



Maximize Your Influence

*Resolving difficult conversations
& emotionally heated issues -
without becoming drained*

By Michael Licenblat



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About the Author: Michael Licenblat

In the world of business, sales and education, no matter how confident, competent or experienced you are – **pressure is a part of every process**. How well you handle those challenges, changes, and problems will often determine how successful you are going to be.

Michael Licenblat is a **resilience expert** who teaches people how to **achieve more in high-pressure environments** by bouncing back from pressures, setbacks, and rejections.

Born into a family of entrepreneurial parents, Michael grew up working inside the numerous family businesses and quickly learnt that success often came to those who can ride the bumps, get up, and keep going.



Drawing on his background in Psychology, Shiatsu therapy, and over 25 years of Martial Arts experience, Michael has helped countless companies become '*pressure proof*' and learn how to bounce back from the setbacks and challenges so they can outperform their competition.

In Michael's high energy, interactive and practical presentations, he demystifies what people need to do to become resilient to pressure in today's business world, and keep a clear head when dealing with difficult, demanding and stressful situations – without burning yourself out.

Michael is the author of the book '*Pressure Proof – how to thrive in times of disruption, change and pressure*'. His articles are regularly published in several journals, and he has delivered presentations to organizations such as Toyota, REIV, Smartline Mortgage Group, MLC Insurance, St George, Coles Myer Ltd., Pitcher Partners, SEEK, Caterpillar, Maurice Blackburn, Maunsell, Salesforce, and Victorian Parliament.



Making Impact and Having Influence

Whilst efficient productivity, staff engagement and time effectiveness are core to teams being able to achieve their outcomes, a considerable amount of time and emotional energy is consumed in resolving conflicts, dealing with differences in personalities and work ethics, handling issues with customers, or maintaining cohesiveness in your team.

These interactions and behaviours can distract team members away from their core duties, disrupt the work flow of a team, negatively impact client interactions and experiences, undermine their respect and self confidence, and can also result in team members becoming emotionally charged or withdrawn.

Queensland Government research shows over 65% of employee performance problems are the result of strained relationships rather than a lack of skill or motivation [1], and that the average employee spends 2.8 hours per week dealing with conflict [2].

Further more, 25% of employees said that ‘avoiding conflict led to sickness or absence from work’. Nearly 10% of people found that workplace conflict led to project failure and more than 30% of people said that conflict resulted in someone leaving the company, either through firing or quitting. [2]

We know that there will be times when team members will need to deal with people who disagree with their ideas, approach an emotionally heated client about an issue with a project, deal with negative feedback, resolve conflicts, respond to strong opinions, or manage intense or non-conductive behaviour.

Whilst these are necessary conversations, they can be stressful, especially if people are unsure how to open the conversation, present the issue, keep the issue on track, and stay calm and in control, all without making the person feel defensive or excessively emotional.

Without these skills, team members can feel emotionally pent up and either ‘fly off the handle’, putting more anger and frustration in their interactions for staff or clients, or the opposite, where they withdraw, hold onto tension, and become prone to depression. Issues are increasingly left unresolved, or continually hand-balled to the manager to handle.

A team member’s ability to get people onto the same page will positively influence their client and colleague relationships, streamline client management, enhance personal engagement, improve team cohesiveness, reduce sick leave and absenteeism, and increase personal morale, and career longevity.

Where are you taking the conversation?

There is an old saying that ‘there is more than one way to cook an egg’. In the same context, there is more than one way to have impact and influence in a conversation.

The ideal interaction is one that achieves your outcome, and provides a pleasant experience. We want to use these interactions to empower team members to regain control, understand the anatomy of conversational dynamic, and create positive influence – in a streamlined, natural, and effortless manner.

For this conversation to be effective, the interaction needs to feel natural, and not a contrived effort towards effective listening, nor is it a series of over rehearsed scripts, or a forced code of behaviors and alternatives to expressing anger.

