



ridgetraining

Rigorous Candor: HR's Next Imperative

ASTD's 2006 International Conference and Exposition
Dallas, Texas USA
May 7–10, 2006

Objectives: To learn ways to

Diagnose organizational and cultural dynamics impacting
the practice of rigorous candor

Apply strategies for increasing rigorous candor within
your organization

Model candor with your constituents and yourself.

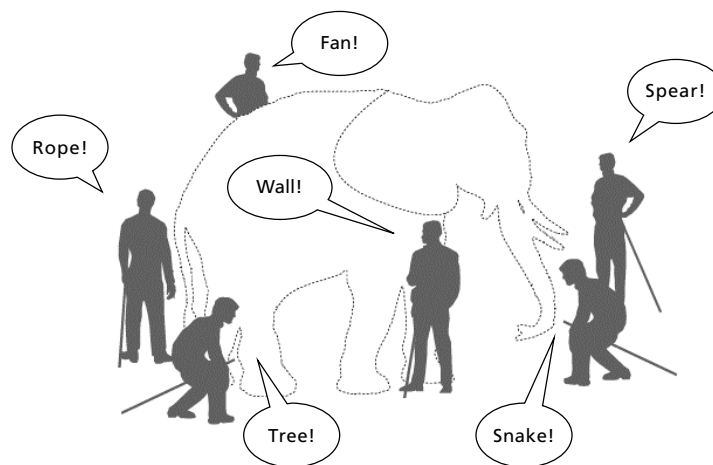
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Session-at-a-Glance



- Rigorous candor is the quest for actionable wisdom
- Lewin's Field Theory [$b = f(P,E)$] is a lens for understanding and diagnosing candor
- The unit of change is the small group
- Candor begins with you

The Problem With "Truth"



Definitions of Candor



"Can•dor"*

- (1) Frankness or sincerity of expression.
- (2) Freedom from prejudice; impartiality.

From Latin: "to shine"

Rigorous Candor

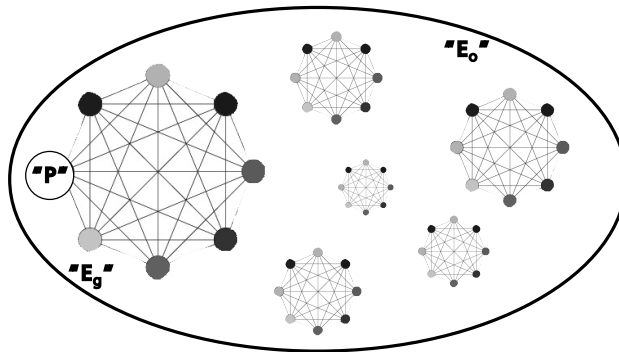
- An interpersonal process
- That promotes the authentic expression
- Of different points of view
- In search of actionable wisdom.

*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language; 4th Edition (2000)

The Playing "Field" of Candor



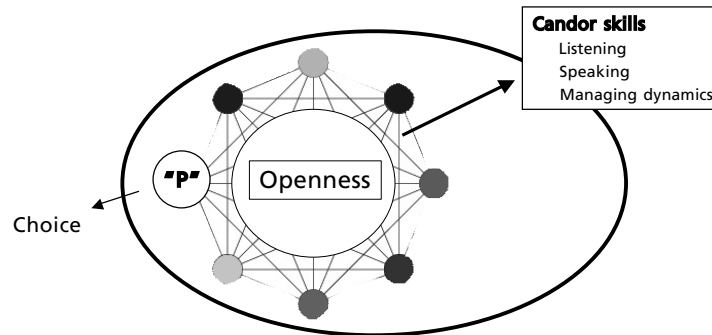
$$\mathbf{b} = \mathbf{f}(\mathbf{P}, \mathbf{E})$$



What Rigorous Candor Requires



"The Quest for Actionable Wisdom"



