


Having a positive
influence on others





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Having a positive influence on others

Every one of us is having an influence on others in everything we do. What if we were all 2-3% better at having a positive influence on others? What might that mean for our students, colleagues, parents, partners, siblings, and friends? Take a moment to capture your thoughts to this question below.

In this session you are invited to consider the notion of '**stretch**' and using this yourself to go that little bit further with those you come into contact with and those important in your life. How might you have a more positive influence on those around you?

Take a moment to capture what you are already doing to stretch yourself.

Once you have finished capturing down your thoughts, on what you are already doing to have a positive influence on others above, share one or two of the things you noted in the chat box of the webinar. Doing so may help others identify new additional things they could do to have a more positive impact on others.



Impact

You never really know the true impact you have on those around you. You never know how much someone needed that smile you gave them. You never know how much your kindness turned someone's entire life around. So don't wait to be kind. Don't wait for someone else to be kind first. Don't wait for better circumstances or for someone to change. Just be kind, because you never know how much someone needs it.

Nikki Banas

Stretch

Now let's begin to think about stretch. What more could you do? It could be a little, it could be a lot. Either way it might be useful to consider how busy you are, what space and context you are in and what you can realistically do. Large or small, any additional actions are bound to be beneficial. As Nikki Banas's quote reminds us - little actions can have a large impact.

In this webinar we all have the opportunity draw on three sources of learning. Content learning, facilitator and moderator led learning, and participant led learning. For the participant led learning component we encourage you to contribute to the chat box and take note of colleagues post that feel relevant to you.

In this session you will:

- Determine what you can do to boost the quality of your day-to-day social interactions.
- Identify a close personal relationship you could improve and the actions you can take to do so.
- Explore a coaching model for helping others respond to their challenging situations effectively.

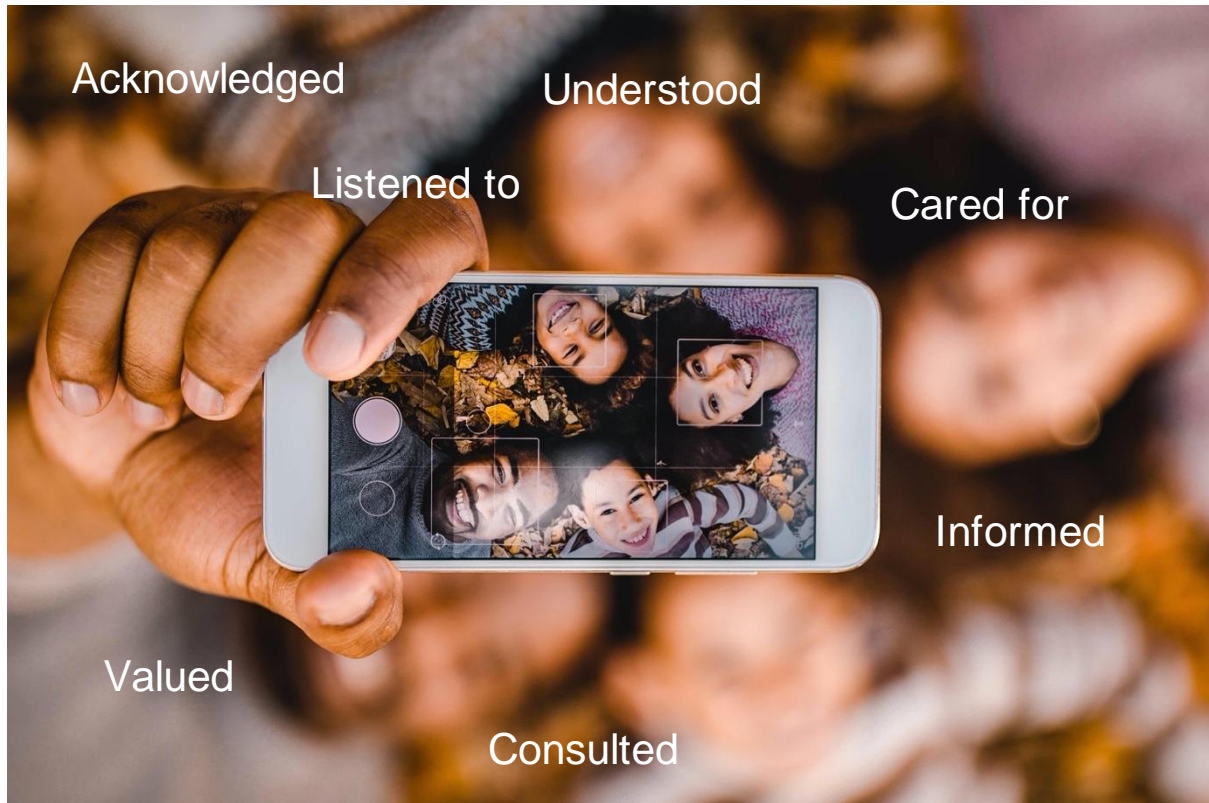
While we invite you to **stretch** – to go that little bit further with those you come in to contact with and those important in your life – we also invite you to think about the notion of **Continuous Relationship Improvement**. In education we all understand the benefits of continuous school improvement. Today let's bring that mindset to our relationships and day-to-day connections. We hope to inspire you to engage in the reflective process of identifying what you can do to enhance your interactions and relationships regularly.

