

fierce.®

10 STEPS TO BE FIERCE AT WORK AND AT HOME



WHILE
NO SINGLE
CONVERSATION
IS GUARANTEED
TO CHANGE THE
TRAJECTORY
OF A CAREER,
A COMPANY, A
RELATIONSHIP
OR A LIFE —

ANY SINGLE
CONVERSATION
CAN.



ABOUT FIERCE, INC.

Fierce is a global leadership development and training company that changes the way people communicate with each other. We partner with our clients to transform organizational cultures by building conversational skills that spark curiosity, ignite innovation, invite cross-boundary collaboration, and solve their toughest business challenges.

To learn how to have conversations that get results, please visit us at fierceinc.com.

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THE COLOR ORANGE...

I love it! With an enthusiasm for life, orange relates to adventure and risk-taking – inspiring confidence, competition, and individuality. After all, no word rhymes with orange...You can't get much more unique than that, eh?

Those inspired by orange are always on the go. Orange is both mentally and physically stimulating – it gets people thinking and talking.

In fact, orange is so optimistic and uplifting that we should all find ways to use it in our everyday life, even if it is just an orange colored pen.

I encourage you to bring some glorious and fierce orange into your life by acting on at least three of the steps found in this eBook. Enjoy!



SUSAN SCOTT
Founder, CEO, &
Best-Selling Author

STEP 1:

MAKE A NEW CONNECTION

In your typical week, think about all the individuals you interact with – whether it be on the phone, via email, and even people you pass by on the street. How many of these individuals do you genuinely attempt to foster a connection with?

Let's be honest: We can all spot if someone is not being genuine from a mile away.

What we should be asking ourselves when interacting with others, is whether we are asking questions and actively listening during our conversations with these individuals or do we just wait for our turn to talk?

As our Founder Susan Scott shares, “If you want to become a great leader, gain the capacity to connect with your colleagues and customers at a deep level...or lower your aim.”

BE FIERCE: Make a new connection with someone in your life – whether it be inside or outside the office. Ask questions and really listen. Schedule a time in your calendar for this effort and make it a habit.





STEP 2: **GO DEEPER**

How many times a week do you have a conversation that just stays at the surface level? With your boss? With your colleagues? With your family and friends?

The truth is...It happens. Perhaps, more often than any of us would care to admit. Even when we are in the conversation, we can breeze past each other altogether.

Here's the thing: We are craving depth each day. We are craving real. We want people to care.

Author Joseph Pine once said, "The experience of being understood, versus interpreted, is so compelling you can charge admission."

We need to seek to understand and go deeper in our own day-to-day conversations.

BE FIERCE: Identify the relationships in your life that deserve extra attention. To do this ask yourself: Where and when do you tend to have your most meaningful conversations? Where and when do you tend to have the most superficial conversations?



STEP 3:

ASK ‘WHAT ELSE?’

Think about when someone asks you:

“How’s it going?”

How do you usually respond?

My guess is that the initial answer is surface level.

Work is busy, but good.

Family is good.

Vacation was good.

I’m good.

Surprisingly enough, the conversation becomes drastically different when you ask ‘what else’ afterwards. Only after the ‘what else’ does something juicier come out. It’s almost like ‘what else’ translates to “No, really. I want to know.”

Part of our Fierce Coaching Program, we instruct individuals to ask ‘what else’ at least three times in different parts of the conversation. You’ll find that each time you ask, you will go deeper into the question – exploring and unlocking new territory.

BE FIERCE: Start with the relationships in your life deserve extra attention. Concentrate on where and when you can ask, “What else?” It is only two words after all...



STEP 4:

IMPROVE TWO RELATIONSHIPS

Here's a simple five-word sentence, and yet the depth and applicability of this sentiment is powerful...

The conversation is the relationship.

Just think of all the relationships in your life...How would you rank the quality of your conversations with those relationships on a scale of 1 to 10 – with 1 being most satisfying and 10 being least satisfying. When you picture this spectrum, where would all your conversations land? Is one end of the spectrum heavier than the other?

