



# Positive Performance CONVERSATIONS

helping leaders tackle hard talks

A solutions approach to delivering difficult feedback

Designed and delivered by **Bill Cropper**

**A 1-day coaching clinic on making tough performance conversations easier...**

## Poor performance conversations raise too much defensiveness

Dealing with poor performance, as most leaders will tell you, is one of the most commonly avoided and widely feared species of difficult discussions. It's not identifying performance issues that's the obstacle. *It's raising defensiveness* - giving difficult feedback to people where their reaction is emotionally volatile, and the conversational course you chart, unpredictable.

Defensiveness is an unnerving side-effect of difficult discussions. Conventional performance conversations centre on 'constructive criticism' but *criticism is criticism*. The person on the other end won't see it as constructive no matter how much we tell them it is. Many managers deliver pre-formed judgements on people's performance deficiencies. We see this as positively assertive; they see it as controlling and coercive. They're unlikely to open up, and far more likely to get defensive, triggering strong emotions that get in the way of hearing what you have to say, and the hope of getting a positive outcome evaporates.

## Positive performance conversations – constructive confrontation

Positive performance conversations work on a simple principle: *focus on future positive performance rather than past negatives*. Focusing less on what's wrong and more on what's expected creates a different emotional climate that enables you to give difficult feedback in constructive ways. It helps to keep their dignity intact and their defensiveness at bay so they hear what you have to say.

Bypassing performance deficiencies and defensive reactions by describing the negative behaviour in positive terms, allows people to respond more positively and focus on the solution-finding and commitment conversation - the goal of giving critical feedback in the first place. Conversations with low performers will probably never be painless, but a few easy adjustments like this can make them less painful and more profitable to all parties.

## What's Positive Performance Conversations about?

A special extension to our *Difficult Discussions* clinic, this 1-day practice-based program provides a step-by-step approach and carefully-crafted conversational formulas to make you feel more comfortable and competent to deliver difficult feedback and deal with low performers. You will learn about:

- SPECIFIC steps to make tough performance conversations easier
- Using non-judgmental, neutral language without diluting a difficult message
- Delivering difficult feedback that is more 'sayable' and 'hearable'
- Constructing performance conversations in more positive ways
- Turning performance conversations into mutual problem-solving sessions

## Here's some topics we'll touch on during the day...

- 'De-vaguating' – being specific about the performance you envision
- Dissecting performance issues - giving clear, frank, fact-based feedback
- Putting negative performance issues across positively
- Saying what you need, why you need it and why they need it too
- 3ANTIX – starting a positive performance conversation
- SPECIFIC – a positive model for performance conversations
- Performance conversations as coaching dialogues
- Curiosity not criticism – finding out their story and telling yours
- Keeping discussion on track: focusing them on finding solutions
- Handling anxiety and other high-pitched emotions
- Anticipating objections – dealing with excuses, justifications and downplays

## Do you want to...

- Feel more comfortable/competent about giving difficult feedback?
- Handle confrontations with poor performers more constructively?
- Deliver touchy messages in more constructive ways?
- Gain new skills/tools to manage performance discussions better?
- Say what you need to say in ways that will be heard and get action?

## What people say...

- *Well worth it... Very good value... A very high standard.* Ken Day, DLGP
- *Great structure and content, presented in everyday language with an easy-to-follow guidebook.* Bill Ohl, DET  
"An excellent course of enormous benefit to anyone who supervises/manages staff." Sandy Walsh, CQ TAFE
- *"Very good. I now have a new way of looking at conversations and am much more aware."* Leigh Henderson, Greenpeace Australia
- *Brilliant! Feel much more capable of handling difficult discussions now.* Dana Farrell, BlueCare

## Readings on Conversations?

Our free [FactFiles](#) include topical tips on aspects of conversations, leadership, change, emotional intelligence and teams and our seasonal [CC E-News](#) e-zines offer a variety of insights and tips regardless of date. [Issue-2](#) considers difficult discussions; [Issue-11](#) looks at coping with caustic conversations – adopting a step-by-step approach can help take the heat out of those more challenging conversational encounters. [Read more](#)

## In-House programs...

Integrate our learning programs into your leadership or organisational capacity-building strategies: conduct them in-house – in standard format or customised to suit the particular needs of your workplace or team. In-house clinics enhance shared understanding, strengthen relationships and increase the likelihood of people applying new ideas productively in 'real-time' back in your workgroup or management team.