This session is one of a two-part series designed to help you unpack ways to enhance your capacity to manage emotions and positively influence the way you and others are thinking, feeling and acting.

Managing emotions can be difficult, particularly in times of uncertainty. This year has been challenging in almost every aspect of our lives, and it is more important than ever that we invest in our wellbeing.

This session deepens the learning covered in Bastow's previous wellbeing webinars: [Watch recordings](#).

People are positively influenced when they feel...



One way of identifying ways we can positively influence others is to consider the feelings that reflect this influence. Doing so can help inform the actions. The science of emotions has shown us that people are positively influenced when they feel pleasant feelings like those mentioned above.

The list above is in no way exhaustive. Take a moment to consider other feelings that people experience when we've had a positive influence on them, capture your thoughts below and then contribute in the chat box.



Positively influencing others

Below is a list of ways we can do to positively influence others in our day-to-day social interactions.

Be present and demonstrate mindful listening

People feel more heard and understood when we are present (rather than distracted) in our interactions with them. To enhance your skill at being present and demonstrating mindful listening you can practice mindfulness meditation. There are many great mindfulness apps and resources available on the web. Smiling Mind (www.smilingmind.com.au) is a non-for-profit, free to use, web and app-based meditation program developed by psychologists and educators to help bring mindfulness into your life.

What else can you do to be present and demonstrate mindful listening when interacting with others?

Be curious

Thursday 10 September 2020 is our national day of action when Australians are reminded to ask, 'Are you OK?'. Think of being curious as an extension of this. 2020 has been a challenging year for everyone making it particularly important for us all to stay connected and stretch that little bit more into our conversations and interactions with others. Take more time to check in with:

1. How people are going.
2. What they are up to.
3. What is going on in their lives.

How do you demonstrate curiosity in your day-to-day interactions?

Leave a comment in the chat box and watch for others. Capture down new ideas that come from hearing the session moderators and reading your colleague contributions in the chat box.

How else could you demonstrate curiosity with the people in your life in your day-to-day interactions?



Gestures

Another great way to think about doing more to push that stretch and foster some of the feelings explored earlier is to give or make more meaningful gestures. Whether it's lifting your head up more and smiling at people as they walk by, talking more with the customer service people at the local shops or asking a stranger how they are going. Doing these small gestures foster connection and a sense of belonging.