As we are creatures of habit, we sometimes default to our most ingrained habits of behavior that can blind-sight us to better pathways of handling these interactions. Sometimes, to achieve a new outcome requires a fresh viewpoint, a change in tact, a different intention, or greater self-awareness.

We have identified 4 conversational modes that are used to achieve outcomes. Each conversation has a style that is directed by intention and personal communication bias. Whilst each conversational style can achieve an outcome, they can vary in how effectively you reach a favorable outcome for both parties, and how harmonious the interaction experience will be.

To get people on the same page, however, we are aiming, wherever possible, to achieve a conversation that reaches a good outcome along with a positive experience. The 4 conversational styles are *Resistance*, *Compliance*, *Compromise*, and *Alignment*.

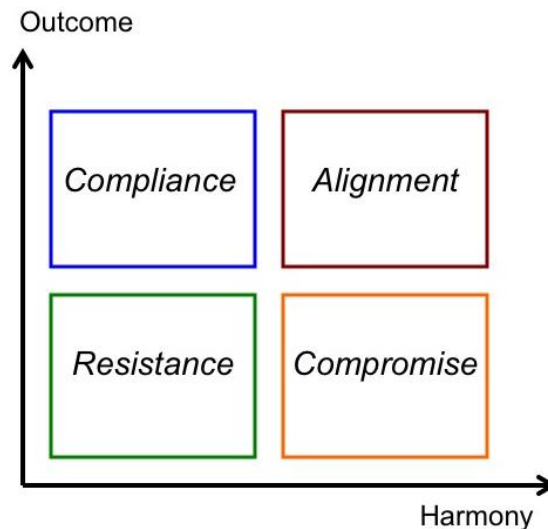


Figure 1.1: Conversational Styles



RESISTANCE *'I'm not budging'*

The **resistance conversation** is like a tug of war. It is a battle of wills where neither party wants to give up anything and is often won by the person who is willing to dig their heels in the longest. It is the hardest, and most tiring, way to influence an outcome.

Like the Battle of Verdun (which lasted for 303 days and became the longest, and one of the most costly, battles of the First World War), a resistance conversation can be drawn out, is slow to progress, feels adversarial, and is exhausting.

Driven by ego, and fuelled by the need to win, a resistance conversation needs a stubborn commitment to the outcome. Like a Mexican standoff, you only really win a resistance conversation when the other party concedes.

A resistance conversation is hard work. In this mode, to get your desired outcome requires a dogged determination to win the battle at all costs, even at the expense of your



COMPLIANCE *'My way or the highway'*

The **compliance conversation** is more of an instruction to do it my way. This type of conversation is less of a negotiation and more of a dictatorship, that will ultimately result in one party getting what they want, regardless of whether others are on board or not.

Think of the scenario of taking a reluctant dog to the vet. They are pulling in the other direction, but due to the slippery tiles, they are being pulled into the surgery. As an example, enforcing airplane safety procedures, or codes of behavior in a court of law, are compliance conversations that are not up for discussion, and simply instructions that need to be followed.

Driven by the need to follow instructions/regulations, compliance conversations are authoritative, directional, and black/white style. It's a 'this is how we do things here' type of conversation, which can resemble clarifying the rules of a game or enforcing the rules in a prison.



COMPROMISE *'Give in order to get'*

The **compromise conversation** is like bartering – you are prepared to give up, or trade, something in order to help the other person get what they want. In a compromise conversation, the priority to maintain harmony will trump achieving your goals or having your needs met.

When there is a need to keep people happy, unite the team, and maintain customer satisfaction, people will reach for a compromising conversation to smooth things out. A compromise conversation is an excellent way to gain trust and ensure there is harmony and happiness in all parties, but at the very least, in others.

Driven by the need to be liked, gain approval, avoid conflict, or just to maintain a positive connection, compromise conversations are heartfelt, bonding, and empathetic. In a compromise conversation you believe the best pathway to maintaining productivity is keeping people happy and being of service to others.



