



MODULE EIGHT

Coaching with Conflict



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Introduction

Module Eight is all about the relationship between self-doubt and conflict: including the risks of judgement, criticism, and rejection.

In this module we'll:

- Dive into the impact of conflict as primary risks at the core of protective beliefs.
- Learn helpful somatic practices that help regulate your client's nervous system and emotional experience.
- Learn original tools to help your clients feel resourced during judgement, criticism and confrontation.

CONSIDER:

- What is this module revealing to me about my relationship with conflict?
- How is my relationship with conflict impacting my coaching business?
- How is my relationship with conflict impacting my coaching work with clients?
- What is my experience of working through these approaches on my own? With my Practice Pod?
- How might these ideas be incorporated into my client work?
- What is unclear to me?
- What questions do I have?

Self-belief Coaching tools + approaches

The tools and approaches referred to in this Module are available for you to download as unformatted word docs for you to add your own branding.

REF.	NAME	NOTES
SBCAM8A	The Emotion Cycle	A practice for experiencing emotions.
SBCAM8B	Conflict Styles	Taking the intelligence and gifts from Accommodating, Avoidant, Adversarial and Passive Aggressive styles, and developing an Accepting conflict style.
SBCAM8C	Reframing Judgement	How to hear the meaning behind the words spoken.
SBCAM8D	Criticism Map	Expand your self-concept to include polarities.
SBCAM8E	Preparation for Confrontation	How to prepare emotionally and psychologically for a compassionate confrontation.
SBCAM8F	Accountable Language	Simple script for compassionate confrontation.

Coaching with Conflict

KEY MESSAGE: Few of us were shown healthy and effective ways to handle conflict. However, our tolerance for judgement, criticism and even confrontation is not fixed. Learning conflict skills helps our clients to become more authentic, courageous and loving in all relationships as they know how to take care of themselves whenever conflict arises.

PURPOSE OF THIS MODULE:

Three of the big seven risks (judgement, criticism, rejection) are directly related to our relationship with conflict. Consequently, the risk of conflict is one of the biggest activators of self-doubt – and conflict is *inevitable* in human relationships.

We see the symptoms of this in clients:

- When we believe conflict is wrong, bad or overwhelming, we find it impossible to be fully ourselves.
- We can be so accommodating of other people's needs and opinions, nothing is ever resolved.
- Some of us have learned we'll only get our needs met if we make demands, and we often create unwanted conflict.
- It might be that as soon as things get heated, you have a desire to hide or soothe as quickly as possible.

These are all completely understandable responses to conflict!

As Self-belief Coaches, we don't believe that conflict is a 'problem'.

Conflict doesn't need to be *solved* as it is an inevitable aspect of humans relating to each other.

We believe that helping our clients to understand how they experience and respond to conflict holds the keys for the expansion of their Self-concept.

There are five aspects to this module:

1. Understanding your Conflict Style
2. Emotions and Conflict
3. Removing the sting of judgement
4. Transmuting the shame of criticism
5. How to have compassionate confrontations

We want to explore how conflict specifically impacts clients with self-doubt, and how we can help them to feel resourced to be with the inevitable experiences of judgement and criticism and confrontation.

CONFLICT AND TRAUMA

If there are traumatic experiences related to conflict in the client's biography, you may find exploring their relationship with conflict is something the client resists or finds difficult.

Resistance tends to manifest through the Survivor Self showing up to protect the client from experiencing emotions.

Notice if the client is 'thinking' their feelings – intellectualising, talking a lot, otherwise deflecting.

Reflect back what you notice and invite the client to be in their body as they feel the emotion using the emotion cycle.

Consent is key here – we always ask the client if they want to look at the dynamics of a conflict. We empower them with the ability to say they want to stop at any time.

This helps to settle the Survivor Self and the Protector – we are including these parts in the process so they can set the pace and they won't be surprised.

I have found that in cases of ongoing conflict, the client's Healthy Self is very interested in looking at this – having the option to 'opt out' is a safety net that is always required and almost never used.

A NOTE ON ENTANGLEMENT

How do YOU feel about conflict? What do you tend to do when conflict is present?

It's understandable that if you feel uncertain, overwhelmed or unprepared, you'll do everything to minimise the discomfort of conflict.

This also means if clients bring conflict into sessions, entanglement is highly likely.

Remember: we want to be aware of our own risk sensitivities so that we minimise the chances of entanglement.

If your own relationship with conflict is tender, please take care of yourself as you work through this module. There is plenty of time to practice these approaches – they are immediately applicable to us and our clients, gentle on your nervous system and rooted in developmental psychology.

Use your practice pod and supervision to explore your experience.

The importance of context + intention for the SBCA Conflict Tools

Our aim in this module is to support client's to feel resourced in any conflict. This requires an Accepting conflict style (p15) where the client can experiment with the intelligence and advantages of all the conflict styles (Humour, Compassion, Assertion and Empathy) in order to best respond to the conflict at hand.

This will help clients to grow their flexibility, creativity and choice for being with conflict in different contexts. Sometimes we want to be direct or to use humour to diffuse tension, we might choose to diplomatically postpone a discussion that gets too 'hot' to preserve respect in the relationship.

Every conflict is different because every context is different. The tools shared in this module are wildly enhanced when used with intention.

Most of us go into conflict *without* any awareness of our intention - of what we want to happen. Sometimes this needs reflection and preparation – with practice, clients can set an intention in the moment they sense there is conflict.

I highly recommend supporting your clients to plan for any kind of conversation where there is conflict.