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Email: [billc@thechangeforum.com](mailto:billc@thechangeforum.com)

## ▶▶ What about Cost – and how do I Register?

Course Fee (GST inc) covers lunch, refreshments and a comprehensive self-coaching Toolkit designed to support your ongoing learning back at work. Fee discounts offered for early registration, schools and not-for-profit community organisations subject to payment prior to attendance. Fees not refundable but are transferable up to 14 days prior to an event. Substitute welcome. Max 16 places per event. **Timing:** 8.30am–4.30pm (approx – unless otherwise advised). **Registration:** Form included below for return by Fax or Email or register **On-line** at [www.thechangeforum.com/Registration.htm](http://www.thechangeforum.com/Registration.htm). Contacts below.

## ▶▶ Conversations Master Classes & EI Clinics...

Our foundation conversational coaching clinic: *Leading through Conversations*, offers leaders at all levels the opportunity to develop essential skills for more skillful and constructive conversations. A number of conversational 'master classes' focus on particular conversation themes including: *Dealing with Difficult Discussions* a 2-day public clinic (with optional and 1-day in-house format) to learn about a process and tools to turn destructive confrontation into constructive conversation; *Positive Performance Conversations* – a 1-day clinic to help leaders adopt a more positive approach to handling tough performance feedback situations and *Handling Toxic Emotions*, exploring ways to build resilience and competence to cope more effectively with caustic conversations at work. An essential complement to conversational coaching clinics is our series of emotional intelligence programs for leaders and teams: *Leading with Emotional Intelligence*; *EI at Work* for general staff and *Teaching with EI* for classroom applications in schools.

## ▶▶ Teambuilding – the Art of Working Better Together...

*Working Better Together* is the generic label we use for our team-building approach. Many of us work together for years and never take the time to reflect on how we come across or talk to each other. All teams need to take time-out now and again to work on their team-talk, renew relationships, find ways to discuss difficult issues that get in the way and clarify how they can work better and more constructively together. We regularly design and run tailored team-building interventions for workteams that want to build a more positive team culture, harness commitment to a shared vision and create opportunities for growth and challenge. Download our *Working Better Together Prospectus* for lots of useful pointers to help plan your next team-building session at [www.thechangeforum.com](http://www.thechangeforum.com). Or contact us by email or phone or on-line enquiry form to request an outline of our approach or find out how a *Working Better Together* clinic can help you and your team.

## ▶▶ Thinking about – personalised Coaching?

As an adjunct to our leadership programs, we provide personalised coaching services for individuals and small groups at all levels. A typical coaching program consists of 5 x 2-3-hour coaching sessions every 4 weeks or so, with a blend of face-to-face and telephone coaching and email support. Download our *Coaching Prospectus* for some simple, straightforward answers to what "all this coaching stuff is about" to help you make up your mind whether our coaching approach might suit you.

## ▶▶ Facilitation & Presentation Services...

As an adjunct to our leadership learning programs we provide personalised leadership *coaching services* for individuals and small groups, forum facilitation, key-note presentations and fast-track learning sessions at conferences, planning forums, team meetings or other relevant events. Bill delivers informative, interactive, thought-provoking sessions on topical themes designed to address or complement particular issues, concerns, challenges and context. Bill's style is relaxed, down-to-earth, amusing, affirming and engaging. He connects with people and puts them at ease, at the same time as raising their curiosity and gently confronting current thinking. More information **on-line** or contact Bill direct to discuss ways he can help.

## ▶▶ Our Change Services – Helping you with Change

Need a helping hand to handle change? Organisations often want help designing their own change processes but choices and options around change and working out where to start can sometimes overwhelm and confuse. We've been helping organisations and leaders with change projects large and small for many years and we've a fair idea how daunting it can sometimes seem. So we've put together a *Profile of our Change Services* which provides a snapshot of the sorts of things organisations typically ask us around workplace change and some of the critical change management areas you are likely to want to address. Download **on-line** or contact us direct to discuss ways we might be able to help.

## Registration Discounts...

	1-person	**SPRING**
21+ days:	\$473 pp	\$440 pp
7-20 days:	\$528 pp	to Sept 30
Schools/NFP:	\$440 pp	\$410 pp

**Note:** All Fees GST inc. Fees current at time of printing but subject to review at the discretion of The Change Forum. Discount periods may be extended. EFT or credit card payments preferred. Purchase Orders not accepted as payment. Places limited.

