

Hey folks, so glad you're with us today. We are talking about seven steps to tackle a tough conversation, a difficult conversation but before we get into that I want to tell you about, if you've not heard about our upcoming Next Level Leadership Live Event then you got to check this out.

This is our big event that we've been doing for the last couple of years but it's been private, we've only opened it up to a handful of people, we've kept it to all of our coaching clients, our Mastermind, folks that come through and do our strap plan stuff and we've now opened that up to you. Whenever we open it up to the handful it was gone, so now we've got it open to you. The extreme early bird, this is no joke, these prices end in one week. Make sure you jump on that. Go to chrislocurto.com, click live events or click the big banner or whatever and get all the information. There's a ton of information of things that we're going to be teaching on.

Oh by the way, my buddy and mentor Rabbi Lapin is going to be speaking as well, so he's going to be speaking in the main session and then we are doing a VIP Experience. This is so cool, it's so fun, all your food's taken of during that process but we also have three extra sessions that we are doing. One of those is going to be a live Q&A with me where you can get your pressing questions answered right there. The next one's going to be a Mastermind with peers, which if you've not experienced this it's crazy powerful. Then the last one is going to be Rabbi Lapin's going to teach a lesson and do another special lesson just for the folks in the VIP Experience, all of this is just for the VIP Experience, I'm talking about the VIP Experience, duh.

He's going to teach a lesson and do a live Q&A during that process as well, so do not miss out on that. We've already had phenomenal quotes from people that are so excited about getting their tickets and coming to the event and we cannot wait, thank you guys. Those of you that have shared that and shared your excitement for others to see we really appreciate that. That means a lot.

What I'm talking about today is a piece of one of the lessons that I will be teaching at the live event. Again, this is three days of incredible content, of fun. Did I mention that we're having fun? I didn't think I mentioned that. We've got a great gala that's going to happen on the first night where it is getting together with me, with my team, with like minded individuals, the greatest thing we get from our clients that come in and do these events with us and keep in mind we've been doing this for years with our clients that it's been closed down to only them. They always talk about how amazing it is to come in and be with like minded individuals because you are spending time doing the thing you do and most of the people around you don't understand what you're going through, the roads you're walking down, you try and explain it, it just doesn't work.

When you come together with folks that are experiencing the same thing as you, it is so powerful and freeing. That's what draws them back every single time. Anyways, we're going to have a lot of fun. One of the lessons that I'm going to be teaching on is called

tough conversations because this is something that I end up doing a lot of in the coaching that we do, in the teaching that we do, is working with leaders and entrepreneurs on how to have the difficult conversations. How to have the tough conversations because who taught you how to do it? Who taught you how to sit down and have a conversation with somebody who was just totally screwing up? Who taught you to sit down with a vendor that doesn't realize that you are the customer? Who taught you how to sit down and have a difficult conversation with somebody who is the opposite personality style that you are? Maybe you might be struggling because it's a big conflict for you and you don't want to do it in the first place.

The thing is is that we've all been taught the same way. For me I've had to figure this stuff out, how to solve these things, how to understand different personality styles, different situations. What happens when somebody's trying to control and manipulate? What happens when somebody feels attacked? All that stuff is what I help people with on a daily basis, this is what we do, this is how we help businesses grow and explode and how to help teams become congruent and productive and all of that kind of fun stuff.

The stuff I'm going to tell you today is just a little bit of this that you can put into practice this week. The stuff I'm going to talk about you can go and do right now. You have to actually listen to the show first. After the show you can go and start putting this into place because if I could see your hands raised in the air and I ask the question how many of you need to have a tough conversation right now I bet probably 3/4 of you would have to raise your hand. You know that there is somebody that you've got to go have a tough conversation with. I cannot give you the huge lesson that I'm going to be teaching at the event, but I will give you a piece of this that you can act upon right now.

Before, the first thing you have to realize, before you can call a team member out for something that they've done wrong you should always, always, always ask yourself first am I the problem. There are going to be so many situations that happen and for me I'm the guy who teaches people how to communicate better. I'm the guy who helps people to just take their communication to an incredible level inside of their business. I'm the guy who helps them to see communication is stinking, it's bad, it's not good, it's causing fear, it's causing people to do half of their productivity. I'm that guy and I'm the same guy who when I'm running 90 to nothing might possibly, maybe leave a detail or two out. It is possible that I might leave a little bit of information out and when I do, guess what? It's going to come back on me and so I have to realize that's the first place I always start.

If something's going wrong, if something's not being done, if something is coming out a way that I don't want it to, no matter what it is, if I'm dealing with a vendor, if I'm dealing with a team member, if I'm dealing with anybody it doesn't matter, the first thing I start to really roll back in my head and start thinking through is did I do something wrong here? Did I not communicate clearly? Did I share the wrong information? Is there anything in this, how did I do this, how did I process, how did I speak whatever the direction was, how did I do this? Did I hold something back or did I give the wrong impression or whatever it is and as I do that, when you start with you it's

an amazing process because you actually start to find some of the things that you screwed up on.

