



Karen Friedman

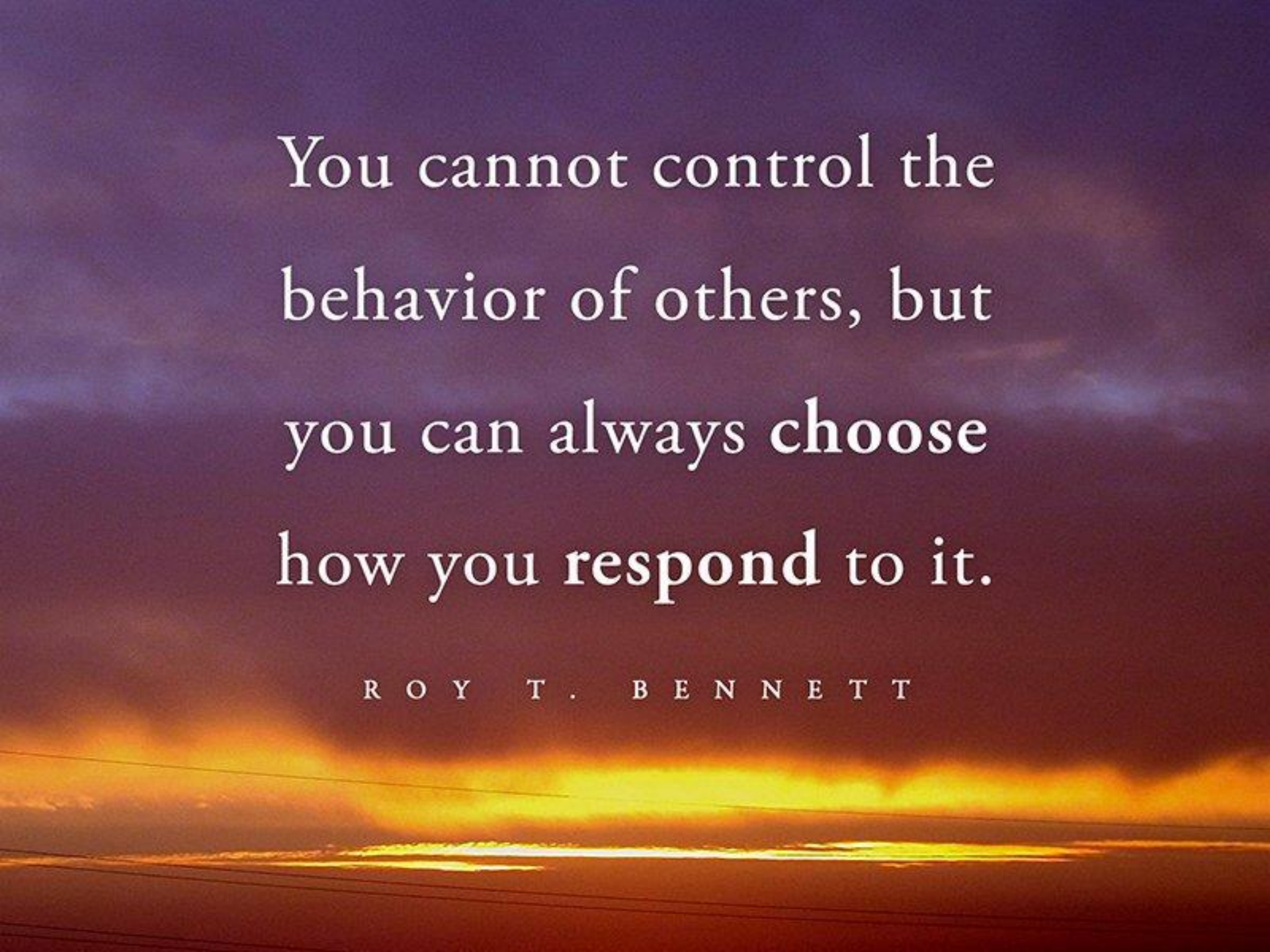
— ENTERPRISES —

CREATING COMPELLING COMMUNICATORS

COMMUNICATING WITH DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

**Managing Mindsets to
Maximize Messages**





You cannot control the
behavior of others, but
you can always choose
how you respond to it.

R O Y T . B E N N E T T



UNDERSTANDING THEIR MINDSET

- **Anxious. Scared. Concerned**
- **Emotions are strong**
- **Think you should agree with them**
- **Angry. Think they're right**
- **Want answers that you don't always have**
- **Power struggle**



CHANGING YOUR MINDSET

- **Don't avoid conversation**
- **Provide information**
- **Address fears**
- **Empathy**
- **Listen, don't interrupt**
- **Remain calm**
- **Focus on what you can do**

YOUR TURN

Pick a Scenario



SCENARIOS

AUDIENCE: Upset Person

An upset person comes up to you and asks:

How could Villanova bring in this controversial speaker? (Examples – someone speaking on reproductive justice, someone with very conservative political views.)

