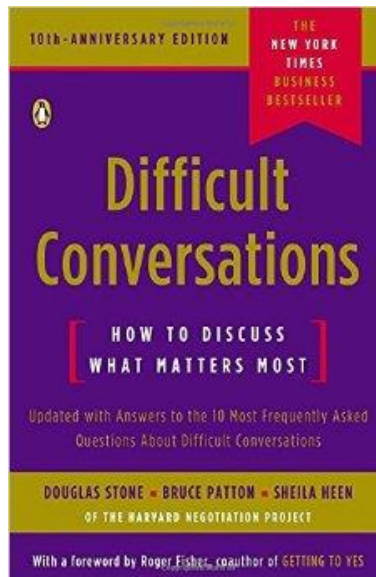


PRODUCTIVE
MUSLIM ACADEMY

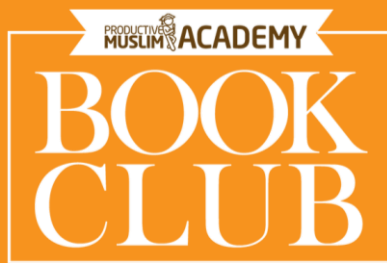
BOOK CLUB



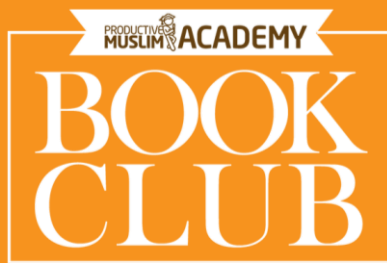
Difficult Conversations – Week 1: Orientation

Begin the book and finish Chapter 3: Don't Assume They Meant it, by the end of the week.

Reading Milestone	Thoughts and Actions to Consider Briefly	Supporting Material and Activities
Before beginning the book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the last time I had or avoided a “difficult conversation”? • When I think about “difficult conversations” how do I feel? • Why do I avoid difficult conversations? How does that affect my productivity? • What actions suggest that I that I don’t consider my contribution to a difficult conversation? • If I could improve my relationship with two people who would they be and why? What difficult conversation would I have to start? • What is my specific and unique purpose of reading this book? • Are there prejudices or unhelpful thoughts I need to address before I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMPULSORY VIDEO: Are you avoiding the difficult conversation? By Kathy Kiernan https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exFpUunPoCY • Notes from your reading of Ego is the Enemy if you have them. • Dua prayers • Facebook and Academy Book Club forum



	<p>start reading?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I given myself permission to dedicate this time to myself, in order to learn and grow? • Have I expressed gratitude to Allah (swt) and myself for allowing this time to read and reflect? 	
<p>Introduction and Chapter 1: Sort Out the Three Conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I think about Ali's story in the preface? Could I relate to it? • Am I willing to take the risk of having that difficult conversation, knowing that is how I am going to change things? • Is "being busy" an excuse to put off a difficult conversation? Are my excuses helping the situation or making it worse? • When I stop thinking about the "facts" and start seeing interpretation, perception and values does that change the way I view a conversation? • Do I forgive myself when I have a difficult conversation and accidentally made the situation worse? What has this chapter taught me? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two people you would like to have a difficult conversation with. Try to see your argument from their perspective. Clarify what you need to say to the person without assigning blame (towards them or yourself). Leave space for new perspectives you will obtain in chapters 2 and 3. • Facebook forum and Academy Book Club forum
<p>Chapter 2 Stop Arguing About Who's Right</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can I relate to any of the characters presented in this chapter? Does reading about them change the way I view my own situation? • How does the way I see a "difficult conversation" change when I realise both my assumptions and that of the other person make sense in our respective worlds? • How does my Islam change the way I interact with people, even when we have a difficult relationship? • Do I celebrate the power of choice? Or do I surrender my choices to other people's needs, without asking myself, is this really my responsibility, and if it is, to what extent is it my responsibility? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quran and notes from Mohammed: How He Can Make You Extraordinary if you have them. • Talk to a good friend about what you are learning in the book. They are also likely to benefit from it. • This month's challenge • Facebook and Academy Book Club forum



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the above a source of “difficult conversations”? How can I change this? 	
Chapter 3: Don't Assume They Mean it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do I think of the ambulance vs the expensive BMW blocking the road story? What does it tell me about expectations and assumptions? Do I recognise the Leo & Lori story in my own life? What did I learn from it? Will it change how I react towards my spouse? What do I think the authors are trying to tell me in this chapter? Is there anything I disagree with or need to work through with people I love? Did I really and truthfully go through all the questions asked in this worksheet in order to orient myself for the following weeks, in order to have those difficult conversations I described in the supplementary activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask family, colleagues and friends about whether you have been truly present in conversations with them or if you have just been explaining how “busy” and “tired” you feel. Ask for help if it has been a tough week! This month's challenge

Productive Muslim and Muslimah Book Club Challenge of the Month

This challenge is a little bit different to previous challenges we have set in the Academy book club. This one lasts all month so read the instructions carefully.

- 1) Write a list of all the difficult conversations you have had in the past and what made them difficult. Re-play one or two of them in head. Now apply what you have learned this week to those conversations. Did anything change? Was the result more positive?



- 2) Identify two people you love with which you need to have a difficult conversation. You can discuss this with other people but ONLY IF you are going to also speak to the person that you must speak to in order to solve the problem. Do not create more “middle men” and do NOT gossip (talk about the issue for the sake of it, in order to put another person down).
- 3) Arrange to meet one of the two people you have identified in public (a neutral place is best). Do NOT have the difficult conversation via text message and only use the phone if it is absolutely impossible for geographical reasons to meet in person.
- 4) Apply what you have learned this week in the conversation. Listen to the other person without trying to second guess their motives or intentions. Understand that they will also be trying to second guess you – so be very clear (and kind) about your side of things too. If things get heated, agree to disagree this week. Tell them you are working a few things out and you need time to process. Offer another meeting next week.