



# DISCUSS THE UNDISCUSSABLES

“People almost never change without first feeling understood .”

Daniel Stone

## Why is discussing the undiscussable important?

Conversations are the lifeblood of effective working relationships. Leaders and team members continuously interact with one another through conversation. Their conversational proficiency determines the levels of trust and commitment required to implement the strategies, systems, and processes to achieve desired results.

What is and is not said in conversations, how it is said and how it is listened to, and what is happening to others’ emotionally, are crucial for how efficiently and effectively leaders, teams and team members perform.

Conversations which do not generate new insights, innovative practices, effective actions, and positive results are unproductive; they create and perpetuate costly communication breakdowns and generate waste.

## How effectively do we discuss the undiscussables?

At times it feels all too hard to have the difficult conversation and avoid it in the hope it will resolve itself. It can seem difficult to speak one’s truth when giving someone feedback or addressing a difference of opinion.

In today’s ‘always-on’, fast-paced environment leaders increasingly feel like they operate in permanent white water, facing increasing complexity, uncertainty, and rapid change. In such circumstances, working relationships deteriorate and leaders remain stuck in recurring, limiting behavioural patterns that produce suboptimal results.

It is no wonder, according to research conducted by the Harvard Business School, 71% of leaders claim meetings are unproductive and inefficient and 62% of leaders claim that meetings miss the opportunity to bring the team closer together? The consequences of not speaking one’s truth or believe it is futile to question or share differing perspectives, leaves people feeling disengaged and disempowered.

SPOKEN



STATE

Safe  
Secure

BEHAVIOUR

Truthful  
Sincere

IMPACT

Connected  
Clarity

UNSPOKEN



Caution  
Fear

Insincere  
Censored

Confusion  
Closed

## New possibilities to discuss the undiscussables?

Team members need to share more of their truth together to understand complex situations, consider options, and make more informed choices. The effectiveness of their actions depends both on the effectiveness of their working relationships and particularly, the quality of their conversations on crucial issues.

As William Ury, author of *Getting to Yes*, said, “We must create an environment where even the most serious disputes are handled not based on coercion or force, but from mutual respect and coexistence. Far from eliminating differences, our challenge is to make the workplace safe for differences”.

## The How to Discuss the Undiscussables Masterclass enables leaders to create an environment where:

Team members are able to speak about their mistakes

All feel free to ask questions that are important be asked

Team members seek honest feedback and are radically transparent

All feel able to disagree with no fear of possible consequences

All challenge assumptions and share ideas even if they fly in the face of prevailing sentiments

No one fears being thought less of by asking for help

Team members disagree, not causing offense and engage in robust debate

Create an environment where more is spoken than unspoken

### Team members benefit by being able to:

Understand why they get stuck in difficult conversations

Design a conversation that promotes mutual learning and commitment to action

State their views in ways others are held with respect and legitimacy

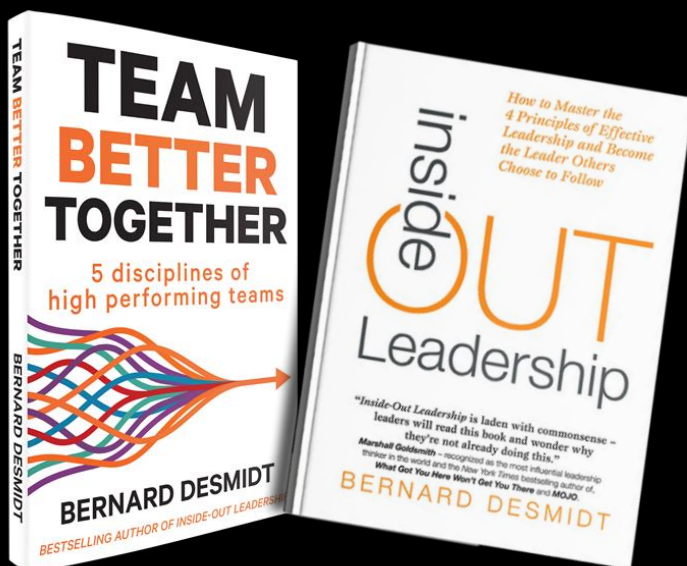
Ask questions that shift others' perspectives and moves things forward

Confidently and constructively manage discussing the undiscussable





As an accomplished coach, trainer, facilitator, speaker and author, Bernard works with leaders and leadership teams to unlock the power in teams and access the collective capacity and capability to achieve the greatest things possible.



## What clients have to say about Bernard's workshops:

"Bernard is a very courageous person who has stretched and challenged all of us to go places where we could not have imagined let alone gotten there on our own. It was an eye-opening experience and Bernard provided a safe environment where judgement is suspended, and open and frank discussion could take place. It was a very humbling experience."

### Cath Jules (CEO - Criterion Conferences)

"...the greatest and unique aspect that Bernard brought to the program – that I have rarely seen in any other facilitator – is his ability to enable people to think, feel and speak freely without fear of repercussion."

### Sean Dempsey (CEO - Plan Partners)

"...Bernard has both an engaging and challenging facilitating style which encourages thinking and discussion. Our leaders are bright smart people and I knew they needed someone who had a strong presence, whose material was thought provoking and up-to-date and who could move our leaders forward on their leadership journey..."

### Linda Smith (Manager – People & Culture, ISPT)

"...Bernard's programs look at leading through deeper self-knowledge; how this informs how you lead; the impact you have on the people you lead; and the effect this has on others."

### Suzanne Shepherd (Group Executive – Human Resources, McMillan Shakespeare Group)

To discover more about the Masterclass workshops,  
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