



Calming an Anxious Organization: Lead with Conviction

Diocese of Wilmington
April 30, 2024



Do we have a problem?



What causes anxiety in YOU or your organization?



Game summary

View full report

Thanks for participating!

Play again and revisit key talking points.

Find a new kahoot

Play again

View summary

Get feedback

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Connections to Catholic Ministry

"Have the courage to be truly happy!"
Pope Francis

inspireED
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Beacon of Light



All organizations have challenges, but some seem to experience a **culture of anxiety** that inhibits growth and improvement. It can be difficult for a leader to determine how to **calm anxious waters**.

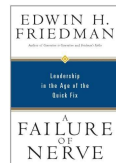
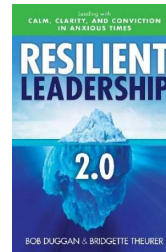
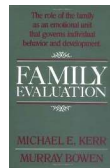


Leading with Conviction

- ▶ Navigating Challenging Times
- ▶ Bettering Outcomes
- ▶ Managing Waves of Chaos and Sabotage
- ▶ Acting Boldly within Complexity and Change

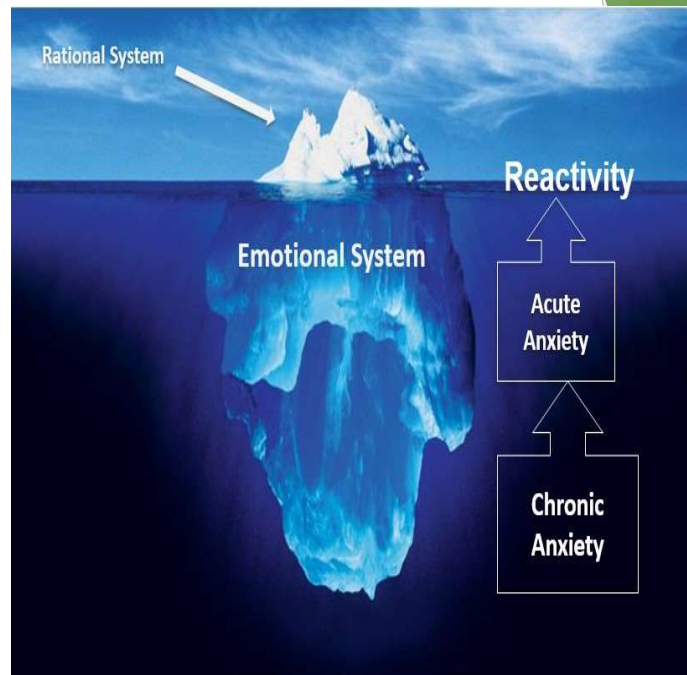
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Resilient Leadership based on Bowen Theory

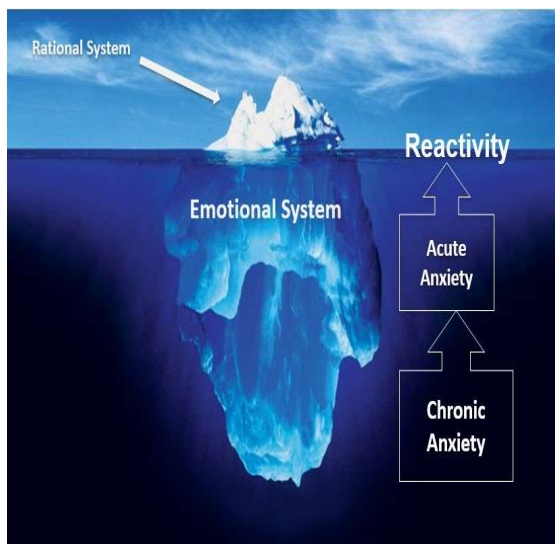


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Rational vs Emotional System



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Emotional System:

*automatic actions,
reactions, and
interactions that shape
how a relationship
system functions*

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Resilience (After Shipwreck!)

- ▶ Capability of a strained body to recover size and shape after deformation causes by compressive stress
- ▶ An ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change
- ▶ Major Loss Event:
 - ▶ Death, Divorce, Job, Property, etc.
- ▶ Death by a Thousand Cuts:
 - ▶ One small cut may not be harmful, but a thousand small cuts will kill a person.

