

A woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark red sleeveless top, is sitting at a table and talking to a man. The man is wearing a yellow patterned shirt and is seen from the side. They are in an outdoor setting with a blurred background of buildings and greenery. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Leaning Into Discomfort

---

**Strategies for Effective Leadership Dialogue**

North Shore Chamber: Thrive

Speaker: Laura Caton, Partner and Senior Consultant LeadShift



## Star Performer

"I didn't want to hurt their feelings," or "I don't have enough time," or "I just don't have enough confidence. I'm afraid I won't do it well."

**You cannot put your own comfort ahead of the needs of your employees.**

Jeff, "I don't handle strong emotions well."



## **The Table Group, Patrick Lencioni**

Estimated that more than 70% of decent leaders avoid uncomfortable conversations at work.

**The level makes no difference**



# Awesome Quote

---

“If you mislead a player, you lose them forever. If you tell them the truth, you lose them for 24 hours.”

**Jim Leyland, American former baseball player and coach**



**Default Mode**

# Joyful Accountability

**"The best leaders actually embrace uncomfortable situations. And best relationships are built on difficult conversations."**



Alan Mulally, former CEO of Ford Motor Company



## **EQ Skills to Build**

1. Emotional Self-awareness
2. Emotional Expression
3. Interpersonal Relationships

Check out EQi 2.0

---

# Prepare

- Architect the meeting
- Plan the message you want to convey
- Create a brief outline of your delivery
- Include 1-3 examples of the behavior you are referencing
- Chose the right time
- No extra baggage

**You should ask yourself:** What is your purpose for the conversation? What do you hope to accomplish? What would be an ideal outcome?







## How to Begin?

I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about \_\_\_\_\_. I want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective.

I think we have different perceptions about \_\_\_\_\_. I'd like to hear your thoughts on this.

I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

**Why does that work?**

# No, this isn't easy. Emotions

## 01

### Be honest and direct.

Don't be subtle; be clear, candid, and direct

Begin from a place of curiosity and respect.

Take a deep breath, rip the band-aid off, and stop trying to save yourself.

## 02

### Expect a reaction.

This isn't easy; be aware of the "amygdala hijack,"

Know that the first reaction isn't the end reaction.

Get Out of Your Feelings

## 03

### Empathy

Don't rush the conversation or the reaction

Acknowledge and validate

Know what they need, not what you need.

## 04

### Explore the solutions

The "what and why" should come first; the "how" to act on it follows later once they've processed the information.

Invite the other person to share how they feel the issue should be solved.