Why does the University have gender inclusive guidelines around pronouns if it calls itself a Catholic university?

Does the University really support Black Lives Matter?

AUDIENCE: Faculty Member

A star faculty member is requesting a brand for a University special initiative they are passionate about. The dean of the College has already “approved” a brand for this special initiative and now the request has come to you. The faculty member has seen a brand for one of his College’s centers and is insisting that his initiative deserves at least the same.

AUDIENCE: University Partner

A demanding University partner is working with a UCM colleague on a major video/print piece/web redesign. Your colleague is very anxious and upset by the project process and knows the product is not good. The colleague is asking for you to save the day by diverting your entire staff to work on this—or tell this University partner that we can’t make the deadline.

AUDIENCE: Group Members

You are working as part of a group with members from across the University. One member of the group is extremely negative and regularly makes disparaging comments about UCM. Now you’ve had to tell that person that it’s not possible to create a logo/new webpage/social media campaign, and they scream at you in front of the whole group.

AUDIENCE: Father Peter and Pat

Father Peter and Pat have a priority project and Ann has already assured them that UCM will make it happen. Ann has tasked you with the project, but the timeline Ann has said Father Peter and Pat want is impossible given the amount of work the project involves and the University contract process. How can you explain this to Ann who will have to go back on her word to Father Peter and Pat?

YOUR REACTION

Perspective

Tone

YOUR REACTION

“Don’t you talk to me that way”

“I’m happy to help you, but I feel disrespected when you talk to me with such a harsh tone.”

NOT ABOUT YOU

NO

This has been tough for us. **We have a lot of problems. **We** had a hard time getting here. **We** have two people out sick today.....**

YES

This is a difficult situation, but we are here to walk **you through it and to let **you** know what the plans are, the timeline and what systems are in place to help **you**.**

Three Conversations

1

“What Happened”
Conversation

2

The “Feelings”
Conversation

3

The “Identity”
Conversation

The “What Happened” Conversation



Disagreeing about what happened or what should have happened.



I’m right, you’re wrong, whose to blame?



Filled with untrue assumptions. See the other person as the problem

Three Conversations

The “Feelings” Conversation



Manage strong emotions



Struggle to express their feelings and listen to others



Emotions make people feel vulnerable and uncomfortable

Three Conversations

The “Identity” Conversation



Conversation we
have with
ourselves



Will it expose my
self doubts?



How will people see
me afterwards? How
will I see myself?