HEALTHY SELF + INTENTION

You can help clients to practice working on intentions by inviting them to reflect on a recent conflict and answer these three questions. They can take this away as a homework practice:

What are you advocating for in this conflict?	Get clarity on your needs - what are you looking after, or advocating for? e.g.: are you voicing a need, holding to a boundary, stating your thoughts?
What is the quality of trust in this relationship?	If trust is high, this usually indicates a willingness to work through or hold space for the conflict. If trust is low, it can mean we need to lower our expectations in terms of what can be achieved in the conflict.
How do you want to feel during this conflict?	Get clear so you can embody how you want to feel. How does this emotion feel in your body? This can help you to regulate your nervous system during the conflict.

Emotions + conflict

NOTE: This approach can be used for any experience of heightened emotion – not just those related to conflict, and not those related to harder to feel emotions.

We can't talk about conflict without talking about our experience of emotion.

During conflict, our stress response is activated. The physiological effect of this means emotions are heightened. This can be incredibly uncomfortable.

We tend to respond to the discomfort automatically - either by dissociating, dismissing, or distancing ourselves from a feeling. OR we over-identify with the intensity of the emotion and become hijacked by it.

Many clients will say things like:

- I don't know how to feel *this* safely.
- I don't know who I will be if I allow myself to feel this.
- This emotion is too big.
- I never say the right words when I am angry.
- My anger frightens me.
- Their anger frightens me.

It is common for clients to disbelieve they can experience their emotions without being overwhelmed by them.

DEVELOPING AN EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY

The emotion cycle tool is a way of helping the client to develop an emotional vocabulary.

The Feelings Wheel created by Dr. Gloria Willcox (Appendix A) can also help clients to put words to emotions.

SBCA Coaching Tool: The Emotion Cycle

By slowing down and allowing the emotion to be felt fully in a safe environment, clients can experience their emotional resilience in real time.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Help clients to feel their feelings (instead of thinking them).
- Begin to develop a practice where they are able to be present to the full spectrum of their emotions.
- Experience less fear of what they might feel during experiences of conflict.
- Feels more attuned to the wisdom of their emotions and associated body sensations.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

The Emotion Cycle process is based on Eugene Gendlin's work on 'Focussing'. I have found this to be easy to understand, though rich and complex and personally, deeply healing.

Karla McLaren (The Language of Emotions) and Dan Goleman's work on Emotional Intelligence accessible and helpful. These are great resources for clients too.

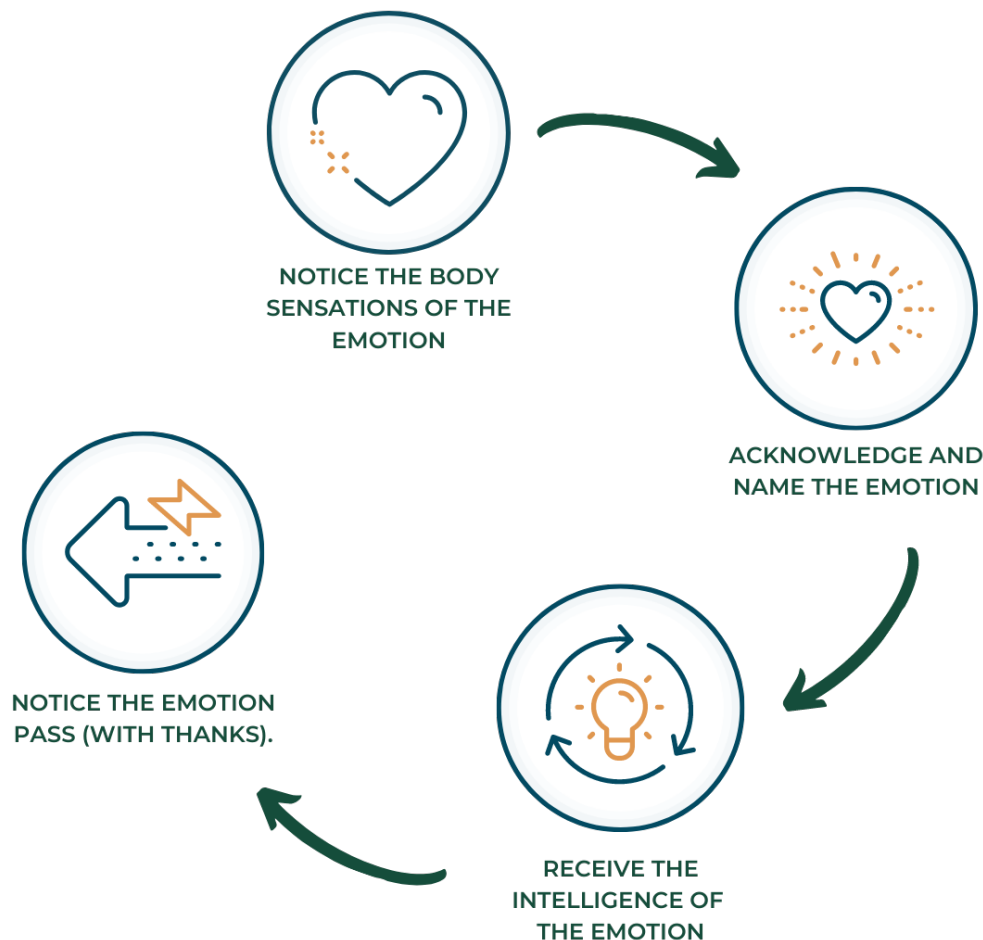
The Feelings Wheel created by Dr. Gloria Willcox (Appendix A) can help clients to put words to emotions.

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

- Feel supported to consciously access the clarity and power of their emotions: clarity over the reason for emotions and power at being able to feel them.
- Begin to cultivate a personal vocabulary for their emotions.
- This can be particularly beneficial for clients who feel relatively numb or shut-off from their bodies and emotions. However, they are also likely to resist this process.