Why Personal Candor Matters



- "If you asked me what I came into this world to do, I will tell you. I came to live outloud!"
– Emile Zola
- "You shall not withhold yourself...Break through your shells, become direct; man, have contact with men!"
– Martin Buber
- "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."
– Mark Twain
- "Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint on it you can."
– Danny Kaye
- "Our business in life is not to get ahead of others, but to get ahead of ourselves--to break our own records, to outstrip our yesterday by our today."
– Stewart B. Johnson

Five Fears



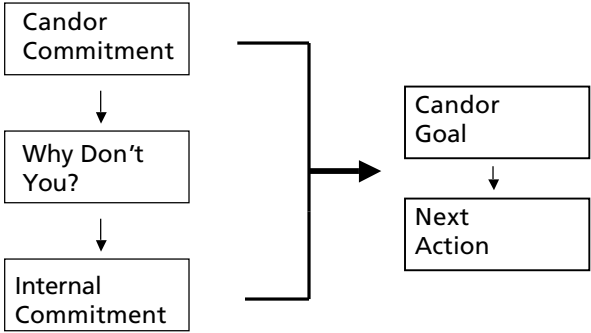
1. Retribution
 - Work consequences
 - Relationship consequences
2. Losing face/being wrong
3. Hurting others' feelings
4. Losing influence and support
5. Change!

Candor & Consequences



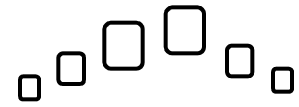
- What's the worst-case scenario?
- What's the likely scenario?
- What's the best case scenario?
- What's the consequence of your silence?

Personal Dimension of Candor



Adapted from *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*; Kenan and Lahey; Jossey Bass, 2002.

Personal Dimension of Candor



Prime Your Thinking

Your Goal

To further your thinking about your own candor commitment.

Directions

Refer to this as you explore your own personal dimension of candor.

Candor Commitment Offer ideas without reservation Give feedback proactively Be straightforward about what I really think Listen to others openly (even when I don't like what I hear) Be authentic and genuine with others Be fair and openminded about new ideas Hear others' feedback to me State my opinion in a group Speak to manager about problems and concerns	Five Fears Retribution Work consequences Relationship consequences Losing face/being wrong Hurting others' feelings Losing influence and support Change
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Sample

Candor Commitment

What is a strong belief or value you hold about candor?

To be genuine and authentic in all my interactions.

Why Don't You?

At times, you don't act in accordance with what you value about candor. What keeps you from honoring that commitment to candor? What are you afraid of?

It's awkward to tell the truth; I'm afraid to hurt others' feelings.

Competing Commitment

Underlying the fear or block you identified above is another strong value. At those times when you don't honor your candor commitment, what other value are you honoring?

To have conversations be safe and not awkward; to be gracious with others.

Mining the Paradox

As you look at the paradox between your candor commitment and the competing commitment, write a goal that positions the two values as complementary.

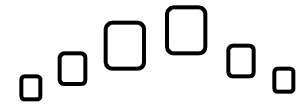
I want to be authentic with others in a socially graceful way.

Next Action

Given your goal, what is the next action you will take?

Watch how skillfully others handle awkward situations well and learn how they position their own comments, and then try it myself.

Personal Dimension of Candor



Your Goal

To elaborate on your candor commitment, understand the competing priorities, and find a way to honor them both in a goal and a next action.

Directions

Answer each question, referring to the sample worksheet on the previous page if needed. Your facilitator will guide you through a discussion in your small group about your responses.

Candor Commitment

What is a strong belief or value you hold about candor?

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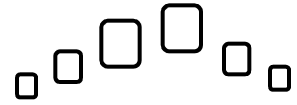
Mining the Paradox

As you look at the paradox between your candor commitment and the competing commitment, write a goal that positions the two values as complementary.

Next Action

Given your goal, what is the next action you will take?

Debriefing: Candor in Action



Your Goal

To learn about your personal commitment to candor from your real actions and reactions.

Directions

Make some notes about the discussion you just had about the personal dimension of candor.

Rating Your Candor

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate your level of candor with your partner(s) as you discussed the personal dimension of candor?