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Resilient Leaders

Lead with **calm, clarity, and conviction** in the midst of anxiety provoked by increasing complexity and accelerating change.

Lead from **strength**, knowing how to care for themselves emotionally, spiritually, and physically, sustaining leadership efforts over time.



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Lead with Conviction



To act boldly, take clear stands, and be willing to take risks (even when it makes you vulnerable to failure and ridicule) for the sake of preserving core values or creating a new future you care about.



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Lead with Conviction

- ➔ **1** A New Way of **SEEING**: Recognize when **anxiety—in yourself or in your system**—makes it more challenging to lead with conviction.
- 2** A New Way of **THINKING**: Understand the crucial role a leader's clarity of vision, values and principles plays in calming an anxious system.
- 3** A New Way of **LEADING**: In the face of resistance and sabotage, stay the course—without feeling defensive or needing to “win”.



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Lead with Conviction First Big Idea

1

A New Way of **SEEING**:

Recognize when **anxiety—in yourself or in your system—**makes it more challenging to lead with conviction.



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When have you felt like a failure in a situation?

Has there been a time when you found it difficult to maintain a positive attitude?

Have you ever felt stuck?

How did you feel?



Discuss



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Recognize Emotional Triggers

Threats to...

- Control
- Safety
- Approval
- Belonging
- Certainty



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When Anxiety is High “Leading with Conviction” Becomes More Difficult

- **Clarity of thinking becomes nearly impossible**
- **Resolve and stamina are easily eroded.**



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Systemic Reactivity Symptoms

- ❖ **Increased Conflict** (or Conflict-Avoidance)
- ❖ Anxious Focus on the **Symptom-Bearer**
- ❖ **Diminished** Capacity for **Thoughtfulness**
- ❖ **Herding** (Group Think)
- ❖ Leadership Failure: Imaginative Gridlock & **Loss of Nerve**
- ❖ **Power Yielded** to the Least Differentiated/Lowest Functioning
- ❖ Overly **Rigid Hierarchy**



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Emotional System: Self reflection



- ❖ **What helps me calm down?**

DISCUSS



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Core Practice: 6-Second Centering



2 Seconds: Uncross your legs and feel your feet firmly into the floor


2 Seconds: Inhale deeply; find your length and embody an upright posture as you breathe in


2 Seconds: Exhale slowly, relaxing your shoulders as you do. Feel your feet into the floor



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Lead with Conviction

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1 A New Way of **SEEING**: **Recognize when anxiety—in yourself or in your system—makes it more challenging to lead with conviction.**
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2 A New Way of **THINKING**: **Understand the crucial role a leader's clarity of vision, values and principles plays in calming an anxious system.**
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Lead with Conviction Second Big Idea

2

A New Way of **THINKING:**
Understand the crucial role a leader's clarity of vision, values and principles plays in calming an anxious system.



A lack of clarity in the rational system provokes reactivity in the emotional system.



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How Guiding Principles Can Help

Guiding Principles help us to stand outside the emotional climate of the day by providing us with an anchor to ground ourselves and a road map for navigating.

Who do I want to be, and how do I want to operate during this time?



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Communication

- Most leaders believe they have been clearer with their employees or their team than they actually have been.
- A leader has to communicate key messages many times over, and do it consistently, in order for the organization to “hear it.”
- Sharing information is not the same thing as building shared understanding



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Reflect/Share



Go back to a situation you identified

Where might your team or organization need more clarity from you?



DISCUSS

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What is an “I-Position”?

An “I-Position” is a forthright statement of what you know, believe, or intend to do.

It is based on facts and principles, not emotions and personalities.



The Anxious Organization, p. 176



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When might an “I-Position” Be Needed?



- Clarify your commitments to key stakeholders
- Communicate your core values as they apply to a specific situation
- Clarify your expectations, especially if there appears to be confusion about where you stand



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A Fundamental Assumption of Resilient Leadership:

The higher a person's level of **self-differentiation**, the greater will be that person's capacity for effective leadership.



