



Are You Too Nice or Too Direct?

A Self-Assessment for Leaders Who Avoid Difficult Conversations

Most leaders avoid difficult conversations not because they lack courage, but because they don't trust their approach.

Some worry they'll be too harsh. Others worry they'll be too soft. Neither extreme works, and both keep you with the problem of needing to have a difficult conversation.

This assessment will help you identify your default pattern so you know which direction you need to stretch.

THE ASSESSMENT:

For each statement, rate yourself on a scale of 1-5:

- 1 = Never true for me
- 2 = Rarely true for me
- 3 = Sometimes true for me
- 4 = Often true for me
- 5 = Always true for me



1. I find myself over-explaining or softening my message to avoid hurting someone's feelings.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

2. After difficult conversations, people tell me I come across as harsher than I intend.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

3. I rehearse conversations in my head multiple times, trying to find the "perfect" way to say something.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

4. I tend to get straight to the point, even if it makes people uncomfortable.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

5. I worry more about maintaining the relationship than addressing the actual problem.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

6. I've been told I can be blunt or that I "don't pull punches."

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5



7. I apologise before, during, or after giving feedback (even when I've done nothing wrong).

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

8. I prioritise getting the issue resolved quickly, even if it means pushing past someone's discomfort.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

9. I delay conversations because I'm afraid of how the other person will react.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

10. I've had team members shut down or become defensive in conversations with me.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5

HOW TO SCORE

Add up your scores for:

ODD-numbered questions (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) = _____ (your **"Too Nice"** score)

EVEN-numbered questions (2, 4, 6, 8, 10) = _____ (your **"Too Direct"** score)

YOUR RESULTS

If your "Too Nice" score is higher (20+ points):

Your pattern: You lead with empathy, but struggle with directness.

You care deeply about people and relationships. You don't want to hurt feelings or create conflict. You likely rehearse conversations repeatedly, trying to find the "right" words. You might soften your message so much that the other person doesn't actually hear what needs to change.

What this costs you:

- Problems don't get resolved because your message isn't clear
- Your team don't know where they stand
- You carry the mental load of unresolved issues
- People might like you, but they don't always take you seriously

Your growth opportunity: You need to build your assertiveness muscle. This doesn't mean becoming a jerk a-hole (here's a tip: no true jerk worries about being a jerk, which means you inherently won't be one!). It means learning to be clear and direct WHILE still being kind.

What you'll learn in the webinar: How to say what needs to be said without over-softening it, and how to trust that people are more resilient than you think.

If your "Too Direct" score is higher (20+ points):

Your pattern: You lead with clarity, but struggle with empathy.

You value efficiency and results. You don't see the point in dancing around issues, just say it and move on. You might get frustrated when people seem overly sensitive or take feedback personally. You probably think, "I'm just being honest."

What this costs you:

- People shut down or get defensive in conversations with you
- Your team might fear you more than trust you
- Good people leave because they don't feel heard or valued
- You solve the immediate problem, but damage the relationship

Your growth opportunity: You need to build your empathy muscle. This doesn't mean becoming soft or walking on eggshells. It means slowing down enough to understand how the other person is experiencing the situation before you jump to solutions.

What you'll learn in the webinar: How to create space for the other person's perspective without losing your directness, and why understanding their view actually gets you to a long-term resolution faster.

If your scores are relatively balanced (both under 20):

Your pattern: You have a solid foundation, but context matters.

You can balance empathy with directness depending on the situation. But you might struggle to know WHEN to lean which way, or you might avoid certain types of conversations because you're not sure which approach to use.

What this costs you:

- Inconsistency in how you show up as a leader
- Second-guessing yourself in the moment
- Still avoiding conversations because you're overthinking the "right" approach

Your growth opportunity: You need a framework that helps you navigate difficult conversations with confidence, regardless of the situation.

What you'll learn in the webinar: A simple, repeatable structure that works whether you need to lean into empathy or assertiveness and how to know when to stretch into each direction.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you know your pattern, the question is: **What are you going to do about it?**

Be sure to attend the webinar because in it:

- You'll learn why you default to your pattern (and why willpower alone won't change it).
- Understand how to stretch in the direction you need without losing yourself.
- Access a practical framework you can use to plan and navigate any difficult conversation, and
- We'll have a live Q&A so you can ask me your questions directly!

I look forward to seeing you at the Webinar!