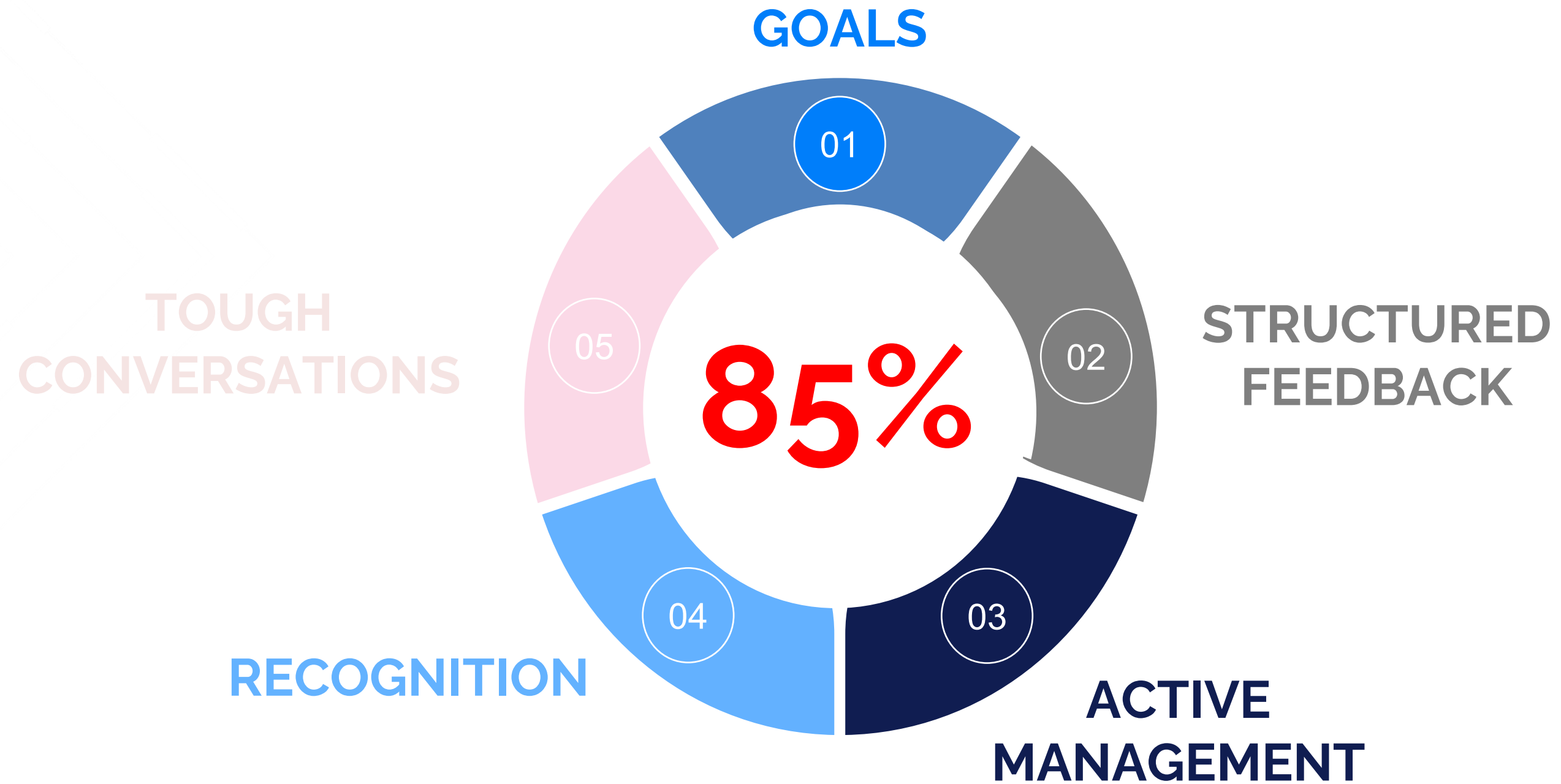


# Active Management

---

Do the right things all along, and this will be much easier

# Proactively Avoid 85% of Issues By Following Parts 01-04...





## **Taking Responsibility**

- As a leader of your team, your role is to elevate your employees and the company's mission. This includes saying what needs to be said in a way that others can hear it.