TOP TIPS:

- Client's may not visibly express emotions. Pay attention to descriptions of heightened emotion, speaking in the third person about how 'other people/you' feel in different contexts (this can be a way of trying to create distance to emotions).
- Building a relationship with the full range of emotions takes time. I highly recommend weaving the Emotion Cycle practice into your coaching – whenever you are exploring emotions – this can also include emotions that clients are happy and comfortable to feel.
- This also makes for a great homework exercise! I tend to go through the process slowly in a session, and then invite clients to practice this so we can see what comes up for them.



COACHING THROUGH THE EMOTION CYCLE

1. NOTICE SENSATIONS OF THE EMOTION:	• Allow yourself to slowly scan your body - pay attention to where you are experiencing sensation in your body. • Notice if the sensation is moving, or if it's static; notice if there is temperature to it; is there a colour you associate with this sensation? • If you could reach inside your body and touch this sensation, what do you imagine it would feel like?
2. ACKNOWLEDGE AND IDENTIFY THE EMOTION:	• Notice yourself feeling activated - this might be instant, or it may take some time to notice. • Be curious and see if you can name what you are feeling (use the feelings wheel to practice this).
3. RECEIVE THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE EMOTION:	• What do you make this emotion mean? • What is the emotion saying? What do you make this mean? Be curious – you can even ask it ‘sadness, what are you saying?’. • Our memories are stored in the body so your emotions may offer a message from a different experience, or from a much younger age. Remember: you don't have to act on anything.
4. NOTICE THE EMOTION PASS:	• When you have some information, you can let it go – you may want to shake your hands or rub them together and then ‘throw’ the emotion on the floor. • Within around 90 seconds, emotions shift and change and you will settle back into a peaceful state. • You may want to thank the emotion for the message – this can help to build a sense of usefulness for even difficult feelings.
AFTERCARE:	• Do you want to express something in some way? Do you need to communicate your needs? • By taking the time to name and experience your emotion, you will have a greater chance of experiencing the clarity and power your emotions offer. • This means how you respond, what you say and do before, during and after conflict comes from a place of peace. It means the experience is more likely to be about advocating for what matters to you.

SBCA Coaching Tool: Conflict styles

Conflict styles are a useful way to understand the way we experience and respond to conflict.

Most of us tend to have a default style that we employ in every conflict.

Helping clients to understand the range of options they have expands their resourcefulness in conflict.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Have a way of naming their experience of conflict.
- See the advantages and intelligence of a default style as well as the drawbacks and disadvantages.
- Begin to be more conscious in moments of conflict and make active choices about how to respond.
- Use the process of Experiments (Module Five!) in the context of conflict.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

The Self-belief Conflict Styles framework is adapted from the work of Thomas-Kilmann. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) is aimed at an organisational context, and I found their model quite unwieldy for clients with self-doubt who's conflicts tended to fall into only a couple of categories.

Diane Musho Hamilton includes a 'passive-aggressive' style which I have found helpful.

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

I've found that Clients quite like this process! It feels like a safe and curious way to start to lift the lid on conflict – just a discussion about the different styles can be hugely beneficial for clients who feel some overwhelm, discomfort or shame about the way they respond to conflict.

TOP TIPS:

- It can be helpful to look at the conflict styles of other people in their lives and see where the differences are and how the dynamics might play out.
- It can also spark conversations about their conflict 'biography'. You can use a kind of 'mini life-map' (Module Four) process to look at their experiences of conflict.

- Once you have uncovered the client's default style you can start to plan experiments for what an Accepting Conflict Style might look like.

COACHING QUESTIONS TO PLAY WITH CONFLICT STYLES

Remember each style has advantages and drawbacks, intelligence and limitations. The 'problem' we have with conflict, is that we tend to have a default, habitual way of managing *all* conflict.

Questions to reflect with clients on how they show up to conflict:

- Of the main conflict styles: Accommodating, Avoidant, Adversarial and Passive- Aggressive, which of these do you most identify with?
- Can you come up with an example recently of how you've recently responded to conflict this way?
- What about this style is working for you? What are the upsides? How is this style working for you?
- And what is limiting about your style? What are the downsides? When is your preferred style of conflict ineffective?
- Of the other conflict styles, what would you like to try? How would you respond to a particular conflict differently?
- What conflict styles did you witness in your family of origin?
- Is there a dynamic in the 'here and now' that you recognise from your family?

HEALTHY SELF CONFLICT STYLE: ACCEPTING

- When we accept conflict is inevitable, we accept it will create feelings that are uncomfortable, AND we accept that we have options and a range of potential ways to respond.
- An Accepting conflict style helps us to be accountable from our Healthy Self and access the strengths and intelligence of all the styles: Humour, Compassion, Assertion and Empathy.
- We also accept the benefits of conflict. Conflict can help us to know when an issue needs to be addressed, a boundary is being crossed, something you value is being diminished, or when you are outgrowing a relationship or another aspect of your life.
- Feeling resourced during conflict is about knowing we have a range of resources and tools at our disposal. This is empowering!

THE SELF-BELIEF CONFLICT STYLES FRAMEWORK:

CONFLICT STYLE	CHARACTERISTICS	INTELLIGENCE AND ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS AND DRAWBACKS
Accommodating	• Prone to being cooperative and attentive in relationships. • May have a hard time valuing your own point of view, standing up for yourself and your ideas. • May be hesitant to separate from others - err on the side of staying connected, diffusing tension, keeping others happy by deferring to the preferences of others.	• Particularly valued in a team or family dynamic - responding promptly to requests, helping implement other's initiatives, listening to the opinions of others – these are effective and necessary approaches. • Highly likely to value generosity and care for others. • Often create a positive atmosphere by looking out for others, being flexible and willing to adapt.	• May feel like you don't really know your own preferences, ideas and opinions. • Tendency to believe you are valued because you take care of other people. • May feel resentful when your contribution fails to be acknowledged or when someone else receives the credit. • Can feel bloody exhausted trying to everyone happy!
Avoidant	• May have an impulse to withdraw, walk away or otherwise disappear rather than face conflict. • Can be seen as 'wilful ignorance' (ignoring multiple infidelities, failing to notice your teenager is not at school	• Tend to have skills in diplomatically sidestepping issues or postponing issues until emotions are less fraught.	• May withdraw from relationships that contain a lot of difference. • Can hold back contributions in case you get feedback (which you

