

SUMMARY:

If you are in the midst of a difficult conversation, this episode of the GLS Podcast is a can't-miss! Sheila Heen's research unearthed the three common layers that exist in every difficult conversation. In Part 1 of this interview (Episode 031), Sheila unpacked the "What Happened? Conversation." In this episode, you will learn about the "Feelings Conversation" and "Identity Conversation." Get equipped on how to turn your difficult conversations into productive and authentic exchanges.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Difficult conversations are multi-layered.
- **Layer 1: The "What Happened? Conversation"**
 - "The facts" feel like facts, but they are really our perceptions.
 - We need to shift from point-making to taking a learning stance.
- **Layer 2: The "Feelings Conversation"**
 - In a professional context, we think we are not supposed to have feelings.
 - When we solve the business problem on the surface, the feelings beneath still exist.
 - Every organization has an emotional footprint: Feelings that are rewarded and those that are not.
 - Embrace the "And Stance," understanding that our feelings are often complex and contradictory.
 - The best way to handle emotions is to be authentic and ask for time to process your feelings.
- **Layer 3: The "Identity Conversation"**
 - Our self-identity drives our feelings and the way we tell the story.
 - Your answer for X in the following statement is the key to understanding how your identity was triggered: "If I know nothing else about myself, I know I'm X."
 - Three core identities triggered by a difficult conversation:
 1. Am I a good person or a bad person?
 2. Am I competent or not?
 3. Am I worthy of love?
 - Before the conversation, we need to have a conversation with ourselves and "complexify" our identities. Not "Either/Or" but "What do I need to learn?"
 - A conversation with yourself ahead of time inoculates you from whatever might be coming at you.
- The difficult conversations in our lives are often the most important conversations in our lives.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Think about a difficult conversation that you need to have this week in a professional or personal context. Try living in the "And Stance." Dig deeply and name all the emotions you are having—even if they are contradictory.
2. For that same difficult conversation, think about the identity issues you are facing. How would you answer X below? "If I know nothing else about myself, I know I am X." How does your answer indicate the way your difficult conversation may be triggering your identity issues?

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

[Difficult Conversations](#)
[Thanks for the Feedback](#)

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