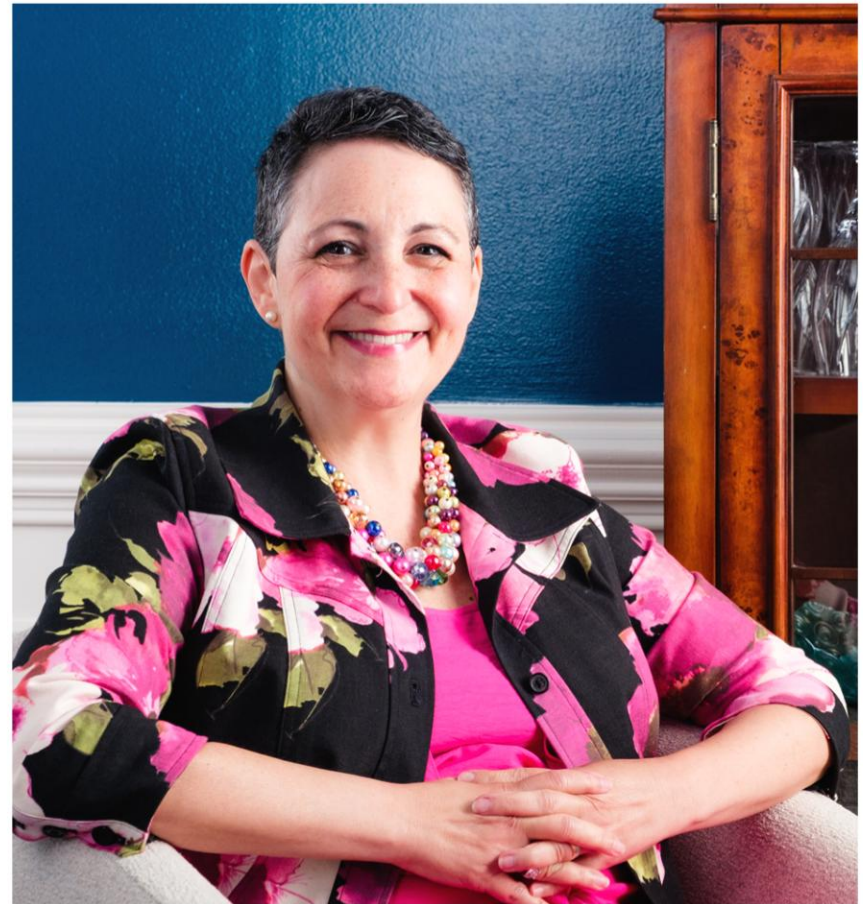


Navigating Conflict and Difficult Conversations

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**How do you FEEL when you hear
“CONFLICT”?**

“Honest criticism is hard to take, particularly from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger.”

Franklin P. Jones

THE SATURDAY EVENING
POST

What We Will Cover



What
contributes
to
unproductive
conflict



Understanding
the root
cause of
common
conflicts



How to
avoid
avoiding
conflict



How to S.N.A.P
out of
unproductive
conflict

What is a conflict that comes up for you repeatedly at work?