	again, zoning out instead of talking over a problem).	• Some conflicts will dissipate on their own if we allow them to. • Walking away can sometimes be the absolute right and best thing to do.	may tend to interpret as criticism). • May expend valuable energy on resisting or suppressing conflict. • Can tend to feel invisible, isolated, confused, or helpless as nothing seems to change - over time this can take a toll on self-worth.
Adversarial	• Competitive or combative nature - always up for a debate, a willingness to stand for your values, or defend a position. • May be quite energetic - conflict could feel like an opportunity to express your will.	• Catalysing and life-affirming - it takes courage to assert our opinions in the world! • Necessary skills for leadership include drawing boundaries, setting limits and preserving integrity. • Freeing to be able to say no and mean it. • Liberating to make decisions and choices that do not depend primarily on the happiness of others.	• Can put everyone else in a state of unease. • May be cut off from true communication because others won't risk arguments; may end up believing you have more support than you do. • Tends to shift the focus of any conflict to a power struggle. • Treating everyone as an adversary creates a sense of separation - may suffer from the consequences of anger. • Common for those with an Adversarial style to find it difficult to relax - when the conflict is over,

			can feel alone, isolated, a bit purposeless.
Passive-Aggressive (combination of Avoidant and Adversarial styles)	• When it doesn't feel safe to express anger, resentment or resistance, or request directly, it gets indirectly expressed. • Can be humorous and quite creative.	• Can be a safe way to retaliate if you're at the wrong end of a power dynamic. E.g.: you can ignore emails, turn in reports late, forget to arrange meetings for a boss who you believe demeans you.	• Because passive-aggressive behaviour is about being indirectly angry, over time this confusion eats away at trust.

SBCA Coaching Tool: Removing the sting of Judgement

If we feel judged in any way, our protective behaviours and survivor strategies will rise up as we attempt to take care of ourselves.

Clients are likely to hold back from taking any action they believe carries the risk of being judged by others.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Develop a greater capacity to be present to judgement.
- Able to receive it without taking responsibility for someone else's opinion.
- Feel resourced to frame it and respond in alignment with their Healthy Self.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

Reframing is a concept from Cognitive Coaching. I developed this process after working with so many clients who reported finding it difficult to find the words to respond to judgement – that often came from people they loved (partners, family members, friends or colleagues).

They often describe a feeling of understanding what the other party mean or what they believed they were feeling, but also knowing that this wasn't the client's intention. Reframing in this way, makes room for both.

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

- Enables the client to express their intentions, experience, opinion or preference without taking responsibility for the other person.
- Allows the other party to have their experience and understand our client's perspective.

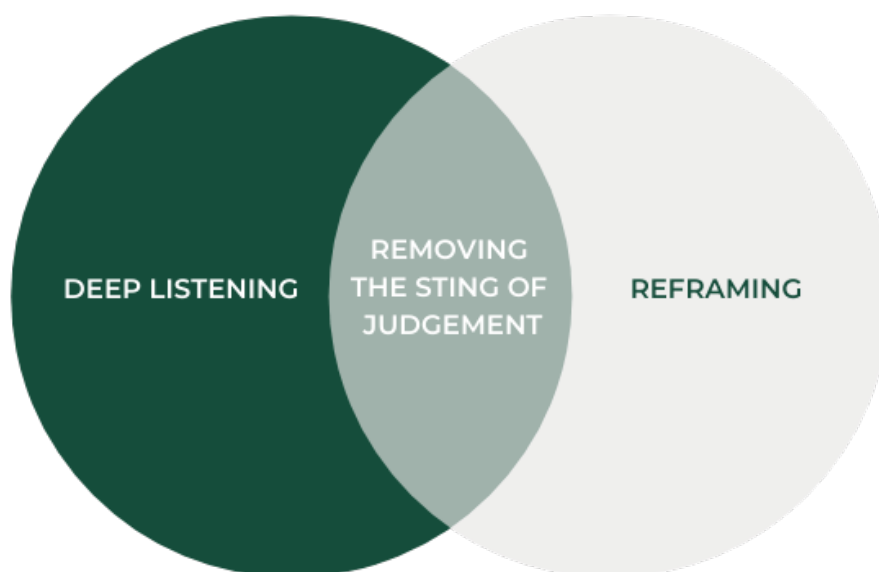
Top Tips:

- Many clients will at least initially, feel a little pressure to say the zippy, clear response (complete with mic drop). In reality, this is much messier – give acres of permission for this!

- The pause and breath after receiving the judgement, is the space for the client to register what's theirs and what belongs to the other party.
- This can be seconds, minutes, or days long – it is fine to say '*ok – I just need to think about what you've said*'. And return with '*can we talk about this some more, I've had a chance to think about what you said and here's my take...*'
- This is a great homework exercise for clients to take away - be open to occasions where a negative tone or judgement arises, either about you, about someone else, or about a situation. Find a way to offer a reframe that captures the meaning but drains out the negativity. Reflect on your experiences practicing this.

This is a practical process for helping the client to minimise the 'sting' of judgement, so they take care of themselves, remain in conversation and preserve the relationship.

There are two key parts to this process: deep listening and reframing:



DEEP LISTENING

It's very common for our clients with self-doubt, to interpret any and all feedback as judgement.

We interpret everything we hear. We make assumptions about what people mean and most of the time we aren't even listening to them! We can decide that we are being judged when someone offers feedback, when someone disagrees with us, or has a different opinion or preference, when someone expresses their own boundary.

Supporting our clients to listen deeply helps them to be aware of more than just the words they are hearing.

