facilitation](#)

Tel: 07-4068 7591 Mob: 0429-687 513
Email: billc@thechangeforum.com

►► What about Cost – and how do I Register?

Course Fee (GST inc) covers lunch and refreshments and a comprehensive self-coaching Toolkit designed to assist your ongoing learning back at work. Fee discounts offered for early registration, schools and not-for-profit community organisations subject to payment in advance of attendance. Fees are not refundable but are transferable up to 14 days prior to an event. Substitute welcome. Max 20 places per event. **Timing:** 8.30am Arrival – 4.30pm Close (unless otherwise advised). **Registration:** Form included below for return by Fax or Email or register **On-line** at www.thechangeforum.com/Registration.htm. Contacts below.

►► Emotional Intelligence & Conversational Coaching...

In addition to the foundational program [Leading through Conversations](#), we offer a number of conversational coaching master classes publicly and in-house on particular conversation themes including: [Dealing with Difficult Discussions](#) in both 2 and 1-day formats; [Positive Performance Conversations](#) a 1-day clinic to help leaders handle performance review situations more productively and [Handling Toxic Emotions](#) on caustic conversations at work. An essential complement to conversational coaching is our series of emotional intelligence programs for leaders and teams: [Leading with Emotional Intelligence](#); [EI at Work](#) for general staff and [Teaching with EI](#) for classroom applications in schools.

►► Teambuilding – the Art of Working Better Together...

[Working Better Together](#) is the generic label we use for our team-building approach. Many of us work together for years and never take the time to reflect on how we come across or talk to each other. All teams need to take time-out now and again to work on their team-talk, renew relationships, find ways to discuss difficult issues that get in the way and clarify how they can work better and more constructively together. We regularly design and run tailored team-building interventions for workteams that want to build a more positive team culture, harness commitment to a shared vision and create opportunities for growth and challenge. Download our [Working Better Together Prospectus](#) for lots of useful pointers to help plan your next team-building session at www.thechangeforum.com. Or contact us by email or phone or on-line enquiry form to request an outline of our approach or find out how a [Working Better Together](#) clinic can help you and your team.

►► Thinking about – personalised Coaching?

As an adjunct to our leadership programs, we provide personalised coaching services for individuals and small groups at all levels. A typical coaching program consists of 5 x 2-3-hour coaching sessions every 4 weeks or so, with a blend of face-to-face and telephone coaching and email support. Download our [Coaching Prospectus](#) for some simple, straightforward answers to what “all this coaching stuff is about” to help you make up your mind whether our coaching approach might suit you.

►► Facilitation & Presentation Services...

As an adjunct to our leadership learning programs we provide personalised leadership [coaching services](#) for individuals and small groups, forum facilitation, key-note presentations and fast-track learning sessions at conferences, planning forums, team meetings or other relevant events. Bill delivers informative, interactive, thought-provoking sessions on topical themes designed to address or complement particular issues, concerns, challenges and context. Bill's style is relaxed, down-to-earth, amusing, affirming and engaging. He connects with people and puts them at ease, at the same time as raising their curiosity and gently confronting current thinking. More information [on-line](#) or contact Bill direct to discuss ways he can help.

►► Our Change Services – Helping you with Change


Need a helping hand to handle change? Organisations often want help designing their own change processes but choices and options around change and working out where to start can sometimes overwhelm and confuse. We've been helping organisations and leaders with change projects large and small for many years and we've a fair idea how daunting it can sometimes seem. So we've put together a [Profile of our Change Services](#) which provides a snapshot of the sorts of things organisations typically ask us around workplace change and some of the critical change management areas you are likely to want to address. Download on-line or contact us direct to discuss ways we might be able to help.

Registration Discounts...

	2-days	1-day
21+ days:	\$792 pp	\$474 pp
7-20 days:	\$858 pp	\$528 pp
Schools/NFP:	\$693 pp	\$474 pp

Note: All Fees GST inc. Fees current at time of printing but subject to review at the discretion of The Change Forum. EFT or credit card payments preferred. Purchase Orders not accepted as payment. Places limited.

About your Presenter:

 **Bill Cropper** is Director of The Change Forum. He has a wealth of practical leadership learning, coaching and change experience. His work centres on helping leaders to build the conversational, emotional, relational and team-working capabilities they need to create vibrant, supportive work cultures and high-performing teams.