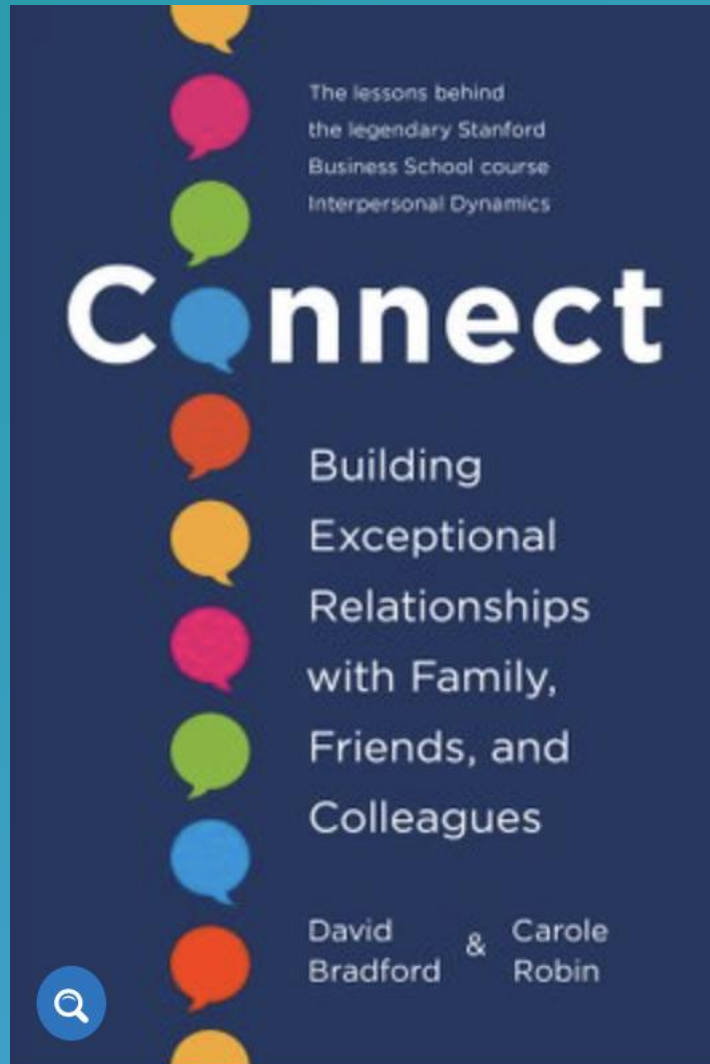
Conflict:

A disagreement,
or a difference
of opinion or perspective.



Productive Conflict:

Achieves an outcome and
attends to the
relationship before,
during, and after.



1. In almost every case we have choices. How the other person responds make some choices easier and some choices harder.

2. Both statements are equally valid: “I have a choice” and “I am affected by you”.

Which responses to a difficult conversation make choices harder?

Easier?

Criticism



Contempt



Defensiveness

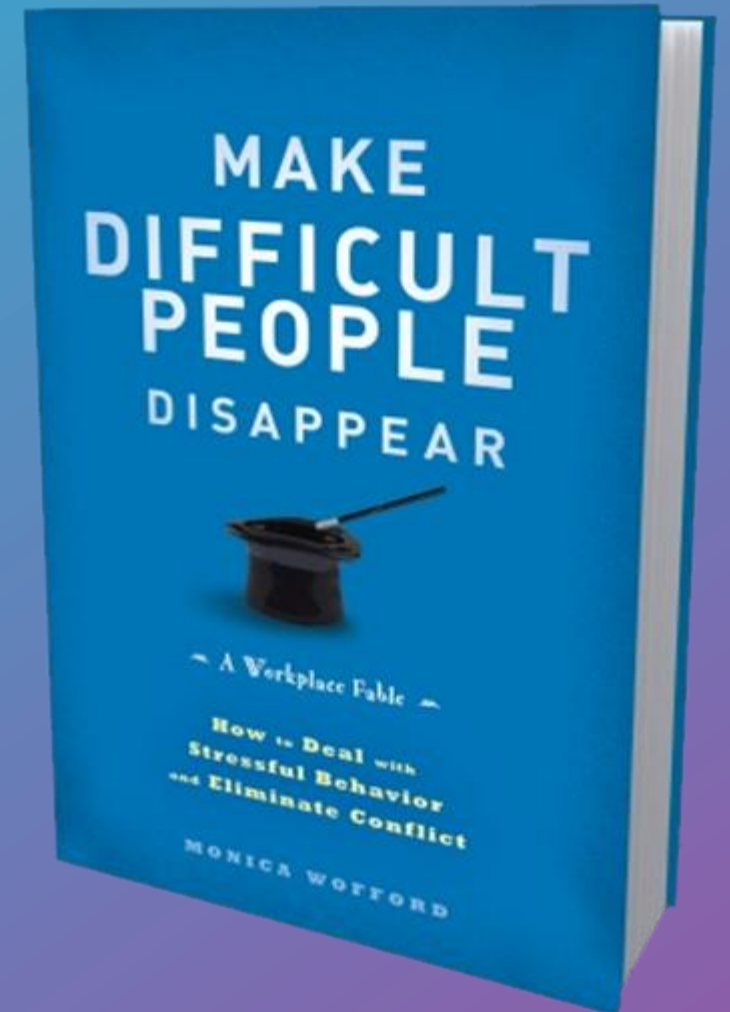


Stonewalling



Where Does Conflict Originate?

