**TBP 244 Challenging Conversations Edited\_Transcription**

[Daniel Hill] (0:05 - 13:05)

Welcome to the Blueprint Podcast. In these episodes, I'm going to share with you my life's work boiled down into simple blueprints that I used to build a 10 million pound portfolio and retire with financial independence at the age of 35. You can listen to these podcasts in any order, and I guarantee you that when you execute them in practice, you will see that success and failure are both very predictable.

Let's get into the next blueprint. You have two choices in life. Do you want to live an easy life in which case you're going to have to make some hard decisions and have hard conversations?

Or do you want to live a hard life in which case you can just float through having easy decisions and easy conversations and never really get in anywhere? The art of the challenging conversation is a skill set that as a high performer, a leader, a manager, an entrepreneur, and a business owner, you have to master. The reality is nobody likes it.

My first challenging conversations made me sweaty, made me emotional, made my eyes water. Nowadays, I have them on a daily basis because I appreciate that a well-structured challenging conversation always has a positive outcome. In this podcast episode, I'm going to take you through the six steps of the challenging conversation blueprint.

This is an advanced property entrepreneur blueprint that is only suitable for those that are ready to step up, ready to step out of their comfort zone, and ready to take their life and their business to the next level. The six steps to the challenging conversation blueprint, there is awareness, mindset, booking it in, understanding the situation, and how to actually handle it. I'm going to kick this off with awareness.

I would say the warning and disclaimer with this is you need to approach this strategically. It is going to make you feel horrendous and uncomfortable, but I guarantee you once you've done it enough times, you'll appreciate that the value is actually created in challenging conversations. Not only does it get it off your chest and make you feel better and stop ruining your days and weeks running around with emotional conversations in your gut and in your head, what it does is it pulls you out of that and it actually enables you to deal with the situation, deal with the problem, and the other person actually wants to have the conversation and get the outcome as well.

The first is the awareness. What you want to do is start thinking about the fact that you want to spot problems before they become emergencies. If you've got a team member who's underperforming and you don't address it, they're going to get worse before they get better.

You want to deal with that problem before it becomes an emergency and you have to face potentially fire in them. The awareness is just initially tuning in. Step one is about monitoring people's performance, identifying different traits in your team or your business, and just being able to get the feeling when something's not right.

You'll probably know this better at home when it's with a child or with a partner, when you know they're just out of sorts, they're upset, they want to have a conversation, they're not their normal self, and you just have that awareness that something's not right. This is the first thing to really tune into, and you'll start to get used to what that feels like when a challenging conversation needs to happen. You'll see it, you'll see patterns, you'll see character traits.

It could be response times, it could be quality of work, it could be emotions, it could be communication style, whatever. Just tune into that awareness and you'll start to notice the signs. When you've noticed the signs and you want to approach it, you need to have the right mindset.

I said at the beginning that this is going to make you nervous, it's going to make you anxious. The easy thing is to not deal with it. But if you can have the mindset that a well-approached challenging conversation will always have a positive outcome, I guarantee you, you'll go into these conversations feeling really positive.

And what you want to do with your mindset is go into it knowing that something's got to be dealt with, but consider a few things. So this isn't cocking the gun. This isn't guilty, you know, you already hung, drawn and quartered them.

This isn't their guilty, this is what you're going to do, this is how it's going to play out. All you need to do is go in with the mindset that there's a problem and you want to table it. You need to, and the way that you stop this from becoming an awkward one is because the reality is six or seven times out of ten, you'll think someone's annoyed you or someone's not done what you wanted them to do.

Six or seven times out of ten, you don't have the full picture. And you've probably had an experience where you've got all guns blazing at somebody. I told you to do this and you didn't do it or you should have done this by now.

Why isn't it all not done? And actually, when you say that to them and cock the gun and shoot them with the bullet, they turn around and say, well, hang on a minute, you told me next Tuesday you wanted that doing. And you scroll through your messages and you're like, oh, no, I did say last next Tuesday.

You look like an idiot. They feel offended and upset. Nobody wins.

So you want to go into it assuming you're wrong. Let's assume that what you think has happened is wrong. And this is how you should approach a lot of things in business.

Assume it's a blind spot and just think that you're going into this to create a positive outcome. If it is legitimately a problem, they're not going to be happy. They're probably nervous and anxious that you're going to speak to them.

It just needs nipping in the bud. It needs dealing with and it needs to be resolved. You're going in there to deal with the situation.

Assume you're wrong. It's not not criticism or reprimanding them. It is coaching and it's supporting them and it's trying to get a positive outcome for everyone.

All you're going to do at this stage, the mindset here is really to present the facts or what you believe to be the facts. Hi, so and so, just so you know, I've been presented with this information. It looks on face value like you're for the second week run and you failed to hit your service level agreement.