What gestures are coming to mind for you now? What ones are you doing and what might you be able to start doing or do more of? Capture thoughts below, contribute in the chat box and capture down contributions in the chat box from colleagues that you might be able to adopt.

Plan interactions and be more intentional

Another way of improving our interactions and having a more positive influence on others is to plan for our interactions and be more intentional in how we set them up. Below are some of points you can ask yourself or consider:

1. What mood and emotions might the people I'm meeting have?
2. What mood and emotion is most appropriate for me to display in the interaction? Nothing is worse than someone's unbridled positivity when the mood and emotions of others is sombre.
3. What's the best environment for this interaction (inside/outside, formal, relaxed), what might help foster connection?
4. What questions could I ask?
5. What am I doing to acknowledge what I've heard and signify my understanding?
6. What interesting and relevant information could I share?

What else can we plan for, or be more intentional about, when setting up our interactions with others? Leave a comment in the chat box and watch for others. Capture down new ideas that come from hearing the session moderators and reading your colleague contributions in the chat box.



Stretch action plan

What are you already doing that you could do more of to boost the quality of your day-to-day interactions?

What else could you do to boost the quality of your day-to-day social interactions?

In the spirit of continuous improvement, plan a time to revisit what you've been doing to reflect on and renew your approach to day-to-day interactions and jot it down below.

The following links are to helpful positive influence blogs:

7 Simple ways to be a positive influence:

<https://www.trainingzone.co.uk/community/blogs/christinapd/7-simple-ways-to-be-a-positive-influence-as-a-leader>

The importance of good influences

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/happiness-in-world/201004/the-importance-good-influences>

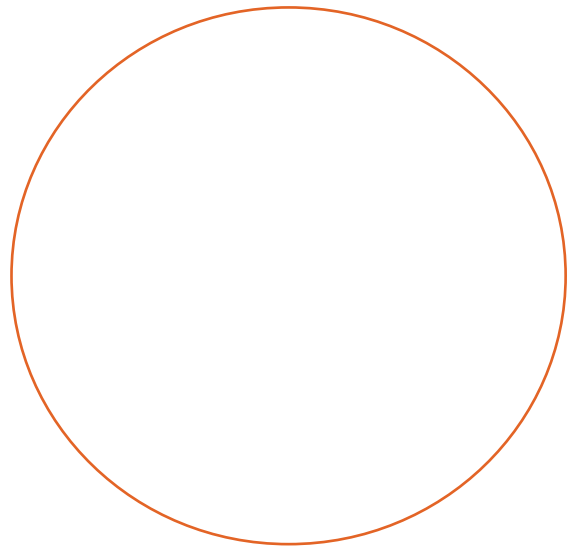
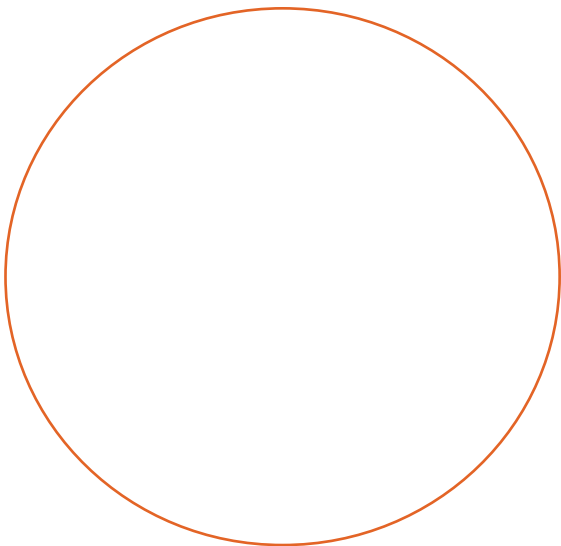
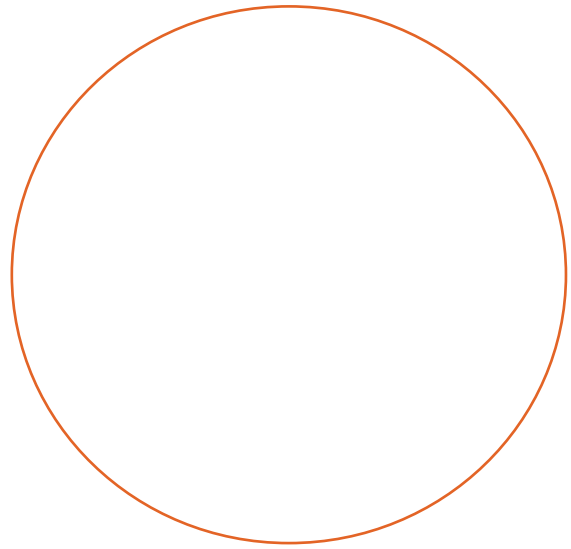
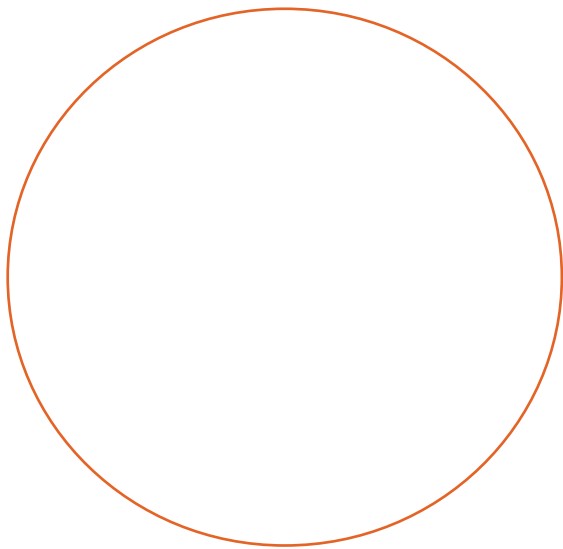
How The Way You 'Show Up' Affects Your Influence:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rodgerdeanduncan/2019/08/13/how-the-way-you-show-up-affects-your-influence/#2a609e7b2892>