Three Conversations

YOUR TURN

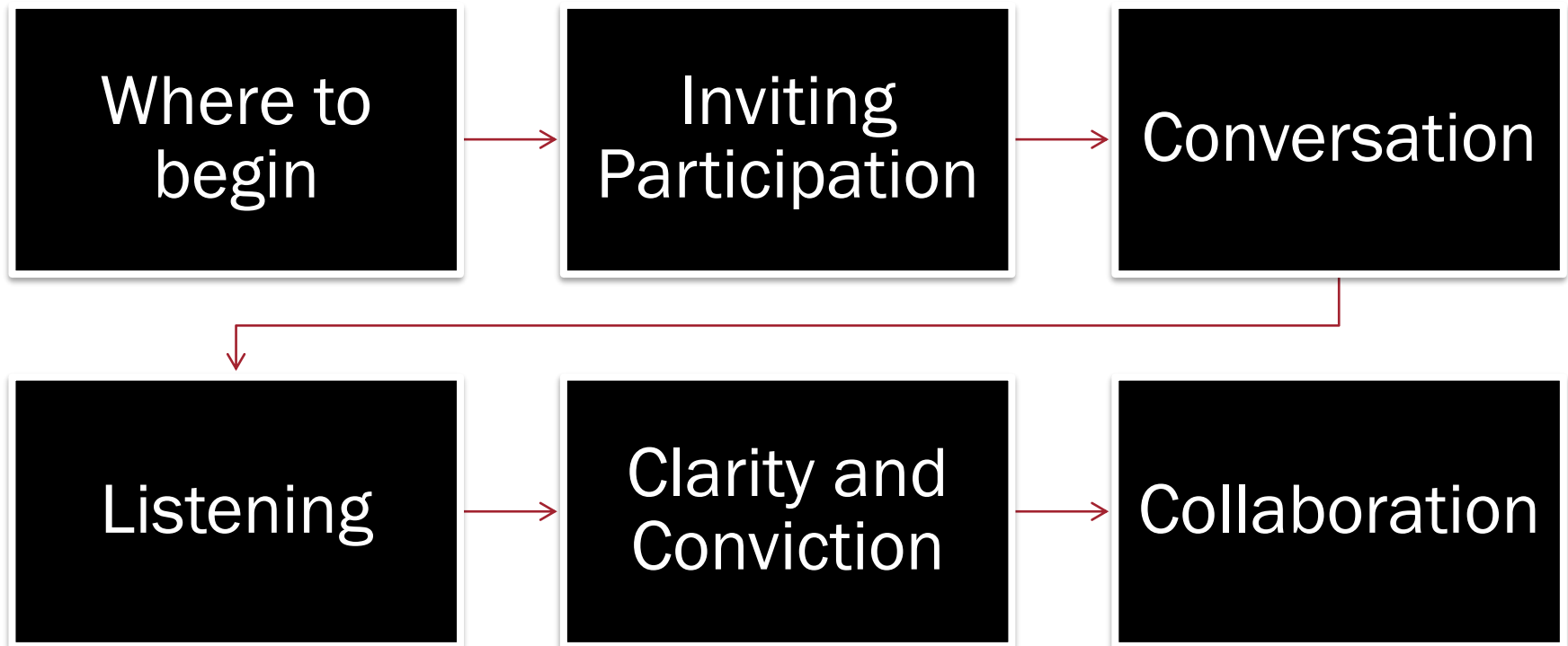
Sharing Personal Experience



PLAN IN ADVANCE



6 STAGES OF DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



OPENING STATEMENTS



Invitation to Engage



Express Purpose



Describe the gap/problem



Ask a Question

OPENING STATEMENTS



ENGAGE: “I am wondering if we can talk about...”



EXPRESS PURPOSE: “We are not going to change our decision but do want to reach an agreement how to move forward together.”



DESCRIBE GAP: “We clearly have different views on this. I want to understand how you see things, but also want you to understand what we believe needs to happen.”



QUESTION: “I have not seen you follow through even though you agreed to bring recommendations to the team two weeks ago which makes me wonder about your commitment to the project. Is this right or am I missing something?”



PRACTICE OPENS

YOUR TURN

- **Pick a scenario**
- **Write an opening statement**
- **Include one or more components:**
 - **Engage**
 - **Purpose**
 - **Gap**
 - **Ask Question**

