



The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations Into Breakthroughs

Marcia Reynolds

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You want people to stretch their limits, but your conversations meant to help them often fall flat or backfire, creating more resistance than growth. Top leadership coach Marcia Reynolds offers a model for using the Discomfort Zone--the moment when the mind is most open to learning--to prompt people to think through problems, see situations more strategically, and transcend their limitations. Drawing on recent discoveries in the neuroscience of learning, Reynolds shows how to ask the kinds of questions that short-circuit the brain's defense mechanisms and habitual thought patterns. Then, instead of being told, people see for themselves the insightful and often profound solutions to what is stopping their progress. The exercises and case studies will help you use discomfort in your conversations to create lasting changes and an enlivened workforce.

The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations Into Breakthroughs Details

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Rebecca says

I first discovered Marcia Reynold because I took a class with her on emotional intelligence. She writes the Outsmart Your Brain Blog and I have followed her for over 10 years. She is very prolific and intelligent. When I Desired Outcome, Reflect, Explore, Acknowledge and Make a Commitment. These practical tools work. She gives you an wonderful exorcise and some examples to follow. This is a book for anyone who wants to learn how to communicate with leaders and anyone who wants to learn these techniques. This is an overall excellent read and good reference book.

Paul says

The title caught my eye since I have an uncomfortable personnel situation to deal with right now, and the annual performance reviews are coming up - always a fun time! I found myself skimming the text in places since it seemed I'd already caught the point of those sections, but the example stories were helpful for imagining how to use the material. The chapter on listening with your brain, heart, and gut is a gem; I'll use those tips immediately in many conversations.

Tef Bcn says

Brief:

Make a confort buble

Listen (brain,heart,guts)

"Puss" to provoke a reaction

Repeat same words in a resume

Catherine Robinson-walker says

The Discomfort Zone is an essential book for leaders and coaches. Dr. Marcia Reynolds is a coach's coach with unparalleled experience in working with leaders all around the globe. Her point of view will resonate with all those who have observed how organizational relationships do – and do not – thrive. Her proven model for breakthrough conversations is easy to remember and her cases are compelling. Don't let the small size of The Discomfort Zone fool you. Dr. Reynolds has streamlined her considerable wisdom into this accessible, absorbing read for anyone committed to bringing out the best in others. Bravo!

Paula Olmstead says

Thank you Marcia for creating a book that is so easy to read and apply! Difficult conversations don't have to be difficult and you have provided a practical guide to assist leaders to understand that it is easier than they think.

Emma says

Short and sweet book about how to carry deep conversations that inspire insights. I think the author's book is most practically applied to other career coaches, and contrary to the title, to a less extent to managers. This is because the author recommends the leader to always let the subject find their own insights and gain perspective from within, but as a true leader, one must often lead employees to a shared perspective/goal of the company instead of just the individual.

Though not explicitly mentioned, I think concepts from meditation are also heavily applied. Headspace, bringing the mind back, non-reaction.

Overall a useful, practical read for anyone looking to help unstuck others or themselves.

Cari says

This book is a powerful example of what it takes to be a mindful leader. Marcia Reynolds talks about the pattern coaching conversations must have in order to change people's minds. Moreover, during these conversations, people learn something about themselves. We must ask probing questions, allow the person the space and the trust to have an epiphany or realization, and then help the person define action steps in order to move forward and change. It dovetails with the practice of mindfulness in that you must be aware and conscious of the conversation, thinking with not just your brain but with your heart and gut as well. Great book.

Musa says

This is a good book that gives you a general foundation on how you can conduct effective conversations with your team in the workplace. Whether you'll find it useful will very much depend on your organization's culture and what kind of role you're currently in. I'll definitely recommend this for people who just grow into management positions.

Jeff Bobin says

Every leader should take the time to read this book!

If you want to grow and help others grow to be the best they can be this could transform how you approach conversations. Real growth occurs in those places that uncomfortable conversations take place and thinking,

planning and using those can be vital to the growth of you and your organization.

Joeann Fossland says

What a great process to really make a difference in conversations to transform a person's ability to see and make better choices. Should be required reading for every manager or leader who is seriously committed to empowering their employees , rather than just trying to throw motivation at them! As a business coach, the questioning that Reynold's depicts has been part of my toolkit, but the book takes it up a rung on the ladder! Just loved it!

Amalauna Brock says

Required statement: I received this book as part of the Good Reads First Read program for free.

I requested this book hoping that it could help make my advising conversations more productive. The first part of the book was helpful. The last 3 chapters were not really.

The book was ok, but it was half full of getting in touch with feelings, other pointless activities, and trite over simplifications.

I would recommend this book only to people who want a barebones description of her method and nothing else.

Tricia Friedman says

Important reminders on the power of full throttle listening. The book has plenty of anecdotal accounts. The author drives home the point that improvement is not about ease, rather, progress must walk a bumpy, dark, intimidating path. The good news is the book provides the means for navigating that path as a community.

Abdurrahman AlQahtani says

This book is about coaching using what the author calls "The Discomfort Zone" and a process summarized in "DREAM": Determine, Reflect, Explore, Acknowledge, and Make.

I simply couldn't complete the book, and ended up skimming and reading the end of chapter summaries and takeaway points. The reason is that the author started to repeat herself over and over again, and the examples given are noting but surprisingly naive.

I hate these kind of books where the claim is "I have discovered something new and better than anyone else... let me tell you about it!" only to see the ideas are deeply rooted in similar literature. This one was about

coaching, and the key behind coaching is asking the right questions. Use the simple GROW model (Goals, Reality, Options/Obstacles, and Way forward) instead of this twisted model of "The Discomfort Zone".

Sanda says

It is a very interesting and practical book, giving a thorough insight of a useful coaching approach. I can't say that it was easy to read, because one has to stop and think over in order to absorb the information and then to stop and practice in order to verify the ideas. But, in the end, the process described helped me increase my effectiveness and gave me courage to continue searching and developing myself.

Rhnair says

This book didn't clearly work for me. Maybe I was looking for a kind of manual on how to handle uncomfortable situations, some kind of step by step guide.

In this book, Marcia brings out many of her own experience. But what is missed out that those experiences and outcomes are very culture specific. The entire attempt is to say that people are most likely to change their mind or look at reality through another lens when they discover it on their own. But, each situation would be different and how one handles it will depend on that. She also talks of the "gut brain" and "heart brain", which is to be used to listen to what the people are NOT saying but are trying to communicate during a conversation. So, my learning is that such listening capabilities are like talent which one is born with. One may try learning it, but there would always be limitations.

I wish Marcia would have written this based on the multitude of the cases she has handled, rather than belabour on the theories in the initial chapters. That would have made this an interesting read. She does use some of them in the later chapters, but the flow is quite jumpy.

There are a few good takeaways like about using silence during a conversation, not being pushy and to walk away if the person is not ready to negotiate. But overall, it was difficult for me to keep a thread of the advices she was trying to give.