ALIGNMENT *'All on the same page'*

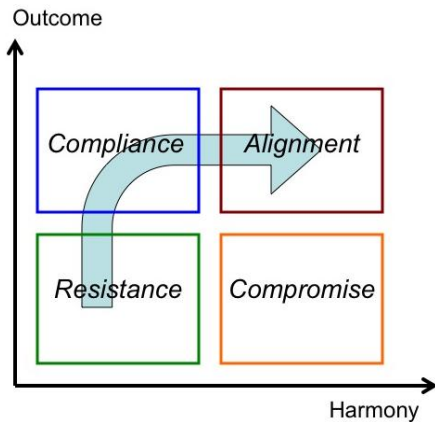
The **alignment conversation** is like a handshake – all parties are in agreement with your solution to the issue and everyone is happy about the outcome. Where there may have previously been conflict and tension there now exists a cohesive solution that everyone is on board with.

Whilst a 'win-win' scenario is one where everyone benefits, an alignment conversation has the added benefit of the other party being on board with your solution and left feeling that it was a positive experience. Master negotiators strategically work towards setting up alignment conversations.

Driven by the need to get buy-in through trust, a person who has alignment conversations is often an influencer of people, does well in leadership roles, and invests into gaining the respect of their peers, clients, and customers.

The Pathways to Alignment

There are many pathways that a conflict, discussion or interaction can take to reach an alignment conversation. Here are some common patterns

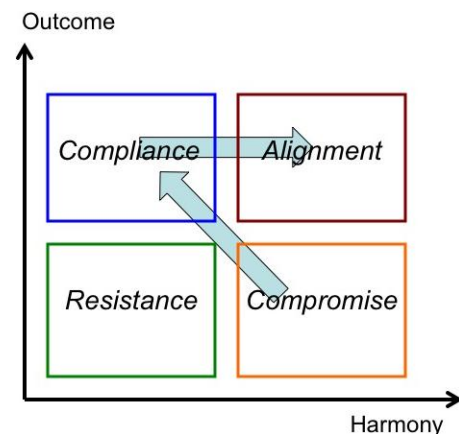
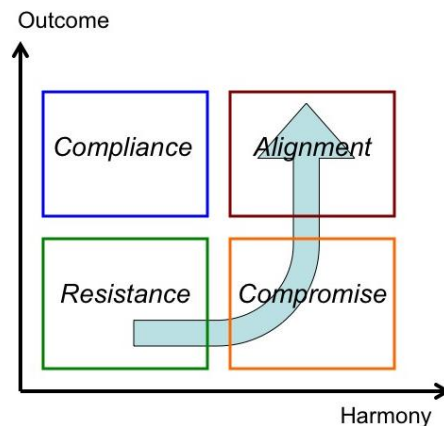


POWER STRUGGLE

When a resistance conversation is not progressing, by moving into compliance mode sends a message that you are in control. This then may make the other person rethink the strength of their stance and come on board to your outcome.

RAPPORT BUILDER

By approaching a conflict with the intention to understand, listen and empathize, can remove the aggression and accusation in the other person resulting in a calm and respectful conversation and resolution.



NICE AND CLEAR

If trying to find a middle ground reduces the respect given to you from the other party, then moving into compliance mode can re-establish your authority and be the turning point to resolving the issue on your terms.