Deep Listening is about learning how to pay attention to another person's unspoken intention. It's the felt experience of what is between the words, what we sense. There are three levels of listening:

Moving above Level One requires EMPATHY:	This means listening to what the other person has to say, even if you do not agree with it. Can you meet the person where they are? Can you let go of expectations? Empathy builds trust so you can hear the other person.
Moving through Level Two requires listening for EMOTION:	This means paying attention to how the other person seems to be feeling. How do they seem to be feeling - what's unspoken? Maybe they are presenting as angry, but you sense there is fear or confusion here. Listening for emotion helps us to feel connected.
Moving to Level Three requires listening for MEANING:	This means listening to their intention - which is unlikely to be spoken, they may not even be conscious of this What is the meaning behind the words? What do you sense about their conflict style? Meaning helps you to know more about the person - to build connection, to have compassion. Remember this is not about agreement – it's a willingness to meet the other person where they are.

HOMEWORK PRACTICE FOR CLIENTS:

Focus on deep listening skills in your everyday life. Notice where you drop into level 2 and 3 listening:

- What do you learn about the other person?
- What do you learn about your relationship?
- What do you hear other than words?

REFRAMING JUDGEMENT

Reframing judgement is a deceptively simple two-step process!

This helps us demonstrate we have received the content of the message and we can consciously remove the sting of judgement. We do this to take care of ourselves, to stay in the conversation, or to preserve the relationship.

Reframing judgement is a choice - a resource we can decide to use:

- Reframing is not a negotiation, not a long explanation, not striving to fix anything, not promising anything. It's short and sweet.
- We hear the feedback, keep the meaning, and remove the sting.
- We offer it back as something that both parties can accept.
- Reframing is a tool that helps to establish we are receiving the meaning of the message, without diminishing ourselves.
- Nobody has to be wrong.
- This can be used in any context and is **most effective in relationships with high trust**.

HOW TO REFRAME JUDGEMENT:

RECEIVE IT

- Take a breath.
- Listen for empathy, emotion and meaning.

REFRAME IT

- Acknowledge what you heard.
- Strip out the negative judgement.

Example:

CONTEXT

- Ash and I are talking through decisions during a house renovation.
- Ash says: *'I feel confused by what you want, this is really frustrating. You aren't clear!'*

RECEIVING

- Receive it. Take a breath. Listen for empathy, emotion and meaning.
- **Empathy:** We make decisions very differently.
- **Emotion:** I believe he is frustrated.
- **Meaning:** We are both tired and we have to make a lot of decisions right now.

REFRAMING

- Acknowledge what you heard.
I can see why that is frustrating, I know we are both tired.
- Strip out the negative judgement.
I really enjoy talking out lots of different options, this is how I figure out what I like. I'm showing you my working.

Example:

CONTEXT

- Client recalls feedback from her Manager.
- Manager says: *You were quite abrupt at our team meeting; I was disappointed you didn't stay to congratulate Jenny before she goes on maternity leave.*

RECEIVING

- Receive it. Take a breath. Listen for empathy, emotion and meaning:
- *My manager is trying to manage a disparate team via Zoom and we are all worried about this project and now we are losing a team member. When they were all talking over one another, I left quickly to get to another meeting.*

REFRAMING

- Acknowledge what you heard:
I'm sorry I left quickly – I had another meeting straight afterwards and I felt really rushed. Zoom is quite difficult to communicate.
- Strip out the negative judgement:
Please know I've sent Jenny a personal message as I wanted to reflect rather than try to do this in front of everyone.

OTHER WAYS TO RESPOND TO JUDGEMENT:

Always remember reframing is a choice! If trust is low or if you don't know the person very well, you can ask for clarification, set a boundary or just acknowledge what they've said.

Here are ten ways to respond to judgement:

1. Can you say more about that?
2. What do you mean?
3. What is it you want to have happen here?
4. I prefer to look at the issue this way.
5. I'm happy with how I'm handling the matter.
6. It works for me to use this approach.
7. It's important to me that I take care of this my own way.
8. I appreciate your perspective.
9. I hear you.
10. Your opinion is clear.

What to say when the judgemental feedback has some truth in it:

1. That's quite hard for me to hear but I understand where you're coming from.
2. I'd like to take some time to think about what you've said.
3. I appreciate your directness.
4. That really stings to hear, and I know there is some truth in it for me to consider.
5. How can I approach this in a better way?

SBCA Coaching Tool: Transmute the shame of Criticism

We all have a sense of how we want other people to see us. We tend to have only our best qualities on display most of the time. And we all have qualities that we wish we didn't have – the parts we tend to keep in check and hide from others.

When we are criticised, someone says something about us that feels uncomfortable. Usually, they are attributing some quality to us that we don't want to be associated with. Sometimes this IS nothing to do with us – it's completely their opinion and they may not even know us (strangers on the internet). We can ignore it, laugh it off or just acknowledge that the person isn't safe and decide to let it go.

When we feel shame from being criticised, its often because someone has attributed a quality to us, that is in 'polarity' to our self-concept - the quality attributed to us doesn't fit with how we see ourselves or how we want to be seen by others.

To transmute the shame of criticism, we need to 'integrate the polarity'. This just means we can find a way to claim the quality - to accept that we are both the qualities we can claim and the ones we resist.

It is important to remember that all qualities are neutral!

When we actively create more wholeness, there is no polarity for people to criticise - just parts of us.

There are two parts to this process: Identifying Polarities and Mapping Criticism.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Learn how to see qualities as neutral!
- Develop an expanded self-concept.
- Learn how to forgive and claim the shadowy parts of us.
- Claiming all the qualities means we never have to feel shame at being criticised.
- Boundaries become clearer, self-trust and self-worth are enhanced.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

The concept of polarities was first developed by Jung.