TELL YOUR STORY



What you see happening



Why you see it the way you do

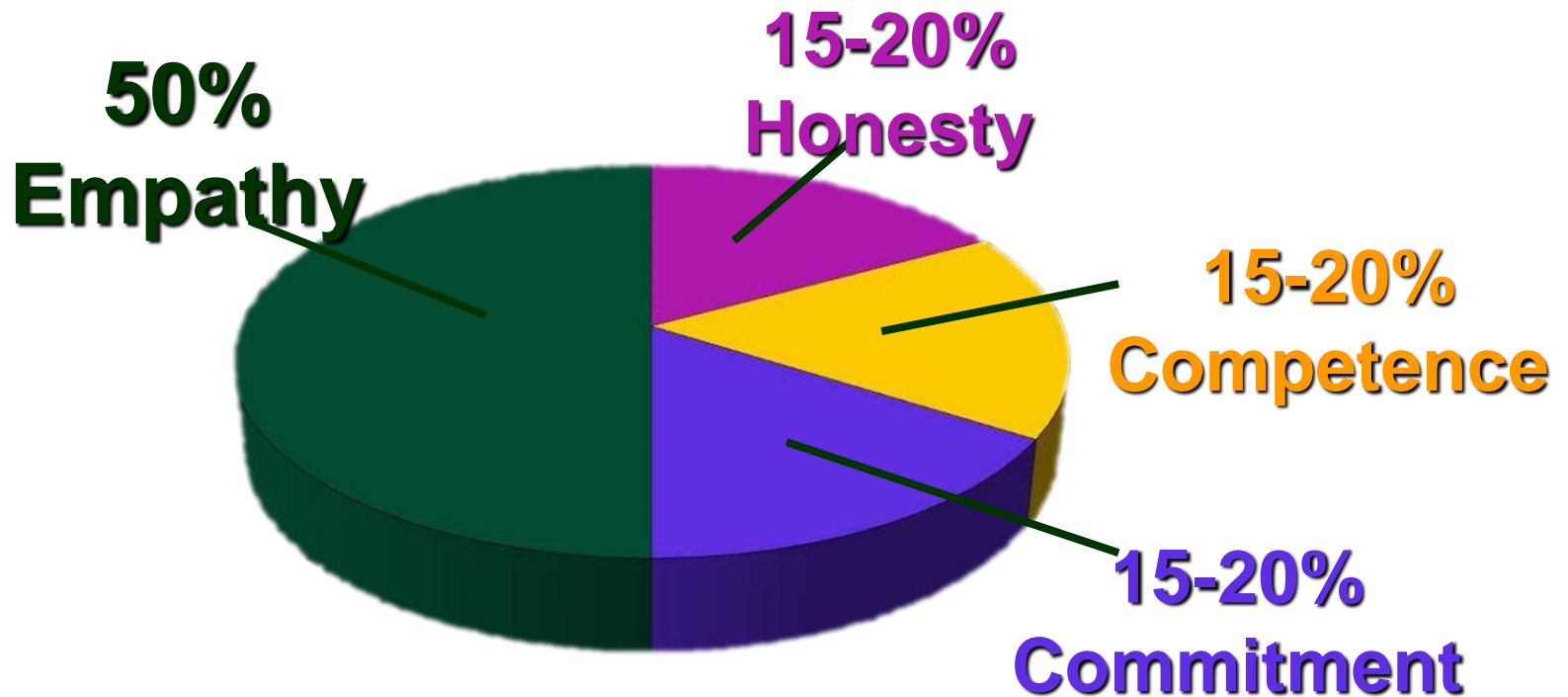


What VN values related to issue



How VN feels about situation or problem

Personal Credibility Reaction



People don't **care**
how much you **know**
until they **know**
how much you **care!**

SPEAK WITH CLARITY/CONVICTION



What's important to us is...



For us, this is about xyz

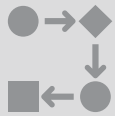


I want to be very clear about our purpose



Is there anything I'm saying that isn't clear?

Common Ground Closes



“I think we both understand where we differ. How can we move forward and work through this together...”



“I have a better understanding of why you’re upset”



I understand how the situation was misinterpreted”

YOUR TURN

Scenario Role Playing



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NO

Calm Down

Just Relax

Don't Worry

Stop Stressing

It will be fine

**You shouldn't feel
that way**

YES

I understand

Help me understand

I'm listening

Let's find common ground

What can I do to help

It's okay to be frustrated

Take me through what happened

Take a breath and start from the beginning



WHAT TO SAY

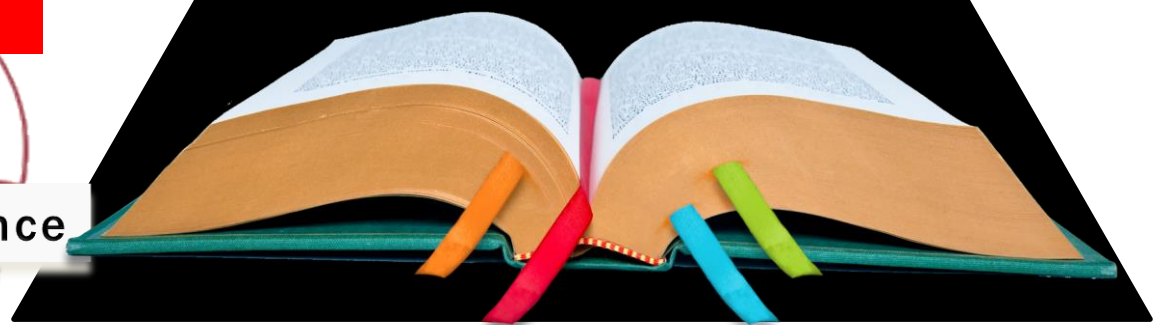
STORY: Slow the spread of COVID-19

DOING OUR BEST

- Working together
- Constantly changing
- Updating tools/info

PERSONAL

- Masks/Distance
- Hygiene
- Avoid Crowds



Shared

- Vaccines
- Quarantine
- Ventilation/
Outdoors

Bridge to Message

In fact

It's important to understand

What you might find interesting

That is a common misperception so let me clarify

First, let me say

Let me also point out

In reality

What we do know is

I'm not going to speculate; what I can tell you

That is not entirely correct, the truth is

In my experience

A - T - M



Acknowledge
Transition
Message
and Address



Hostile Questions



Listen without interrupting



Do not attack the questioner



Acknowledge emotional concerns



Re-state key messages

Don't Know Answer



I don't have enough information to answer your question



Based on what we know today



I don't know, let me get back to you



Repeat, paraphrase, clarify

Unclear Comments



Ask person to give an example



Share information or facts



Restate to verify what person is saying



Can you elaborate?

Speculation/Rumor



It would be inappropriate to speculate. I can tell you this



Here is what we know



I can only address current guidelines



We do not discuss personal employee information



Avoid thinking they are the problem

Have own story and interpretations

Don't make assumptions

Abandon Blame



KarenFriedman.com/villanova