The Synergy of Alignment Conversations

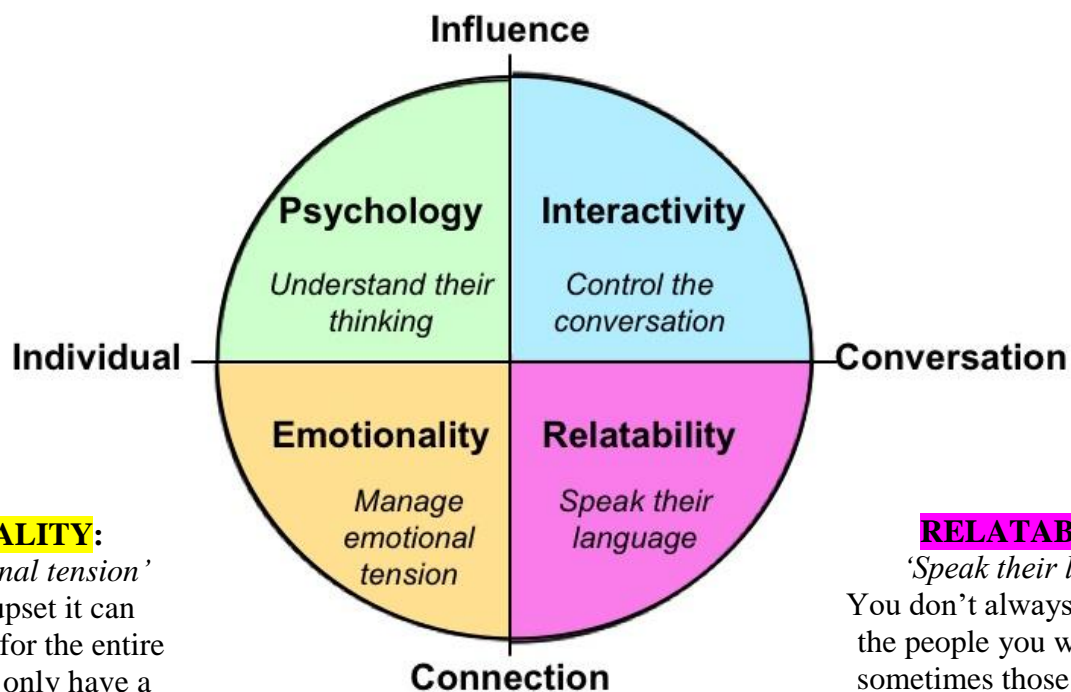
The essence of an alignment conversation is the ability to positively influence in order to achieve your desired outcome whilst sustaining a good connection and a pleasant experience. This requires blending the four pillars of positive interactions: Psychology, Relatability, Emotionality, and Interactivity:

PSYCHOLOGY: *'Understand their Thinking'*

People's behaviour is rarely about you – it is often a reflection of their pressure pattern and communication style. Understanding their thinking patterns allows you to quickly identify why people get worked up, how they are likely to respond, and what you should be doing and saying (as well as not doing) to resolve the situation and keep them calm.

INTERACTIVITY: *'Control the conversation'*

Having a conversation dominated by a strong personality can be intimidating and prevent the exchange of ideas and feedback. Mastering conversational dynamics helps you to resolve issues effectively, neutralize conversation dominance, cut through the emotion, and help people with greater efficiency (and without going around in circles for 20 minutes).



EMOTIONALITY:

'Manage emotional tension'
When you get upset it can throw your focus for the entire day. People can only have a negative impact on you if you let them. Managing your emotional reactions allows you to stay calm and remain clear thinking when your opinion is being challenged, the conversation becoming heated, or you are confronted with accusation/disagreement

RELATABILITY:

'Speak their language'
You don't always get to choose the people you work with and sometimes those personalities clash resulting in tension and friction. Enhancing your relatability allows you to connect with people who are not like you, understand what they are looking for in a conversation, and being able to resolve issues without taking their manner or style personally.

Your Next Steps...

STEP 1: Get the Diagnostic

Download a complimentary copy of the **Personal Influence Diagnostic** that will ascertain your communication, influence and buy-in ability, and advise you on what next steps you can take to resolve conflicts with ease and confidence.



Simply send me an email from
<http://www.bouncebackfast.com>

STEP 2: Let's have a conversation

If the principles in this white paper resonate with you then let's have a conversation to see how we can help your team get started.



Simply send me an email from
<http://www.bouncebackfast.com>

REFERENCES

[1] <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/employing/conflict>

[2] <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/207196>