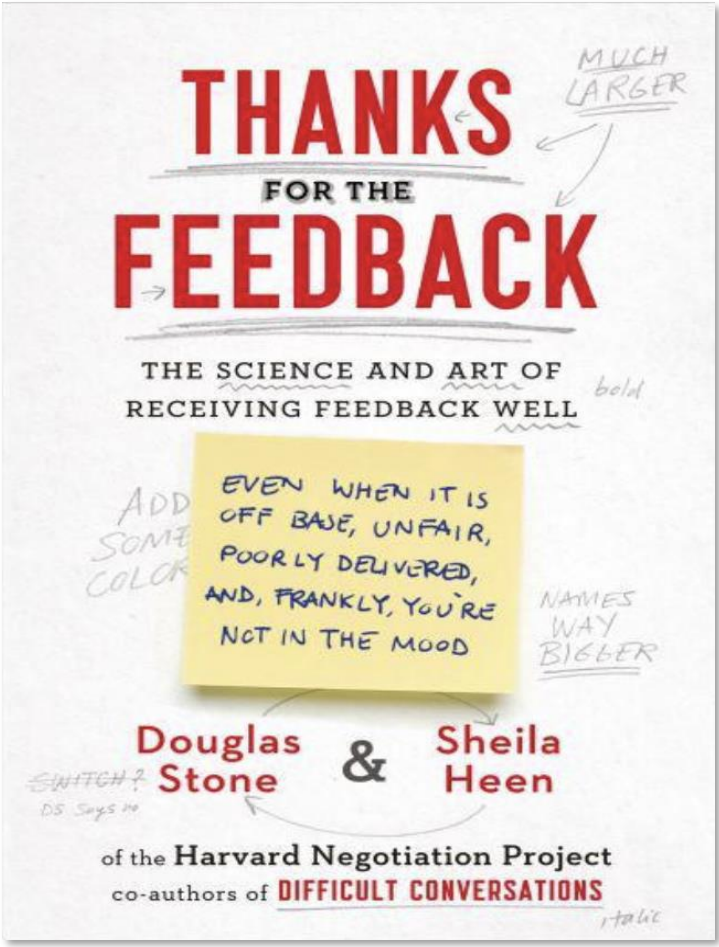
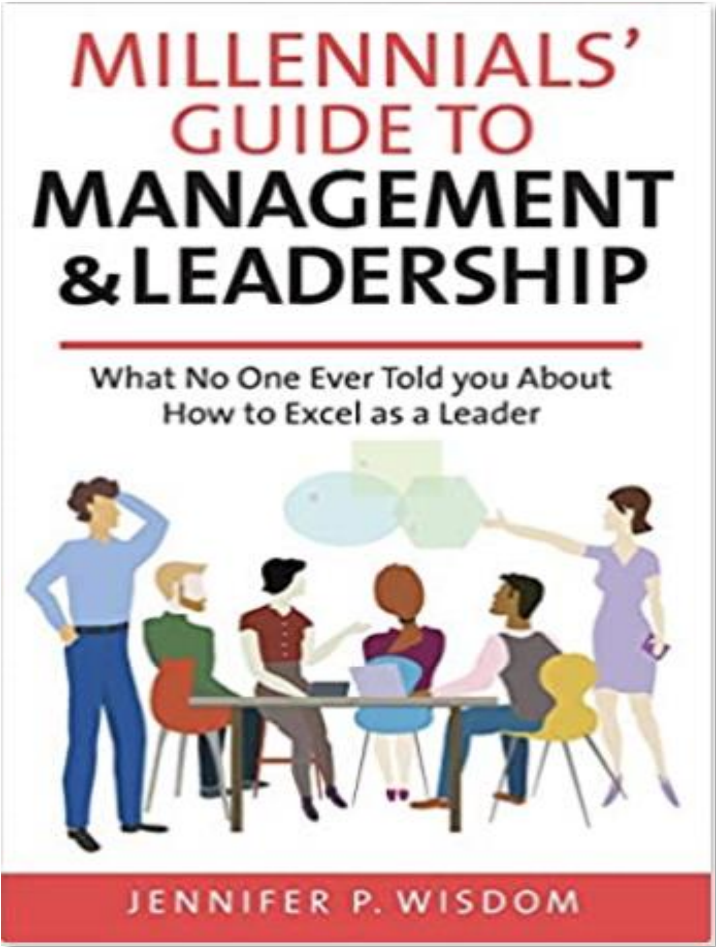
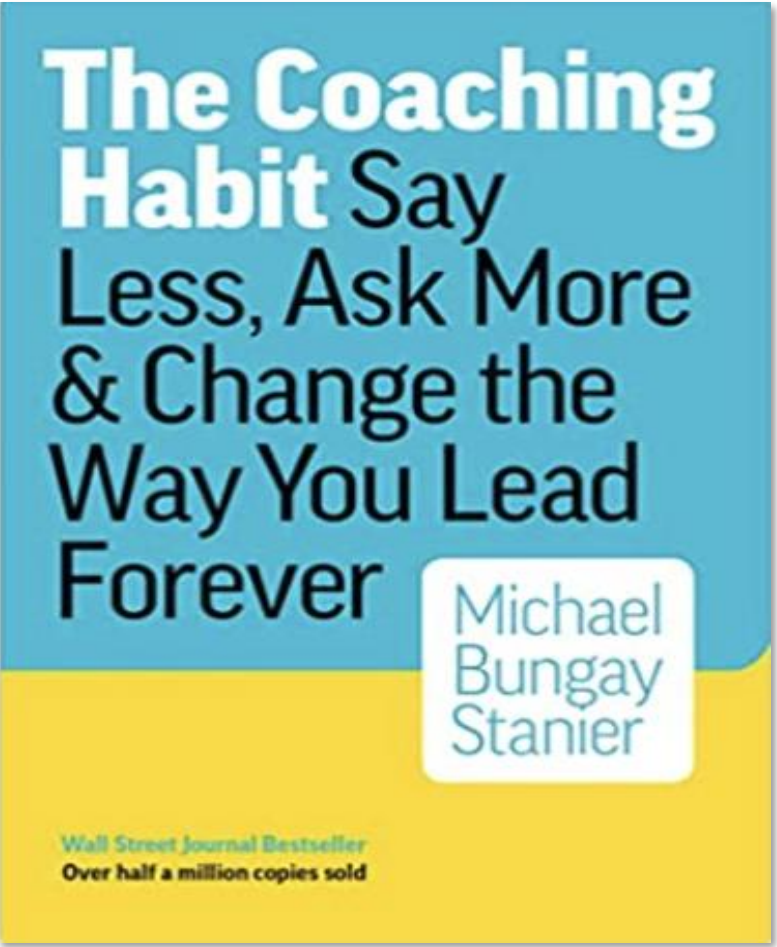
## **The Right Mindset:**

- Having a positive and purposeful attitude towards tough conversations will create success.

## **Skillset & Strategy:**

- Having a repeatable process will create efficiency and ease to giving necessary feedback

# Book Suggestions



# Remember The Best Leaders

- Embrace uncomfortable conversations and overcome the natural tendency to avoid them.
- Know that difficult conversations are necessary for building strong relationships and driving positive change.
- Are aware that avoiding uncomfortable conversations can lead to decreased productivity and hinder personal and professional growth.