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

This is an incredibly liberating process - with practice you see that you can never be criticised without your permission.

TOP TIPS:

- Take this slow – many clients find this developmentally challenging because it is about letting go of other people's opinions of us and allowing ourselves to lean into qualities that we may feel deeply resistant to.
- Most clients seem to understand this – even intellectually at first. For a lot of people this will be an entirely new concept!

IDENTIFYING YOUR POLARITIES

Polarities represent the qualities that we claim, and those we reject. Our polarities are formed as we develop our sense of self, our personal identity.

- If you think of yourself as meticulous and exacting, then you won't identify with being slap-dash.
- If you pride yourself on having a rebellious streak, you are unlikely to appear to yourself or others as conforming.
- If you own your lack of pretension, you probably won't identify with being the centre of attention - that's 'Not Me'.
- **It's likely (and human!) that you judge others for having the qualities that you've decided are 'not me'.**
- Our polarities change and evolve over time.
- Letting go of some identity markers can feel like a liberation, for others it can feel like a small 'death'.
- **Remember: all qualities are neutral - we can decide to identify qualities as 'Is Me' or is 'Not Me'.**

To identify your polarities:

- Go through the list and tick every quality that feels like it IS you (attached as separate document).
- Then review the polarity qualities - if someone attributed this to you would it be a criticism? Do you feel any resistance to or shame around the polarity quality?
- You'll end up with a list of polarity qualities you can use to Map Criticism.

MAPPING CRITICISM

- Writing the criticism down helps us to see the things we haven't wanted to look at.
- If there is a quality that we have fixed as 'Not Me' it's in shadow. Because it's so associated to 'Not Me' we feel shame, embarrassment if someone attributes this quality to us.
- As you allow yourself to see that ***you possess all qualities*** - all four quadrants are true aspects of you - you can diffuse the criticism by owning what is true.
- When a quality no longer has the power over us we can work with it, identify with it, allow our capacity to be with it, expand into it. This means we include more into our self-identity - we expand into difference.
- When we integrate 'Not Me' qualities, we release the energy that we are using to keep them out of awareness.
- As we begin to expand into owning these qualities, accept that they exist in us, we are less likely to judge qualities in other people.
- This process diffuses the sense of being in conflict because there is nothing to defend.
- When we are no longer divided against ourselves and others, we are available for deeper connections with ourselves and others.

EXAMPLE OF CRITICISM MAP (FROM SAS)

Recognise when we are in polarity | **Reframe** to play with the spectrum of Polarities | **Reclaim** the different aspects of the quality

1 IDENTIFY THE CRITICISM. What is the 'Not Me' quality that we feel shame or resistance around? <i>'Selfish'. I feel resentful of people that challenge me for taking care of myself.</i>	2 FIND THE POSITIVE REFRAME. Keep the meaning, diffuse the negativity - what is the upside of this quality you are feeling criticised about? <i>Selfish also means I value my own time, prioritise myself and my needs.</i>
3 FIND THE DOWNSIDE OF THE REFRAME. Broadening the context, the spectrum of polarity - what is unhelpful or undesirable about the positive reframe? <i>Can feel disconnected from people I care about. Sometimes lonely.</i>	4 FIND THE UPSIDE OF THE CRITICISM. Revisiting the original quality, what aspects of this can be positive - what can you own about it? <i>This is about preserving my energy - sometimes to give more or to reconnect with people. Often my energy is just for me. That's not a bad thing.</i>
5 WHAT DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE MOST? Review the quadrants and get curious about where are you in preference? <i>4 - the upside of the criticism - selfish feels quite neutral to me when I thicken the story about selfish.</i>	6 WHAT DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE LEAST? Review the quadrants and get curious about where you feel the most resistance then find an example of how this IS true for you? <i>3 - the downside of the reframe - I can take care of my own needs without it being about anyone else.</i>

Notice if identifying with all quadrants changes your relationship to the criticism or to the other person.

EXPANDING INTO WHOLENESS

To transmute the shame of criticism, we need to integrate the polarity. This just means we can find a way to claim it - to accept that we are *both* the qualities we are happy to have, and those we resist.

Instead of splitting ourselves into 'Is Me and Not Me', we allow for an internal integration.

We open up our unconscious - we bring our stuff out of the basement and have more stuff in our house - there are more parts of us that we can own.

We can actively create more wholeness which means there is no polarity for people to criticise - just parts of us.

HOMEWORK FOR CLIENTS:

Invite them to complete at least three criticism maps between sessions:

- Look for opportunities in interactions with others (at home, work, online) where shame is present for them. Be on the lookout for self-directed criticisms (when you criticise yourself).
- If you don't experience a criticism, search the polarities list and find qualities that bring up shame or resistance to explore.
- Complete your map. Try to identify with all four quadrants. What do you identify with the most? The least?
- Notice if identifying with all quadrants changes your relationship to the criticism or to the other person.

SBCA Coaching Tool: Compassionate Confrontation

Confrontation is often the aspect of conflict that most of us feel the least equipped for, but **confrontation is simply an *intentional conversation to address conflict*.**

There are good reasons why confrontation feels so sticky:

- few of us have seen this modelled well
- it can feel like a lot is at stake
- we fear we might break or lose the relationship
- we understandably experience a stress response (fight, flight, freeze, tend + befriend) and become absorbed with managing our stress
- we don't know what to say
- we don't want to hurt the other person

Consequently, we tend to revert to our default conflict styles, we project our shadows onto each other, we become engaged in long-standing feuds, we separate because we cannot hold the difference between us.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Know how to prepare for a confrontational conversation and what to say during it.
- Practice staying in your own body and owning your experience.
- This is another type of experiment – it's a way to see what happens when you decide to try a different way.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

This process is adapted from the Gottman's work on conflict.

