

## Figure C1.3 Difficult Conversations: Resolving Interpersonal Tensions Between Team Members

**PREMISE: Each difficult conversation is really three conversations.**

### 1. *The “What happened?” conversation*

- The truth assumption (I am right; you are wrong—even though it’s really about perceptions.)
- The intention invention (We assume we know the intentions of others; when we’re unsure, we usually decide others’ intentions are bad.)
- The blame frame (We can’t get beyond blaming and can’t understand how we all contribute.)

### 2. *The “Feelings” conversation*

- Difficult conversations don’t just involve feelings. They are about feelings.
- Ignoring feelings is like staging an opera without the music.

### 3. *The “Identity” conversation*

- What does this say about me?
- Am I competent? A good person? Worthy of love?

Adapted from Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (1999). *Difficult Conversations*. New York: Penguin Books.

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