What Fostered Candor?

Why were you candid at all?

What did your partner(s) do that fostered candor?

What choices did you make that helped you be more candid?

What Made You Withhold?

If you didn't rate your candor a "10," why?

What did your partner(s) do that made you decide to withhold?

What choices did you make that led to your withholding?

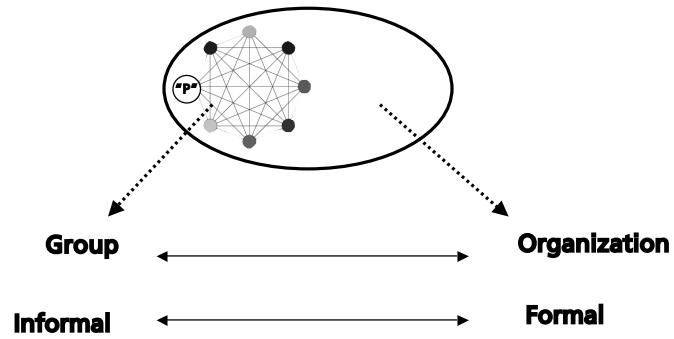
Next Action

What can you do in everyday conversations so that the interpersonal dynamics foster candor?

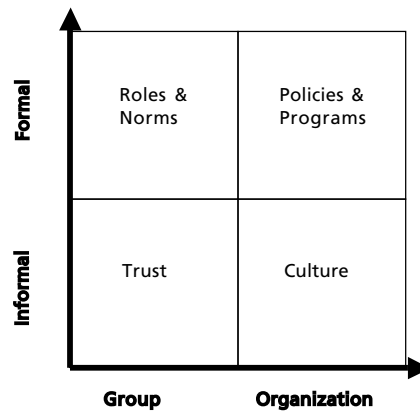
Dimensions of Organizational Candor



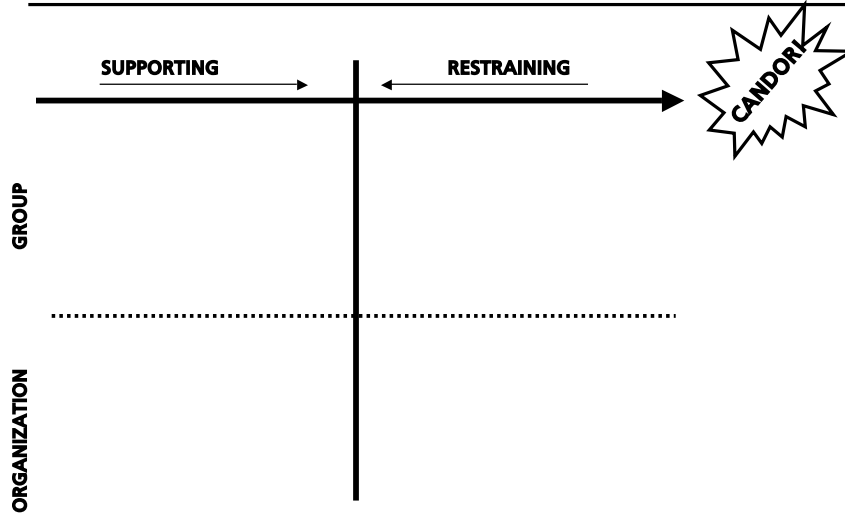
$$b = f(P,E)$$



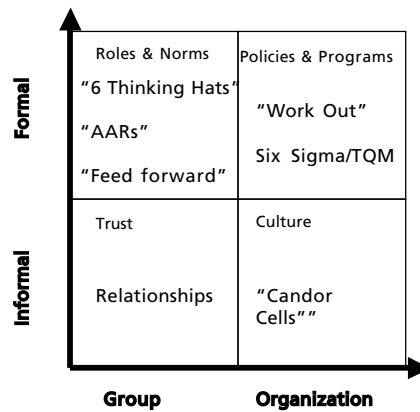
Environmental Factors that Govern Candor