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

- Putting compassion at the heart of confrontation creates a way for both parties to generate a mutual understanding of the issue.
- This module is designed to help clients become more at ease in conflict - this doesn't mean it will always feel super comfortable - but starting from compassion, knowing what to say (and why!) can help to feel resourced.

TOP TIPS:

- Planning this with a client in session will help them to feel prepared.
- Encourage them to start with low-risk contexts – relationships where there is high trust and room for messiness.

There are three parts to a Compassionate Confrontation:

- Preparing - how to get super clear for yourself and to feel ready
- Creating the conditions - how to invite someone to a confrontation
- Accountable Language - what to say during the confrontation

STEP ONE – PREPARING FOR COMPASSIONATE CONFRONTATION

These four questions are designed as a reflection process to support a client to get really clear about their intentions for a confrontation. They can do this as homework or you can lead them through this in a session.

WHAT TO DO	HOW TO DO IT	WHY THIS MATTERS
1. Acknowledge: What happened that I didn't want to happen?	- Was this a judgement, criticism, a sense of being disrespected, was a boundary crossed, a 'not me' quality attributed to you, was something you value dismissed in some way? Did you disagree with someone but it felt like your views were not acknowledged? Is there a behaviour you want this person to change? - Something has happened that you didn't want to happen - what is it?	- It's very important to acknowledge this for yourself! - Get it out on paper so you can decide what is at the heart of the issue. - This helps to build trust in yourself, it's also incredibly cathartic to have a rant on paper :)
2. Protect and Restore: What needs to be protected? What needs to be restored?	- What right needs to be protected? My right to safety, respect, to be heard, my right to resources (money, time, property), my right to... - And what needs to be restored? Usually something needs to be either acknowledged or acted on.	- At the core of the dispute there will usually be something that you want - something that you want to protect, or something that you need restored. - Getting clear on this helps you to be 'clean and clear' in communicating this to the other person.
3. Tend to Past Hurts: Has anything like this happened before? (...cont. on next page).	If you are having a difficult response to a conflict, it may be that this is triggering an older, unresolved situation.	Identifying that this is a reoccurring issue can be so helpful because you can heal more than one instance of this conflict.

WHAT TO DO	HOW TO DO IT	WHY THIS MATTERS
When do I remember feeling like this in the past?	• This might be something that keeps occurring in this relationship (e.g.: your mother-in-law dismisses your instructions for how to parent the kids, a colleague keeps interrupting and talking over you and other team members in meetings). • It may also be that your response is related to a younger version of you. • You can work with releasing these unresolved feelings by taking care of your younger self - the key here is step 2: What needed to be protected? What needed to be restored?	
4. Release Unresolved Emotions: What needs to be felt? What actions needs to be taken?	• What needs to be felt? The more you can feel into emotions before you confront the other person, the less likely they will derail you in the conversation. • And what action needs to be taken? You may want to DO something - particularly if the confrontation is related to your younger self. Ideas: write letters you are not going to send (to your younger self, to others). Release your letters to fire, a body of water, burying in the earth is a way of letting something bigger and more powerful than you hold this for you.	• Feeling your way through is a massive act of self-compassion. Now you are ready to communicate with the other person :)

STEP TWO – CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR COMPASSIONATE CONFRONTATION

It's important to avoid jumping into what might be a difficult conversation.

Show yourself and the other person compassion, by creating the conditions for this to go well.

There are Practical Conditions and Power Dynamics to consider for creating emotional and psychological safety.

Practical Conditions:

- Meet in a safe place somewhere you won't be interrupted.
- With adequate time for full discussion.
- Without other people or children around.
- Not right before going to bed, and
- Not when either of you is exhausted, hungry or have been drinking.

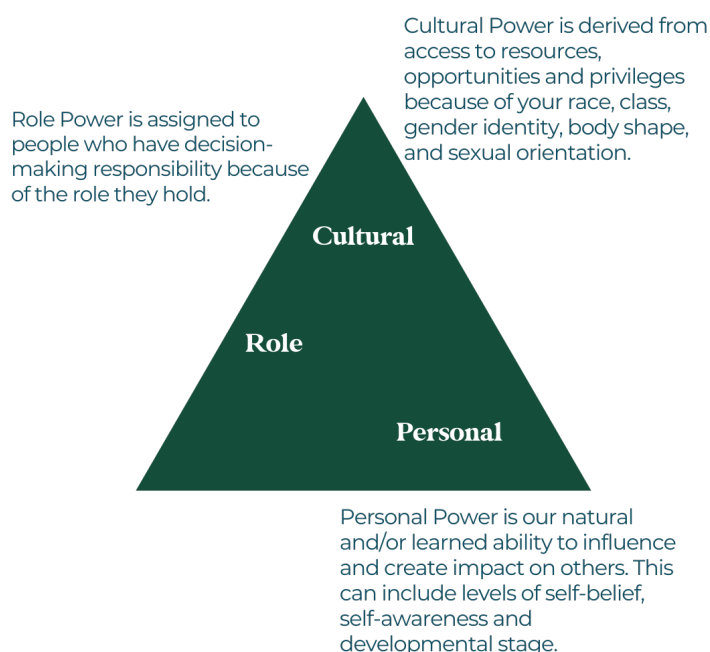
Power Dynamics:

Each person brings their respective history, culture, privilege, identities and conditioning to a relationship. These elements create power dynamics.

Power is often unconscious but always present.

Being aware of these dynamics can help us to make choices within the confrontation that are aligned with our values.

Hawkins' Power Triangle (2012) is a helpful reference:



A script for inviting the person to talk:

Sometimes our clients just don't know what to say!

It can be so helpful to offer a script – this can be adapted for whomever the confrontation is with - a loved one, colleague, mother:

- *Hey I have been thinking about(this issue/that conversation/how we left things)*
- *and I feel....*
- *I would really like to talk about this with you more, because I care about you and the issue.*
- *Can we arrange a time to chat?*
- *Let's give ourselves an hour and meet here....*
- *When would be good for you?*
- *I'm so glad we are going to talk. Thank you.*

Consider the recipient and how they might like to receive this invitation (by text, email, WhatsApp, or in person, over the phone).