"Conflict occurs when we demand and expect others to behave in a way that is not natural or known."



Here are some unhelpful perspectives



“How could they NOT know
(the right way to behave)?”



“I am right. They are wrong.”



“Their intention is obvious.”



“They should act the way
I expect them to act.”



“My view is the only valid view.”



“It’s just their personality.”



“They should act the way I act.”



“Nobody likes them anyway...”



“I’ll see how THEY like it when
I do it back to THEM!”

And one very helpful perspective...

**It is highly likely that you
are your difficult
person's difficult person.**

Most of us want:

1. to be treated with respect.
2. to express our feelings, opinions, and wants.
3. to advocate for our own priorities.
4. to say “no” without feeling guilty.
5. to have opinions that are different from others’.
6. to speak to people in positions of power without fear.
7. to take care of and protect ourselves from being threatened physically, mentally or emotionally.
8. to create our own happy and healthy lives.



Mindsets That Keep Us Quiet



“I should just keep this to myself.”



“Asking for what I need will be an uncomfortable conversation.”



“I should put the team’s needs ahead of my own.”



“I don’t have the time to advocate for what I want.”



“I will be seen as pushy.”

Mindsets that Help Us Self-Advocate



“My needs are valid –
as valid as anyone else’s.”



“If I don’t start the
conversation, who will?”



“I’m curious about what
could happen if I asked for
what I needed...”



“The most successful professionals model
self-awareness. And that’s what I’m doing.”



“Telling the truth is a brilliant way to
create healthy relationships.”

But what would I even say?

"I'd like to talk about something that feels important to me. When would be a good time for a conversation?"

"I need_____ to feel engaged/respected/safe at work, and I have some ideas of what we could do differently."

"I am happy in my role, and I recognize that there's something I need to feel even happier."



DANCE FLOOR

AND BALCONY

What's Happening Down There?

I/We need to clarify:

1. Who is responsible.
2. Who is accountable.
3. Who else should be involved, consulted or informed.
4. What a successful outcome should look like.
5. How this project fits into the bigger picture.
6. What resources are available.
7. What the risks are.
8. What we can learn from past experiences doing something similar.
9. How much autonomy I/we have.
10. Who I/we can ask for help.

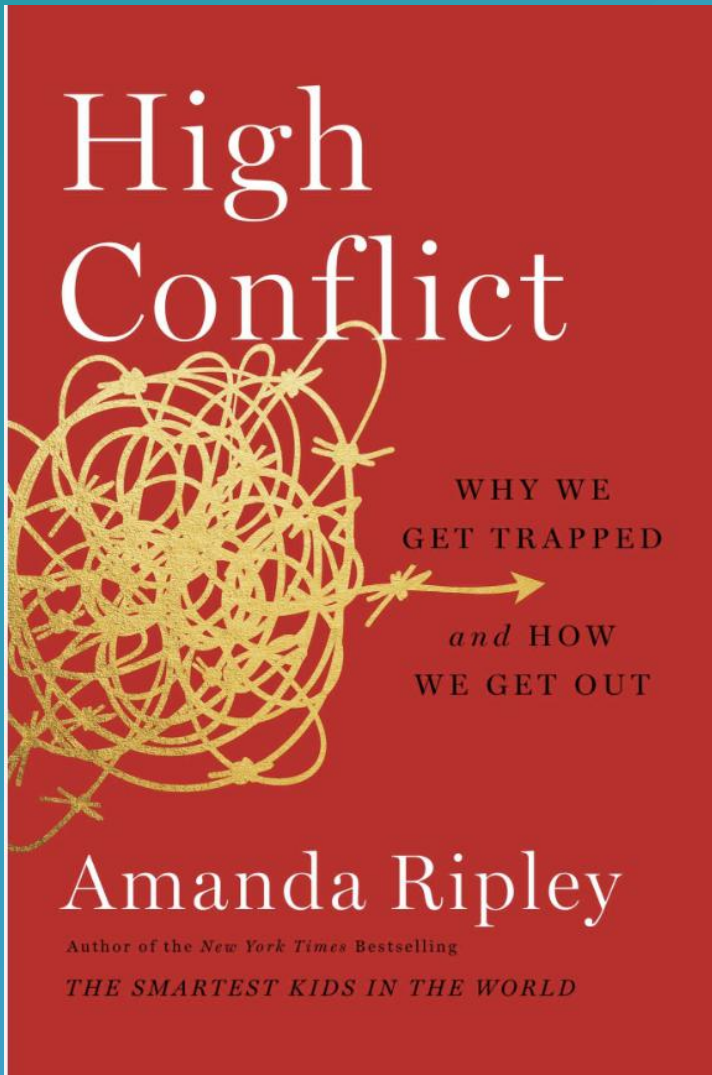
I/We want more time to:

