THE EXPERIENCE CUBE

The experience cube can be a helpful tool to plan and manage your conversation. Using the four elements of the experience cube - *Observations*, *Thoughts*, *Feelings* and *Wants* - helps you to separate your experience with the situation from your potential judgements about the situation. This approach removes blame and minimizes defensiveness, facilitating a positive conversation.

THE MODEL

OBSERVATIONS:

Sensory data (information you take in through your senses), primarily sight and sound. What a video camera would record.

I see…
I hear…
I noticed that…
When I heard you say…

THOUGHTS:

The meaning you add to your observations (i.e., the way you make sense of the data, including beliefs, expectations, assumptions, judgements, values and principles).

I think that…
The story I'm telling myself is…
I believe that…

WANTS:

Clear description of the outcomes you seek. What you hope to achieve, your intentions for the future.

I would like…

I want…

I need…

FEELINGS:

Your emotional or physiological response. Feeling words such as happy, sad, mad, glad, scared, or a description of what is happening in your body.

I feel… (angry/sad/happy/mad/frustrated)

Resource: Bushe, Gervase R., *Clear Leadership – How Outstanding Leaders Make Themselves Understood, Cut Through the Mush, and Help Everyone Get Real at Work*, 2001.

EXPERIENCE CUBE PRACTICE

Use your situation to plan a conversation by thinking through each quadrant of the Cube. It does not need to be a linear process, you can start anywhere in the Cube and intersperse questions and check-in points.

OBSERVATIONS

What observable facts can you identify that support your feedback?

THOUGHTS

What stories are you making up? What assumptions are you creating? What judgments do you have based on your own beliefs, values, and worldview? How can you check these assumptions? What clarifying questions would you need to ask?

FEELINGS

What feeling do these thoughts evoke in you? Where do you think these feelings come from?

WANTS

What do you want from this conversation and from this person? What is your request of them? What is your true intention? How can you align your request with your intention?

LISTENING THROUGH THE CUBE

The other person may not have prepared for the conversation in the same way as you. But you can always use questions to explore their experience as well. When listening, try to find out what's going on for the other person to understand their version of events better.

OBSERVATIONS:
What did you see?
What did you hear?
What did you notice?
What did you observe?

THOUGHTS:
What were/are you thinking?
What stories were you making up?
What did that mean to you?
What assumptions were you making?
What connections were you making?

WANTS:
What do you want?
What's your motivation?
Why is this important to you?
What were you hoping for?
What did/do you wish happened?

FEELINGS:
What were/are you feeling?
What's going on for you emotionally?
What happened in your body?