Organizational Dimension of Candor



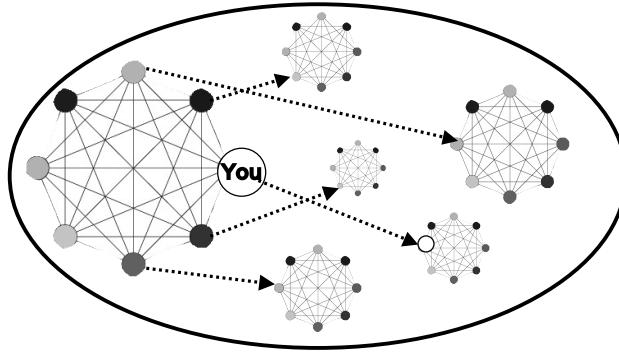
What You Can Do



Creating a “Candor Epidemic”



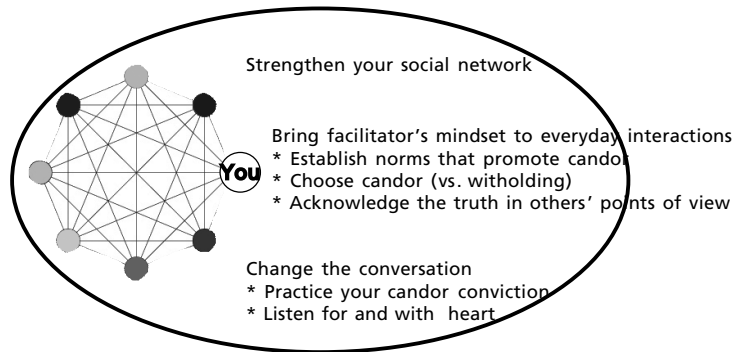
$$b = f(P,E)$$



Becoming an Agent of Candor



$$b = f(P,E)$$

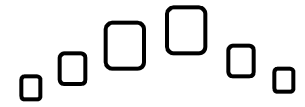


Acid Test



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- Is it important to my own "candor commitment" to speak up?
 - Will my point of view serve the group and the goal?
 - Can I speak in an undefended way?
 - Can I hear the truth in others' differing points of view?
 - Am I influencable (willing to yield my truth)?
 - Do I understand the potential consequences, and am I willing to accept them?

Organizational Dimension of Candor



Your Goal

To understand competing forces in your organization regarding candor, so that you can better position yourself as an agent of candor.

Directions

Do a force field analysis on your organization as a whole, as well as the primary group of which you're a part by responding to the questions and directions below.

Group-Level Issues

1. What are all of the group norms, behaviors, values, beliefs, and cultural practices that foster candor? Write these underneath "Supporting Forces" next to "Group Level."
2. What are all of the group norms, behaviors, values, beliefs, and cultural practices that hinder candor? Write these underneath "Restraining Forces" next to the "Supporting Forces."

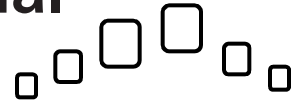
Organizational Level Issues

3. What are all of the organizational norms, behaviors, values, beliefs, and cultural practices that foster candor? Write these underneath "Supporting Forces" next to "Organizational Level."
4. What are all of the organizational norms, behaviors, values, beliefs and cultural practices that hinder candor? Write these underneath "Restraining Forces" next to the "Supporting Forces."

Assessing the Forces

5. For each of the Supporting Forces at the group level, draw an arrow toward the Restraining Forces that depicts the power of this force; for example, a thick, fat, long arrow for a powerful force or a light, small skinny arrow for a weak force.
6. Do the same for the Restraining Forces at the group level, with your arrows pointing to the left, at the Supporting Forces.
7. Repeat this for the Supporting and Restraining Forces at the organizational level.

Force Field Analysis: Organizational Dimension of Candor



Supporting Forces →

← Restraining Forces

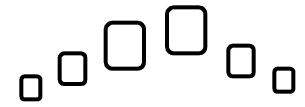
Group Level

Supporting Forces →

← Restraining Forces

Organizational Level

Debriefing the Force Field Analysis



Your Goal

To identify main areas for change in your group and organization.