You actually find some of the things that you can turn to that team member and if it's you you can go let's shut this whole thing down right now, I screwed up, I messed up, I did not help you, I did not make you successful in this process, I did not delegate this correctly to you, I gave you direction on something and I did it badly, I will do that every single time. Then what I will do if that is what has happened I will take personal responsibility, I will take personal responsibility. If I've discovered that I am the one who has done something wrong the first thing I do is I say well I'm so sorry, I screwed that up, that's me. That is on me, I did not explain that clearly or hey, I did tell you this over here and I am now changing my mind and I'm going this direction.

By the way, for those of you that work with a lot of very high Cs that's a very important thing because they will remember ... Sometimes they will remember exactly the thing that you said and you're now asking for something else and it's not what they knew or it's not the direction they went in. I will take that responsibility. I told you this and it was wrong, and so now I'm going in this direction. I want you to know that is my fault, you've done a great job with whatever you're doing but here's what I need you to do now. When you do that, when you take personal responsibility what you end up doing is you end up showing your team member that you're not just out to punish them, you're not just out to call them out, you're not just out to fly off the handle on something and make them be the bad person. You're not just out to be the bad person yourself and yell at someone.

Instead, you show them that you realize you screwed up. What does that do for a team of people? It causes them to have more respect for you. It causes them to see that you are willing to treat them with dignity. It causes them to see that you care about them by taking personal responsibility. Why do I say that? Because they've worked for people who do not take personal responsibility and all they do is blame everything on their team. When you do that not only do you cause them to feel like you're treating them with dignity and that you're not out to just beat them over the head, but it also causes them to feel more loyal to you. That allows them to take responsibility when they screw up.

Here's an amazing thing that happens. When leadership does not take responsibility and all they do is push blame out to team members, I can't stand that, one thing if you've ever worked for me and the people that have worked for me that are listening to this will agree I can't stand the blame game, I hate the blame game. Let's solve problems, but there are so many leaders out there that that's all they care about doing is pushing blame out to people that what happens is the team members start to do the same thing. They start to fight back with blame or they start to fight back with excuses or they start to fill in the blank, whatever it is.

When you take personal responsibility and you say hey, that was me, I screwed that up, I'm the one who's bad out there, then it allows them to do the same thing in the future. It allows them to go okay, he's not about ripping my head off if I did something wrong,

so I feel like I can be a little bit more vulnerable with him, I can share that I've screwed something up, I can do that and it allows the team to really grow together in a very strong way. Now we're not looking to see who's going to stab us in the back next time. That's the first couple of things.

Number three, always, always, always try hard to avoid jumping to conclusions. Always do the best you can, and I'm speaking to a lot of you high Ds out there, always do the best you can to avoid jumping to conclusions. Man I can tell you I've worked for many people in my life, I have had many a leader and if there is one thing that absolutely drives me nuts is when a leader comes into a situation and starts telling you everything you did wrong and starts blaming you for everything that's going on and starts just ripping and going nuts and all that kind of crap. I can't tell you how many times I've looked at a leader and gone do you want to ask a question?

The ones that are at least mature enough will go okay, I am so sorry, you're right, I really should have asked, I'm so sorry, I just assumed this. Is this even what's happening? No it's not, this and this and this. Okay, all right, but here's what normally happens and for a lot of you out there that struggle with having tough conversations, that struggle with having difficult conversations, your natural tendency is to come in and start telling everybody what's wrong. Start telling everybody who's fault it is and who's done what wrong and all that kind of crap and we're not going to stand for this. Well guess what? Immediately it does work for you because it immediately puts everybody on the defensive and shuts a bunch of people down. They just won't even talk.

The problem is you haven't solved anything. Instead you have actually distanced yourself from your own team, you've put a culture in place, you're forcing culture which is another thing that I'm going to be teaching you about at this event. You forced a culture of I don't really care what happened and I really don't care what your opinion is, I'm just going to tell you what has happened and tell you what you need to do about it. That is a terrible way to lead folks, terrible way. As much as you possibly can, avoid jumping to conclusions. What does that lead you to?

Number four, gain perspective on the situation, the person and yourself first. If you will do this it will save you a ton of lost time and confusion. If you will just step into the situation and gain perspective, find out what happened, find out from the person, find out about yourself, gain that perspective as fast as you can. I've got a client of mine who said I had a discussion the other day, a tough discussion the other day and I've got to tell you, a year ago, before starting coaching with you the way that I would have handled the situation is I would have ignored it completely or I would have just become high D dominant and shut these people down and just overpowered the situation.

He said since I've been working with you, instead of doing that because this was a difficult and tough conversation that he had to have, this wasn't a normal one. He said instead what I did was I gained perspective and I started asking a bunch of questions. Then on top of that I helped them to see. That's another step here in just a minute. I helped them to see the decisions that they were making. I helped them to see what they had done. He said it was amazing and a thing of beauty to watch, literally, those were

his words. It was amazing and a thing of beauty to watch because it wasn't what it used to be which is just difficult, angry, doesn't solve stuff, separates all that kind of crap. Folks, I'm telling you, this absolutely works, don't keep doing it the way you used to do it. Instead gain as much perspective as you possibly can.