11. Process what has been shared with me/us.
12. Analyze the data.
13. Plan the work.
14. Communicate the plan.
15. Re-prioritize my/your work or the work of others.
16. Identify and/or secure resources.
17. Learn how to do it.
18. Execute the tasks.
19. Get others up to speed.
20. Get buy-in or agreement.
21. Address others' questions and concerns.

I/We could use some support to:

22. Manage and communicate expectations clearly.
23. Negotiate competing priorities.
24. Set and maintain boundaries.
25. Manage a fear of failure.
26. Partner more effectively with someone who has a different work or communication style.
27. Get on someone's busy calendar.
28. Speak to someone in a position of power.
29. Advocate for what I/we need.
30. Say no.

Conflict “Hacks”



1. Avoid “fire starters” and “conflict entrepreneurs”
2. Shift the situation into neutral
3. Engage in slow deep breathing
4. Distract yourself in the midst of a conflict
5. Reappraise from the balcony
6. Focus on the opportunity

But what would I even say?

“I notice I / we have a pattern.

Here’s what I see_____.

What do you think?”

How We (Sometimes) Respond to Conflict

Inattention

Too busy/
Delay

Actively
Ignore/
Deny

Not my job

Confusion

“Confirmation
Expedition”

But what would I even say?

"I've been avoiding mentioning _____ until now because I

_____.

I'm bringing it up now because I _____.

I realize that I should have brought this up sooner."

And What if You've Been Avoiding a Request?

I feel about what. Here's my positive need and the impact it would have.

I'm worried we don't have enough time to find you a suitable consultant for this project. The timeline is just too short.

I feel concerned about the short timeline for finding a suitable consultant for this project. I would appreciate it if you could extend it by a week. That would allow me to think outside the box, and give us a wider range of options.

How to S.N.A.P. Out of Unproductive Conflict



Stop the conversation.

Notice and name neutrally what's going on in the process, and in you.

Ask for their observations, perspective, and experience.

Propose a process for moving forward.

How to S.N.A.P. Out of Unproductive Conflict

Stop the conversation.

“Let’s pause for a moment.”

Notice and name neutrally what’s going on in the process, and in you.

“I notice that we have tight deadlines and we are not turning it around in time. I also notice it’s making me feel ineffective and like I’m not meeting expectations.”

Ask for their observations, perspective, and experience.

“What are you noticing? How are you feeling? How do you see it?”

Propose a process for moving forward.