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Self-Differentiation

Self-Definition

An individual's capacity for independent thought and action

Self-Regulation

While maintaining a balanced connection to significant others



Key to Leading with Conviction



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Self-Differentiation Questions



- *Who do I aspire to be as a leader?*
- *What are my strengths? What are my vulnerabilities?*
- *What do I think and where do I stand on this issue?*
- *What makes me anxious and how do I react?*
- *What calms me down?*
- *How balanced am I in my connections with others?*



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Lead with Conviction



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A New Way of THINKING: **Understand the crucial role a leader's clarity of vision, values and principles plays in calming an anxious system.**



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A New Way of LEADING: **In the face of resistance and sabotage, stay the course—without feeling defensive or needing to “win”.**



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Resistance (aka “Sabotage”)

Every system “naturally” strives to maintain the balance (homeostasis) of the system.



A Change in One Part of a System Affects All Parts:

1. Homeostasis → 2. Disequilibrium → 3. Adaptation → 4. Homeostasis



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What are some forms of resistance/sabotage you have seen in your workplace?



DISCUSS



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7 Strategies for Dealing with Resistance and Sabotage

1. Expect it
2. Don't take it personally
3. Provide opportunity for venting
4. Keep focus on the future benefits to them/the organization
5. Distinguish between reactive and productive complaints
6. Stay connected to your saboteurs
7. Take good care of yourself—physically, mentally, emotionally



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Core Practice: Embody Your Length

Whenever you have to take a tough stand on a difficult issue, embody your length (assume a tall, upright posture) and continue to do so especially if and when you get pushback.

Embodying your length (assuming a tall spine) exemplifies dignity, communicates confidence and credibility, and supports holding your ground under pressure.



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Core Practice: Communicate Where You Stand

Communication is almost entirely an emotional phenomenon—only a small fraction of the experience is about conveying objective information.

Whenever there is confusion around an important issue, step back and thoughtfully consider where you stand on it—both how you think and how you feel about it—irrespective of the emotional pressures you might be feeling.

Then **communicate your stand calmly, clearly, and nondefensively.**



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New Way of Seeing:

- Resilient Leadership - Rational vs Emotional System
- Recognize Anxiety in Yourself and Your Organization:
What are Emotional Triggers?
- Calm Yourself: 6-Second Centering

New Way of Leading

- Resistance & Sabotage
- 7-Seven Strategies
- Core Practice: Embody Your Length

Lead with Conviction

New Way of Thinking:

- Clarity of Vision, Values, & Principles
- Communication is Key: I-Position
- Self-Differentiation:
Self-Definition & Self-Regulation



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Lead with Conviction

- Resilient leaders act boldly, even when risk-taking becomes more difficult due to high levels of anxiety/reactivity.
- Resilient leaders who communicate clearly about their vision, values, and core principles calm their organization and promote a culture of creativity and enhanced productivity.
- Resilient leaders need to “stay the course”, regardless of the predictable resistance/sabotage they encounter when they have made self-differentiating moves.



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Beacon of Light

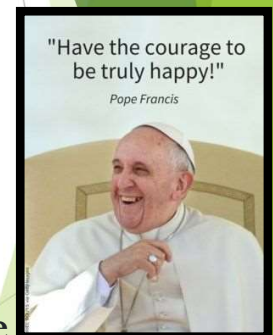
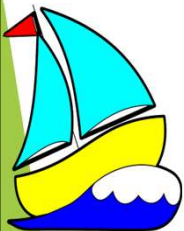


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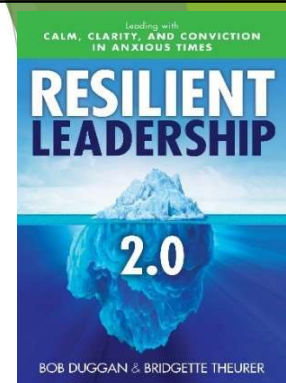
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Next Voyage.... Leading with Calm, Clarity, Conviction

Online Book Study

- ❖ Overview: New Way of Seeing, Thinking & Leading
- ❖ Becoming a Step-Down Transformer
- ❖ Staying Connected: Healthy & Balanced Relationships
- ❖ Avoiding Over- and Under-Functioning
- ❖ Managing Triangles
- ❖ Understanding Inherited Strengths & Vulnerabilities
- ❖ Avoiding the Empathy Trap

In-Person PD Full-Day Workshop



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Thank you for your Ministry!

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