Number five, once you are positive you have as much perspective as you can obtain, gain even more by asking even more questions. Now these are different ones. Once you've asked a ton, once you've gotten a bunch and you actually feel like you know what's going on then go even a little step further. Now some of you are sitting out there going oh come on Chris, really? This is the stuff that I've been teaching businesses to do for over a decade, come on, it works because I've been doing it for a longer time than that. Here's what you do, you start asking a question like help me to understand this. Somebody has messed up, let me say that somebody has been showing up late everyday. If somebody keeps showing up late every single day find out why. Yes they're supposed to show up on time, yes you are absolutely right, you've seen them show up late, all that kind of stuff, but when you ask the questions of help me to understand what's going on that's causing you to be late then what you're doing is you're again showing the person, unless you're just asking it like a smart Alec.

You're showing the person that you actually care and you want to get more discovery. You want to understand even better. You're treating them with dignity in the moment and now they have to actually answer you. They can't just come up with any regular old excuse. Help me to understand why you're late again. Well I mean just there's traffic. Okay, and it's been traffic every time you've been late? Yes, okay help me to understand why you haven't chosen to leave earlier. I don't want to get here and have to sit here for 15 minutes. Okay, so help me to understand this. You would rather show up late and get in trouble for showing up late then show up 15 minutes early? That right there will stun your team member because they will realize A, you're correct, but B, they will realize oh my gosh, I just said that that's the choice I'm making. Wow, that sounds really stupid now that I'm hearing it in my own head. I guess that is the choice I'm making.

It allows them to go you know what? That's actually really ridiculous. You're right, I don't need to be doing that, that's a bad idea, I'm going to change that, I'm going to be leaving earlier. Even when you know that you're right and you know that you have a situation where you can really beat them over the head which is stupid, don't do that, but you could if you chose to, don't. Instead get just a little bit more, hear from them, let them explain it from their side by you trying to understand what it is they're doing.

Next thing, number six, guide your team member to self-discovery. Now this is one of the most crucial parts of any tough conversation. Once you're there, once you've done all of the steps beforehand help your team and this is what my client was talking about and that I shared with you in that testimony. Help your team member or members to see what their choices have been. If we take the situation of showing up late, so you've chosen to show up late because of traffic although you knew that there is traffic on your way to work and it's not just the one time, it's been multiple times. Help me to understand why you're choosing to show up late and that's where the answer comes in of well I don't want to show up early. You would rather choose to be in trouble? No, no,

no that's, oh my gosh, huh and that quote self-discovery, you're guiding them to it.

Because you're not telling them what they're doing, because you're not setting their reality, you're doing this because of this. You did this because of this situation. You did whatever, which so many bad leaders do, constantly telling team members what they're thinking, what they're doing, all that kind of junk. Instead because you've guided and because you've asked a lot of questions, because you've gained perspective, because you've treated them with dignity, because you've taken personal responsibility if it was your situation, because you've done all those things you can now guide them to their own self-discovery. Oh my gosh I'm making bad choices. Yes, you're making choices that actually go against what we do. You're making choices that are going to lead to you being in trouble, getting reprimanded, possibly something permanent in your file or possibly loss of job.

Here's the deal, as long as you understand you're choosing to do that, I can't do anything about that, that's up to you. If you continue I can promise you I will choose to do something about it myself. Guide them to self-discovery and what you might find out is, they were completely unclear that it was their fault. Now again, this isn't a place for you to go see, it's you, you're screwing up, all that kind of junk. It's not about the blame, it's about understanding, it's about recognizing.

Number seven, by asking the team member to clarify the situation you A, treat them with dignity and B, show them that you are more concerned with the discovery than them being in trouble. Again, just like I talked about a little bit earlier. You're doing this again, by helping them to get to clarity, by helping them get to that place of understanding from their side. Not just you taking the person, earlier it was you taking personal responsibility, now it's helping them to get to that place where they can, they have the option to take personal responsibility. By doing it this way you are treating them with dignity and you're showing them that you're more concerned about the discovery and solving problems than blaming.

Those are seven things that you can do right now. That's just a little bit of what I'm going to be teaching you at the Next Level Leadership Live Event. That is something you can put in place right now and many of you have some people you need to sit down and talk with. You have some people that you need to have this conversation with, so sit down, go through these seven steps in your mind, understand the process as best as you possibly can and then sit down and remember, this is a child of God in front of you. This is a human being, treat them with dignity. If they're wrong then you have options. If they've screwed up then you have options. There are things that you can do, you are the leader. You can take care of the situation even if that means they've done something so horrible that you got to let them go.

Now, that's another conversation for another time, so folks there you go. Put these things in place, that's actionable for you right now. Do not forget to go to chrislocurto.com and register for the Next Level Leadership Live Event. You do not want to miss out on this and again, you do not want to miss out on the VIP Experience which is going to be so cool, so fun and do not miss out on the extreme early bird pricing. Yes,

it is the extreme early bird pricing. It ends in one week, it ends in one week so make sure that you get to the site right now, get your tickets, get to the event. I cannot wait to see you May 2nd through the 4th. As always, take this information, change your leadership, change your business, change your life, change your team's life and join us on the next episode.