

MI-ACE Women's Network Annual Conference 2026

Courageous Conversations: Leading with Empathy & Impact

Books

- **Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High** — Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan & Al Switzler
A cornerstone text on navigating high-stakes dialogue with clarity and confidence.
- **Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.** — Brené Brown
Explores vulnerability-based leadership and what it means to lead courageously.
- **Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most** — Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton & Sheila Heen
A Harvard Negotiation Project framework for approaching hard conversations effectively.
- **The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups** — Daniel Coyle
Examines how trust, safety, and belonging shape high-performing teams.
- **Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life** — Marshall B. Rosenberg
A practical guide to empathetic communication that reduces defensiveness.
- **Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In** — Roger Fisher & William Ury
Classic conflict resolution strategies grounded in principled negotiation.
- **The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace** — Amy C. Edmondson
Research-backed strategies for building cultures where people feel safe to speak up.




Podcasts

- **Dare to Lead with Brené Brown**
Episodes explore courage, empathy, and vulnerability in leadership.
[🔗 brenebrown.com/podcast](https://brenebrown.com/podcast)
- **WorkLife with Adam Grant (TED)**
Explores the science of making work better — includes episodes on feedback, conflict, and psychological safety.
[🔗 ted.com/podcasts/worklife](https://ted.com/podcasts/worklife)
- **How to Be Awesome at Your Job**
Practical professional development conversations, including communication and leadership episodes.
[🔗 awesomeatyourjob.com/podcast](https://awesomeatyourjob.com/podcast)
- **The Empathy Edge with Maria Ross**
Focused specifically on empathetic leadership and its business impact.
[🔗 red-slice.com/empathy-edge-podcast](https://red-slice.com/empathy-edge-podcast)
- **Coaching for Leaders with Dave Stachowiak**
Covers active listening, difficult conversations, and leadership development.
[🔗 coachingforleaders.com](https://coachingforleaders.com)

Videos & Talks

- **"The Power of Vulnerability" — Brené Brown (TED Talk)**
One of the most-watched TED Talks on empathy and human connection.
[🔗 ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability](https://ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability)
- **"Dare to Disagree" — Margaret Heffernan (TED Talk)**
A compelling case for constructive conflict as a driver of progress.
[🔗 ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_dare_to_disagree](https://ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_dare_to_disagree)
- **"How to Have a Good Conversation" — Celeste Headlee (TED Talk)**
Ten evidence-based principles for more meaningful dialogue.
[🔗 ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation](https://ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation)
- **"Building a Psychologically Safe Workplace" — Amy Edmondson (TEDx Talk)**
Research-grounded insights on creating safety for honest communication.
[🔗 Search "Amy Edmondson TEDx psychological safety" on YouTube](#)
- **"Empathy" — Brené Brown (RSA Animate Short)**
A widely used 3-minute animated video distinguishing empathy from sympathy.
[🔗 Search "Brené Brown Empathy RSA" on YouTube](#)

Online Resources & Frameworks

- **The Courageous Conversations Protocol** — Glenn Singleton
A structured framework for equity-focused dialogue; widely used in education settings.
- **SCARF Model** — David Rock, NeuroLeadership Institute
A neuroscience-based model explaining threat and reward responses in social interactions — useful for reducing defensiveness.
 neuroleadership.com
- **The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety** — Timothy R. Clark
A framework for understanding how inclusion and safety develop in teams.
 leaderfactor.com
- **Center for Creative Leadership — Conflict Resolution Resources**
 ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/conflict-resolution-strategies