With that visual in mind, it's important to ask ourselves what kinds of conversations we're having:

- *As a leader, are the conversations developmental and supportive or skeptical and controlling?*
- *As a team member, are the conversations collaborative and robust or superficial and frustrating?*
- *As a friend, are the conversations thoughtful and compassionate or assumptive and insincere?*
- *As an individual, what kind of conversations are we having with ourselves? Are they encouraging and optimistic or critical and sabotaging?*

The quality of your conversations is a direct reflection of the quality of your relationships.

BE FIERCE: Keep things simple. Start by identifying two relationships in your life where you are having the least satisfying conversations. Is it with your boss? With a team member? Your friend? Yourself?

If you want to make the relationships more fulfilling, you must start by improving the content and quality of your conversations. Take them out to coffee. Schedule a lunch. Go somewhere that you can focus.

STEP 5: GET REAL

At Fierce, we do not have annual performance reviews.

Instead, we engage in open and honest conversations every day of the year with the people central to our success. Talking about performance is just one of the many conversations you should be having with your leaders and team each day.

We find that this activity aligns closely with one of our Fierce values: **Be real.**

We describe it like this: There is no faking it at Fierce. We present ourselves – our capabilities and our knowledge – exactly as we are. We don't pretend to be anything we aren't. We are transparent with each other and our clients, and we embrace that which makes each of us unique.

We regularly ask our employees how they are aligning with this value. What does this value mean to them? What does it look like?

BE FIERCE: In the spirit of leading Fierce, get real and be your authentic self. Are you having the conversations you need to have with the people central to your success? If not, there is no better time than the present.





STEP 6: **ASK YOUR TEAM**

Think about a time that a leader in your organization made a decision without consulting the people impacted. How was the decision received? Was there resistance?

Most of the time, when people are disgruntled with how an issue was handled, it is because people's opinions and concerns were not addressed in the first place. People ultimately want to know that their perspectives matter. You might even argue that the simple act of engaging them in a conversation prior is more important than the outcome itself.

American poet Mattie Stepanek once shared, "Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."

In our Fierce Team Program, we help teams achieve unity through our beach ball conversation model. We recognize that no single person holds the whole truth, rather a mere sliver or 'stripe' of it. Inviting different stripes can be one of the most effective ways to explore potential solutions and make important decisions.

BE FIERCE: Ask your team what matters to them when making an important decision. Invite people you normally wouldn't...It may surprise you where the conversation leads.



STEP 7: **DELEGATE, DON'T DELE-DUMP**

How does the phrase ‘delegate that’ show up in your organization? For most organizations, that statement means you need to get rid of a task you currently own as fast as possible.

One of our clients fondly dubbed this act, ‘dele-dumping’.

It’s when someone says, “Let me take ALL of these tasks that waste my time and throw them on your plate.” Let’s be honest: That can make anyone want to run for the hills.

We’ve found that delegation is a frequently misused and under-utilized form of development.

If you start to look at delegation as a means of professional development, you may very well be less inclined to run away when someone says, “I have something to delegate to you.” In fact, your response may very well be, “Thank you!”

Think about it...What is currently on your plate that, if someone else had that responsibility, you would be freed up to take on something else? On top of that, what if the additional responsibility helped that person further mature in their own role? Talk about a win-win.

BE FIERCE: Reflect on your current responsibilities and highlight three that are no longer the best use of your time. Start to have conversations about shifting those to someone else in order to free up your time for new things – this will help you, your team, and your organization grow.



STEP 8: TAKE ACCOUNTABILITY

Have you heard of victim bonding? It's when people get together and talk about how horrible a situation is, rather than doing anything to change it.

Here's how victim bonding shows up in a conversation:

Person A: *"Oh, you are having trouble with Finance?"*

Person B: *"Yes, absolutely. Are you having trouble with Finance? They're horrible! They never give me enough resources."*

Person A: *"Me either! Oh, let me tell you this story..."*

And so, the bond begins. It feels so good. It feels so right. Someone actually 'gets it' or 'gets you.' We all love to victim bond at times.

But let's pause on that.

Have you heard the phrase 'misery loves company'? That's what is really happening here. Essentially, you are not only choosing misery, you are choosing to have someone else's misery in your life as well.