Can we have a conversation X, Y, Z and address it? And this is the third step. You don't want to go in and send a WhatsApp message or in the middle of a meeting, throw it in.

But don't throw grenades around. Don't ambush people. You want to book it and say, look, on face value, I've been presented with these facts.

It looks like you haven't been paying my monthly standing order into my account or it looks like you've been late for work three out of four days this week. Can you please consider this? And then can we have a conversation about it?

So what you're doing is you're booking it in and saying, look, can we have a conversation about this this afternoon or tomorrow? Not too long away that they worry about it for a week, but not in the moment where you basically ambush them and say, this is what I've been presented with. I assume I'm wrong.

Can I book it? Can we have a call tomorrow morning? That would be great.

And then you've booked it in and you can, you know, you've managed their expectations, have a think about it ahead of time, come to the meeting tomorrow and look forward to look forward to discussing it. And then what you do when you go into that conversation is you need to understand the situation. And the main thing here is going in open.

Don't go in there with your ego blazing, your attitude on high, you know, your attitude on the defensive, your blood pumping. Just park all of that and just try and be a bit more, you know, a bit more of a. Mature, professional, stoic coach, mentor, leader, not a disciplinarian, a manager, a bully.

Who's going to attack them? And what you want to do really, which is step five, is understand the situation and just say, look, this is on face value. This is what it looks like.

I really appreciate you haven't taken the time to consider it. If you give me some insight, I'd really appreciate it. Then they'll talk.

And what you'll find pretty quickly is either one, if you approach this right, either one that they've got problems at home, the kids not been sleeping, their parents are ill, something's going on and it's completely there's a personal issue and there's a whole situation surrounding it. And before you even have to start talking about discipline, discipline them, they'll just pour out and say, look, I'm really sorry, I've not been firing on all cylinders. I appreciate it's not good enough.

This is why is is one of the outcomes or the other outcome is that. You're completely wrong, you say, yeah, but it says that, but what you don't appreciate is the other side that we're on, there was a flood on the other side, I've been off it for two days. So, yes, I've not been on that site.

Perhaps I should have let you know, but I've been trying to save our bacon on this other side. You know what? That's absolutely fine.

We say, why have you not got this X, Y, Z live this year? You should have done this by now. You say, well, hang on a minute.

We agreed that in our last meeting. Since then, you've sent me all this work to do. I assumed you wanted this doing over this and you think, oh, right, OK, I get it now.

Normally, there's a reason and it is six or seven times out of 10. You don't have the full picture. And when you get the full picture, then you know.

If there's actually an issue and then finally, once you've got all that context and you understand the situation and understand what's actually been going on, then you just got to deal with that. And if it is something at home, I would normally give them breathing space. Just having the conversation is enough to reset the bar and everything's good.

If it is, you didn't have the full picture. That's easy enough. You say you've saved yourself an embarrassment by assuming you're wrong.

And happy days, job done, you've got the clarity, you can reset the bar and you've probably learned something. And then in the middle, if they are not performing and there is an issue, then you go into performance management. So like I acknowledged that normally the conversation is enough to at least reset the bar, but then you've got to maintain standards for some people, for high performers.

It'll be resolved straight away. You never have to tell them more than once. And it's great for B team players.

You know, B team's the hardest team, A team's easy because A team players you create runway for, you protect, you invest in, you believe in, you support and you just keep running with them for as far as they can go. C, and they're amazing, they're superstars, C team players are easy because they're completely rubbish, they're incompetent, they're a bad culture fit and you just sack them. The danger is B players, people who do just about enough enough work or do just enough about a job or just enough progress to not lose their job and it's always difficult.

You're always managing them, you're just about getting to a good stage and then they take their eye off the ball again. It's a difficult position to be in and you've got to watch out for that trap. It is a means to an end and it can trap you for longer than you want.

But, you know, it's a tough one. It'd be worse to have a C player, but it would be better to have an A player. Hopefully that all makes sense.

If you do have a real HR issue, don't deal with it yourself. You know, if you have an electrical issue at your house, unless you're an electrician, you probably wouldn't fix it yourself. When it comes down to things like law or compliance or in this case, HR, don't try and do it yourself.

Send it to the solicitors, the HR company, the professionals and get them to deal with it for you. And just appreciate that having a challenging conversation, if you do it right, will always have a positive outcome. Frame it, present the facts, assume you're wrong, open the conversation, let them talk, two ears, one mouth and honestly, go out there and do it.

The first three will make you the first three will probably break you. The next three will make you and when you get to a position where you can sit anyone down and in the same breath, vocabulary, emotion, tone can give somebody a compliment as you can a critique your performance, the performance of your team, the performance of your business will skyrocket. It'll go straight through the roof.

It's it's as good. It really is as good as it gets. So step out of your comfort zone, take it to the next level.

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