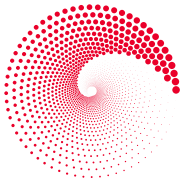


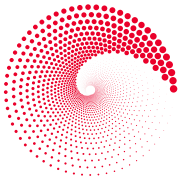
COURAGEOUS
CONVERSATIONS

Courageous Conversations rest on the underlying belief that we are far more than what others might view as our worst vote, deed, belief or action. When we listen rather than lecture, disclose rather than accuse, inquire rather than condemn we unlock possibilities that might otherwise have been closed-off. In conflict or debate — be it in the workplace, family, congregations, or policy arena — the capacity to extend ourselves across lines of difference, build common ground and find ways to savor the tension of honest disagreement begins with courage and conversation. This is where the road begins for each of us, our families, communities and country.

Rather than starting with issues, opinions, facts and figures, in Courageous Conversations we begin with learning - about ourselves and our conversation partnerwe. Learning upon whose shoulders we each stand, the values that motivate each of us, and our lived experience, the seeds of kind of conversation begins.

You are an agent of change.
You have the power to act more courageously and make change happen. You can begin with a Courageous Conversation.

PURPOSE: To begin a conversation with courage and compassion — for ourselves and others — that moves the needle of change toward a more just world.



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HOW IT WORKS

1. **Start with yourself. Choose 3 images that *most* speak to what matters most to you, the leader you aspire to be or the way you try to carry yourself in the world.**

   Tip: Remember, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer. Spend 3-5 minutes sorting through the cards and select the images that evoke a feeling representing this vision of yourself. For example, a photo of a boat doesn't have to mean you see yourself leading on the water. It could metaphorically signify your desire to live with a mindset of abundance, navigating your own course, experience adventure or work in the company of others.

2. **Next, take 3-5 minutes to select the images that *least* speak to the leader you aspire to be.**

3. **Share with a partner:**

   a. *What does each card represent for you?*

   b. *What is the story that makes that image important or meaningful for you?*

   c. *How does this image represent how you understand the world and your place in it?*

4. **Listen to learn from a partner:**

   a. *What are you learning from your partner, their stories and what matters most to them?*

   b. *Where might the images and their stories overlap with, or diverge from, your own?*

   c. *Where are you finding common ground and areas of tension?*

   d. *What can you be curious about to go into deeper conversation?*

TAKE ACTION

1. If you are working in a group setting, keep the conversation going by connecting with others to share what patterns, themes and fault lines you're uncovering in this exercise.

2. Identify who else you want to be in conversation with. Explore the assumptions and fears that you, and that other person, may be coming to the conversation with. Use these cards to embark on a courageous conversation journey with them

3. Based on who you are, how you try to lead and what matters most to you, what are the ways in which you want to show up courageously in your conversations?

4. Write a vision statement, based on the images you selected, to describe how you aspire to act based on the conversation you had.

5. Share this tool and what you've learned about yourself with others.

THE INVITATION **Drawn from the Bridging the Gap program**

1. Our intention is to take seriously the things that others hold dear. If it matters to you then it will matter to us;

2. We are not here to convince anyone they are wrong or try to change them;

3. We are curious why people think the way they do and rather than thinking we are diminished by listening carefully to ideas we might disagree with, we trust that we are enhanced by it; and

4. We believe there is more common ground and experience than we anticipate and when there isn't we can fundamentally disagree with someone and still respect, even love, them.

ABOUT SIMON GREER

Simon Greer has been a social change entrepreneur for 25 years. His Courageous Conversations project in partnership with The Nantucket Project and their collaboration on *American Neighbor* (2020), *For The Common Good* (2019), and *Opening of the American Mind* (2022) have helped spark the creation of this toolkit. Simon is the founder of Cambridge Heath Ventures (CHV), Bridging the Gap (BTG), Face to Face and Courageous Conversations.

ABOUT 21/64

Over the past nearly 20 years, 21/64 has become the preeminent resource for families, advisors, and organizations interested in a fusion of experiential learning and purposeful skill building keenly designed with insight about each generation. We serve those who believe that successful individuals, families and organizations are intentional about their human, philanthropic, and financial assets, while actively investing in the development of each of these assets as their strategy for longevity and success.

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