Here's the kicker: No amount of victim bonding will change your situation.

Is that what you really want?

In our Fierce Accountability Program, one of our foundational concepts in the course is: **If it is to be, it is up to me.** That means, if a situation is going to change, you are responsible.

BE FIERCE: Think of a situation in your life where you feel like you are the victim – whether it be with another person or circumstance. Don't proceed to victim bond with your counterparts, instead have a direct conversation to initiate the change you wish to see. Remember, if it is to be, it is up to me.

STEP 9: GIVE PRAISE

When was the last time you said, ‘thank you’ or ‘great work’? And when was the last time you said more than just that?

The numbers don’t lie folks. According to John Templeton Foundation’s gratitude survey from 2014, only 30% of employees thank a co-worker multiple times a week and only 20% thank their boss several times a week. Shockingly, 29% never thank a co-worker and 35% of employees never thank their boss...Wow.

A good approach is to share and recognize how you yourself have grown in the last year and how your team’s efforts have impacted that growth. Ask yourself: Has your colleague gone out of his or her way to help with a project? Are you grateful for how someone is showing up? Did your team hit it out of the park? Tell them!

So, how can you focus on expressing more gratitude in your workplace?

Get specific and give them praise! It’s a form of feedback and essential for creating a healthy working environment.

The best part: This is something everyone can do – not just leadership.

BE FIERCE: Share praise with at least three people in your organization.

When giving this feedback, highlight and describe their positive actions with plenty of details. Then share the significance and impact their actions had for yourself and others. Make it sincere. Make it real.





STEP #10:

BE BRAVE, ASK FOR FEEDBACK NOW

How do you feel about work? Do you know where you stand with yourself, your leader, and your colleagues in relation to your efforts?

Don't wait until a formal review is scheduled to have the conversation. Real-time feedback is necessary to refine what is working and what is not working.

During this time, you need to ask the tough questions:

- Where do you see me adding the most value?
- What feedback do you have for me with the work I am currently doing?
- Do you see opportunities for me to improve?
- How can I help you be the most successful through my efforts?

Sometimes the feedback is not the easiest to hear. It takes bravery and people caring to share their honest perspective. For you, it takes guts and humility to truly listen.

BE FIERCE: Use the questions above to have a conversation with your boss or colleague about specifics of your work. Regardless of the outcome, truly understanding others' perspectives unblocks career paths and allows you to achieve so much more in the future.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

Improving the quality and depth of our conversations is a lifelong journey.

There is a lot at stake to get it right – as professionals, as partners, as friends, as fellow inhabitants of Earth.

Remember: While no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a career, a company, a relationship or a life – any single conversation can.

That's why it helps to take it one step at a time. And any one of these 10 steps are a step in the right direction.

I hope that this resource helps you move closer to what you really want in life – whether it be at home, at work, or just with yourself.

Cheers to having more orange in our lives!



STACEY ENGLE
President of Fierce, Inc.

MORE RESOURCES FOR MORE CONVERSATIONS

The goal of a Fierce practice is to have open, honest, face-to-face conversations, 365 days a year, with the people central to your success and happiness.

We want you to keep those conversations going and download our other popular eBooks today:



5 CONVERSATIONS YOU NEED TO START HAVING TODAY

There's more than one kind of conversation. In the 15-plus years that we've been training people how to talk about what matters we've pinpointed five critical types.

Each of these conversations is a different animal, requiring a unique approach in order to drive the most value.

Get started changing your organization for the better today with this primer on the five types of conversations that will revolutionize your business.

[Download your copy here.](#)



6 LEADING PROBLEMS BUSINESSES FACE TODAY – AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

Based on conversations we've had with our clients, we've identified six leading problems companies are facing in today's market that are preventing them from growing and achieving maximum potential.

Each of these problems share a single root cause, and it's critical to address them head-on before they lead to even bigger issues – including significant net losses, damages to company reputation, or in the worst-case scenario, a complete dissolution of your organization.

This resource will guide you in diagnosing these problems, assessing their impact, and revealing how you can solve them with the right conversations.

[Download your copy here.](#)