STEP THREE – USING ACCOUNTABLE LANGUAGE IN A COMPASSIONATE CONFRONTATION

Setting the intentions and creating the conditions can help client's feel prepared and they can jump straight to this part.

Accountable Language is an approach designed especially for folks with self-doubt to:

- Be accountable for what is yours.
- Articulate your feelings, wants, needs.
- Remain compassionate to yourself.
- Treat the other person with compassion (deep listening skills are involved!)
- Stay grounded and present to this conflict, here and now.
- Plug 'leaky conflict containers' (when a small conflict escalates to try and address every time this has happened before).
- Have the best chance of being heard, understood.
- Have your needs met and therefore retain the relationship.

Accountable Language is a helpful, simple, intentional script for what to say:

When you...

I feel....

because...

I would like....

because...

What do you think?

This framework helps you to communicate your feelings, wants and needs to the other person.

It is not about blame. Or about attaching to a particular outcome.

You are minimising the conditions for the other person to feel defensive and **maximising the conditions for connection.**

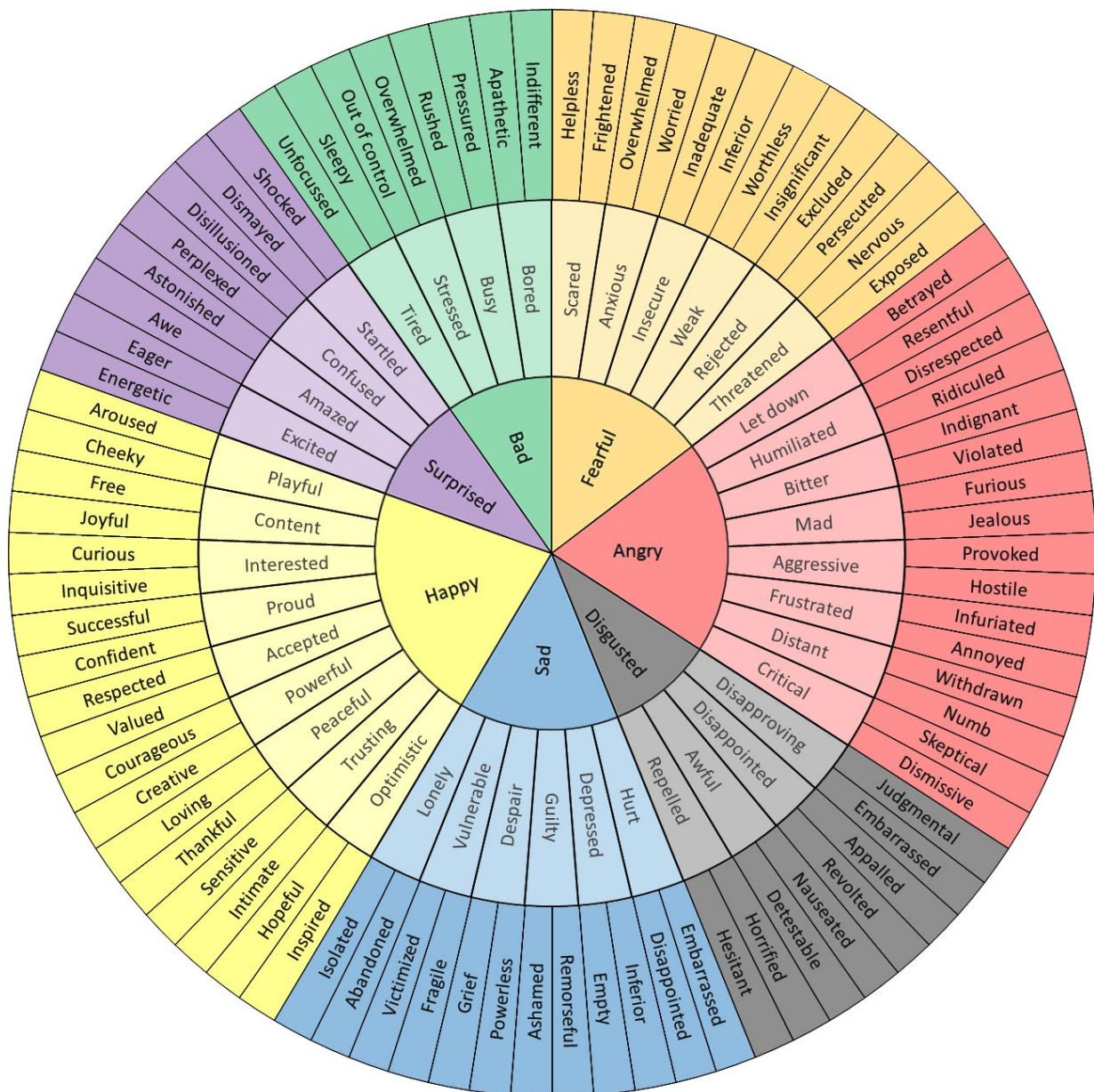
Example:

- **When you** rearranged our 1:1 meeting for the second time last Tuesday at 4pm when we were due to meet at 4:30,
- **I felt** disrespected and hurt.
- **I would like** you to prioritise our scheduled 1:1 meetings
- **because** this helps me know my work is valued.
- **What do you think?**

Example:

- **When you** decided to go downstairs and play video games last night instead of coming to bed,
- **I felt** sad because I hadn't seen you all week.
- **I would like** us to agree to spend uninterrupted time together in the evenings to share how our weeks are going
- **because** this helps me feel close to you.
- **What do you think?**

Appendix A: The Feelings Wheel



The Feelings Wheel created by Dr. Gloria Willcox

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