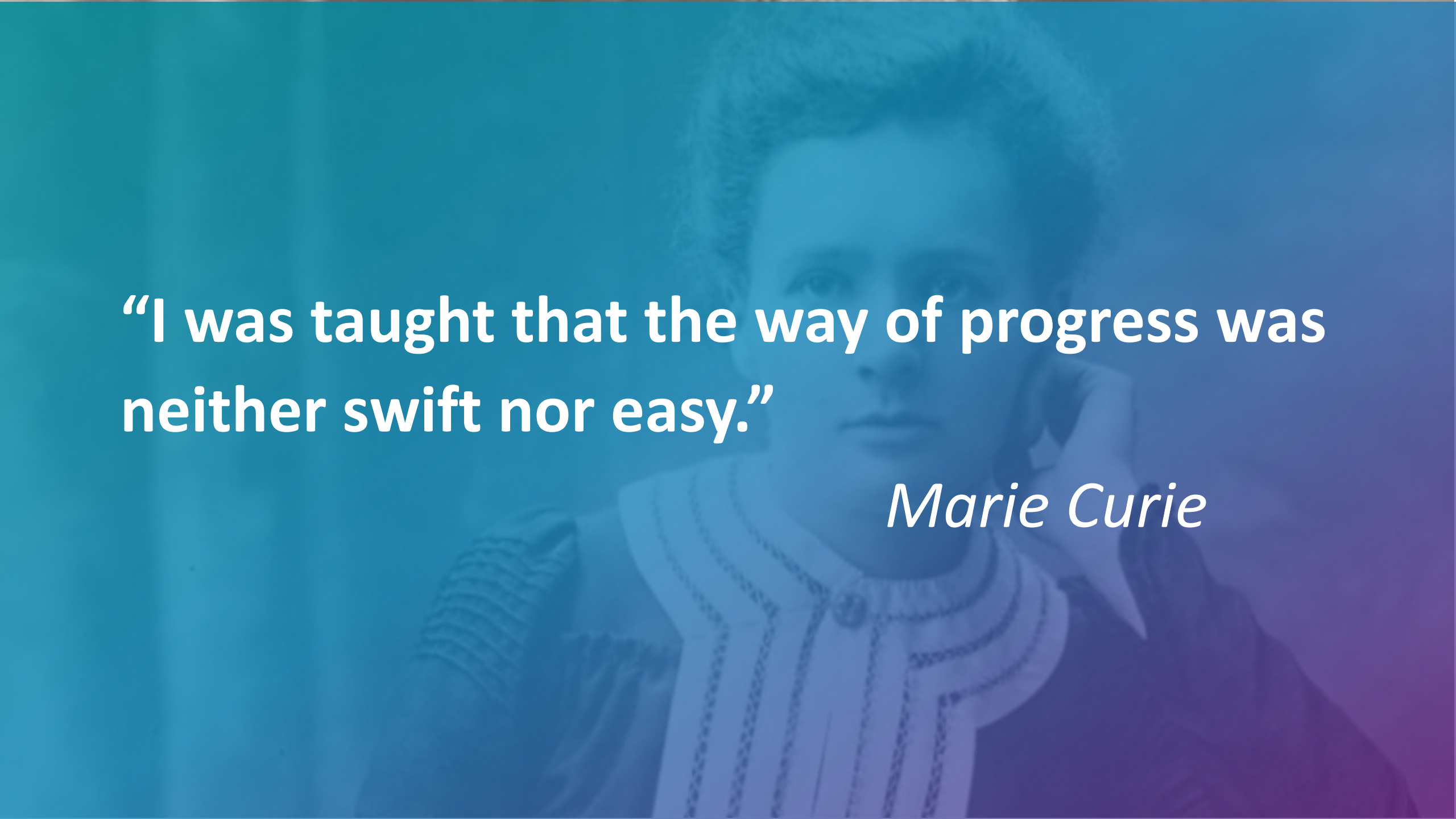
“Here’s what I suggest we do next...”

“What do you suggest we do next?”



10 Great Questions to Foster Productive Relationships

1. What do I say or have said in the past that you have appreciated the most?
2. What do I say or have said in the past that makes you uncomfortable?
3. How will I know that you're feeling valued and appreciated?
4. How will I know you may be feeling stressed or upset?
5. What happens if we can't agree on something important that involves both of us?
6. What might I say or do to get your attention about something urgent if other approaches haven't worked?
7. What can I do to make your day?
8. What do you think I might be able to learn from you?
9. What do you think you can learn from me?
10. What about our work together is likely to change both of our lives for the better?



“I was taught that the way of progress was
neither swift nor easy.”

Marie Curie