Directions

Make some notes about your force field analysis by answering the questions below.

What are the most powerful forces supporting candor?

What can you do to support them?

What are the most powerful forces restraining candor?

What, if anything, can you do about them?

What new awarenesses do you have about the level of candor in your group?

Next Action

Remembering that the unit of change is a small group, what is the first step you could take to either enhance the supporting forces or uproot a restraining force?

Organization

What are the most powerful forces supporting candor?

What can you do to support them?

What are the most powerful forces restraining candor?

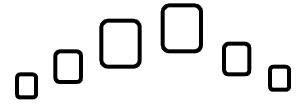
What, if anything, can you do about them?

What new awarenesses do you have about the level of candor in your organization?

Next Action: Group

What is the first step you could take to either enhance the supporting forces or uproot a restraining force?

Becoming an Agent of Candor: Action Plan



Directions

Answer the questions below to think through your plan for becoming an agent of candor back at work.

Strengthen Your Social Network

Informal social networks at work are the fastest routes to creating a candor “epidemic.” How can you broaden your social network, such that you could have broader influence, or at least be part of more conversations where candor could play a part?

Next Action

What’s your next step to strengthen your social network? Write it here, or better yet, put it on your list.

Bring a Facilitator’s Mindset to Everyday Interactions

- **Establish norms that promote candor**

What norms and behaviors would make the biggest difference in promoting candor on your teams and in your one-on-one interactions?

Without being too heavy-handed, how could you introduce or enhance these norms and behaviors?

Next Action

What’s your next step to establishing norms?

- **Choose candor (versus withholding)**

What could make it difficult to choose candor?

What could you do in order to overcome those blocks?

Next Action

What’s your next step to choose candor?

- **Look for and acknowledge the truth in others’ points of view**

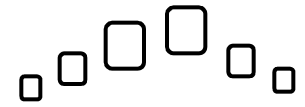
This is most difficult, and most necessary, in conflict. What do you tend to do in conflict that makes it hard for you to hear other people’s truth?

What would you like to do differently?

Next Action

Identify an upcoming meeting where you anticipate others’ having strong opinions. Make a note to yourself to listen hard for the other person’s “truth” and the real needs underlying it.

Becoming an Agent of Candor: Changing the Conversation



Your Goal

To think through a situation where you can increase your candor.

Directions

Answer the questions below to think through your plan for becoming an agent of candor back at work. You will first identify an opportunity for candor, then prepare for candor, and finally learn from your experience.

Identify an Opportunity for Candor

Think of an Issue You've Been "Sitting On."

It could be individual feedback, discussing a group problem, or putting forward an idea. Make a note of it here.

How Would You Like to Show Up in this Conversation?

Imagine the conversation going the best it possibly could. Describe how you behave.

How Have You Shown Up Thus Far?

If you've been sitting on an issue, you've already been showing up in a less than candid way. Describe what you have been doing regarding this issue.

What Are You Afraid of?

If you haven't been candid, you're probably concerned about what could happen. What's the worst that could happen? On a scale of 1-5, how likely is it to happen?

What is Likely to Happen?

As you imagine the different outcomes of the conversation, what might well happen? On a scale of 1-5, how likely is it to happen?

Prepare for Candor

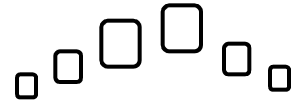
What Do You Want to Say?

How Could You Say It in an Undefended Way?

Rehearse it in your mind a few different ways and jot down notes on the one you like the best.

How Could You Preface It So It Gets Heard as You Intend?

If you're anticipating a reaction from others, how would you address their reactions up front so as to set aside their concerns, at least temporarily, in order to hear you out?



Learn from Candor

What Happened?

Did you succeed in being more candid?

Did you change the conversation?

Did you change the dynamic?

How did others respond?

What were the consequences of your bringing this up?

What might you do differently next time?