## About your Presenter...



**Bill Cropper** is Director of The Change Forum. He has a wealth of practical leadership learning, coaching and change experience. His work centres on helping leaders to build the conversational, emotional, relational and team-working capabilities they need to create vibrant, supportive work cultures and high-performing teams. Bill's keenly interested in the benefits of conversational coaching and emotional intelligence to create connective and compassionate workplaces, promote productive, open interchanges and facilitate personal growth and change mastery. For the past 7 years, he's run hundreds of coaching clinics and forums that have benefited numerous managers, team leaders and other professionals from many wide-ranging backgrounds. Bill's a preferred learning consultant and leadership coach for many public sector agencies, providing facilitation, training and coaching services to senior executives, managers, work teams and community groups around leadership capacity-building. He has a down-to-earth, relaxed and outgoing style and works comfortably with people from all levels, occupations and backgrounds.

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*"I appreciated your laid-back/informal approach to delivery. I left feeling motivated and eager to put what I'd learnt into practice"*

Di Grech Bentley Park College

*"Your friendly, laid back manner put us at ease right from the start."* Robyn Yared,

Greater Brisbane Gifted Education Network

*"I really enjoy your facilitation style Bill - a well balanced mix of theory, practical and humour in a relaxed, fun atmosphere that makes learning easier"*.

M. Polkinghorne, Disability Services Qld

## Contact Us...

We offer a wide range of change consultancy, learning, coaching, team development and facilitation services and invite you to contact us (any time) to discuss your needs or issues, how we can help and arrange a quote. For individual program brochures or more information on how we might be able to assist you or your team, **contact Bill Cropper** at The Change Forum on:

**MOB:** 0429-687513

**TEL:** 07-4068 7591

**FAX:** 07-4068 7555

**EMAIL:** [consult@thechangeforum.com](mailto:consult@thechangeforum.com)

**WEB:** [www.thechangeforum.com](http://www.thechangeforum.com)

Also Register **ON-LINE** at <http://www.thechangeforum.com/Registration.htm>

1 Day Event

\*\* SPRING Offer to Sept 30 \*\*

**Early Registration DISCOUNTS#:**  
Full Fee **\$528** per person

**21 Days+ NFP & Schools**  
**\$473** per person  
**\$440** per person

**Standard** **\$440** p.person  
**NFP/Schools** **\$410** p.person

All Fees GST inc. NFP = non-Govt community-based organisations. Fees current at time of printing but subject to review at discretion of The Change Forum;  
Discount period may be extended – call to enquire; Fees due on registration, payable within 14 days of Invoice and prior to attendance;  
Fee not refundable but up to 14 days prior may be transferred; Substitute welcome up to commencement; See website for [full terms& conditions](#)  
EFT & Credit Card payment preferred; Card processing fee applies; Purchase Orders not accepted as payment; Priority given to paid reservations;  
Fee covers course attendance, guidebook, lunch and refreshments only – travel, accommodation and sundries not included.

▶ **YES! Please Register me for [ ] place/s to attend**

**Event Title:**  **Positive Performance Conversations**  
(Please mark clearly)

**AT Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ON:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Month:** \_\_\_\_\_

Comprehensive self-coaching Toolkit for the course attending included at no extra charge

Lunch and refreshments included; Venue details provided on confirmation of booking

⌚ Please come along by 8.30am to meet others and be ready for an 8.45am start; approx 4.30pm finish  
(Timing may vary occasionally please confirm this with us prior to attendance)

▶ **Here are my/our Details... (Please complete all fields wherever possible)**

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
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<b>Last Name:</b>			
<b>Position Title:</b>			
<b>Unit/Div/Dept:</b>			
<b>Email:</b>			
<b>Tel BH:</b>			
<b>Mob:</b>			
<b>Catering or other Needs:</b>			
<b>Organisation:</b>			
<b>Postal Address:</b>			
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~ SAVE or PRINT & Complete this form then EMAIL or FAX back to secure your booking ~

▶ **More Information?** ☎ **TEL: 07-4068 7591** 📱 **Mob: 0429-687 591** or **Bill Cropper: 0429-687513**  
💻 **EMAIL: [register@thechangeforum.com](mailto:register@thechangeforum.com)** 📠 **FAX: 07-4068 7555**