Bill's keenly interested in the benefits of conversational coaching and emotional intelligence to create connective and compassionate workplaces, promote productive, open interchanges and facilitate personal growth and change mastery. For the past several years, he's run hundreds of coaching clinics and forums that have benefited numerous managers, team leaders and other professionals from many wide-ranging backgrounds. Bill's a preferred learning consultant and leadership coach for public sector agencies, providing facilitation, training and coaching services to senior executives, managers, work teams and community groups around leadership capacity-building. He has a down-to-earth, relaxed and outgoing style and works comfortably with people from all levels, occupations and backgrounds.

Tel: 07-4068 7591 **Mob:** 0429-687 513

Email: billc@thechangeforum.com

"I appreciated your laid-back/informal approach to delivery. I left feeling motivated and eager to put what I'd learnt into practice" Di Grech Bentley Park College

"Your friendly, laid back manner put us at ease right from the start." Robyn Yared, Greater Brisbane Gifted Education Network

"I really enjoy your facilitation style Bill - a well balanced mix of theory, practical and humour in a relaxed, fun atmosphere that makes learning easier".

M. Polkinghorne, Disability Services Qld

Other Services... Contact Us

We offer a wide range of leadership learning, change facilitation and team development services and invite you to contact us (any time) to discuss ways we may be able to assist and arrange a quote. For program brochures, learning resources and more information on our services, **contact Bill Cropper** at **The Change Forum** on:

Mob: 0429-687513

TEL: 07-4068 7591

FAX: 07-4068 7555

EMAIL: consult@thechangeforum.com

WEB: www.thechangeforum.com

Also Register ON-LINE at <http://www.thechangeforum.com/Registration.htm>

OCTOBER OFFERS	1-day pp	2 places or events	2-day pp	2-places or events
Multiple Places for Less!	\$455	\$880	\$748	\$1452
(Full Fee 1-Day: \$550pp 2-day: \$880pp) NFP	\$410	\$792	\$660	\$1320

All Fees GST inc NFP = non-Govt community-based organisations. Fees current at time of printing but subject to review at discretion of The Change Forum;
Discount period may be extended – call to enquire; Fees due on registration, payable within 14 days of Invoice and prior to attendance;
Fee not refundable but up to 14 days prior may be transferred; Substitute welcome up to commencement; See website for [full terms & conditions](#)
EFT & Credit Card payment preferred; Card processing fee applies; Purchase Orders not accepted as payment; Priority given to paid reservations;
Fee covers course attendance, guidebook, lunch and refreshments only – travel, accommodation and sundries not included.

▶▶ **YES! Please Register me for [] place/s to attend**

Event Title:

(Please mark clearly)

AT Location:

ON: Days:

Month:

Comprehensive self-coaching Toolkit for the course attending included at no extra charge

Lunch and refreshments included; Venue details provided on confirmation of booking

⌚ Please come along by 8.30am to meet others and be ready for an 8.45am start; approx 4.30pm finish

(Timing may vary occasionally please confirm this with us prior to attendance)

▶▶ **Here are my/our Details...** (Please complete all fields wherever possible)

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Preferred Name:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Last Name:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Position Title:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Catering or other Needs:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation:	<input type="text"/>		
Postal Address:	<input type="text"/>		
City:	<input type="text"/>	State: <input type="text"/>	PCode: <input type="text"/>

▶▶ **Please Send Invoice to:**

Email:

Contact Name:

Tel:

Position:

Fax:

Unit/Div:

Mob:

▶▶ **For Payment by Credit Card (+ Fee 1.3%):**

Email:

Name on Card:

CVV :

Card Number:

Expiry:

Signature:

Tel:

▶▶ **EFT Payment (on Invoice) to:** TEAM Technologies Forum Pty Ltd Trading as The Change Forum ACN 074816470
ABN 52074816470 National Australia Bank BSB: 084-472 Acc: 67227-7221

~ SAVE or PRINT & Complete this form then EMAIL or FAX back to secure your booking ~

▶▶ **More Information?** ☎ TEL: 07-4068 7591 ☎ Mob: 0429-687 591 or Bill Cropper: 0429-687513

📧 EMAIL: register@thechangeforum.com

📠 FAX: 07-4068 7555