Improving close relationships

In this next part of our session we invite you to turn your attention to improving your close relationships by engaging in this **relationship circles activity**. Firstly, give each circle a relevant heading that indicates the relationship (for example Partner, Friends, Colleague, Siblings, Parents, Students, Children). Then put the names of relevant people in them. Then choose someone (one person for the purpose of the activity), you'd like to focus on in the next activity. This should be someone you'd like to improve your relationship with.



Relationship improvement suggestions

The list below should be viewed simply as ‘thought provokers’, ideas that you might be able to apply to the relationship and person you have decided to focus on. Each idea requires further thinking and research to better define your application of it.

When coming up with ideas of your own or building out those below to suit your own context, focus on improving yourself. Research into the effectiveness of relationship improvement strategies has shown that those who focus on improving themselves (rather than trying to change the other person in the relationship), generally have greater success¹.

Strategy	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality and/or amount of time you spend together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify activities of mutual interest to engage in together (e.g., cooking, listening to or playing certain music, walking in nature etc). • Practice mindfulness meditation to help you become more present and mindful when spending time with others. • Put your phone and other distractions away when together. • Take the time to conceptualise fun or interesting new activities to do together.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read books or blogs on how to improve specific aspects of relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase intimacy in a partner relationship: https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/creating-in-flow/201602/10-proven-ways-you-can-increase-intimacy • Improve your parenting: https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/8-ways-to-be-a-better-parent/ • Discover how to be a better friend: https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-ways-better-friend.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read books or blogs or engage in courses on how to improve specific relational skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase your skill at facilitating difficult conversations: https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-have-difficult-conversations • Improve your empathy: https://andrewsobel.com/eight-ways-to-improve-your-empathy/ • Improve your communication in relationships: https://positivepsychology.com/communication-in-relationships/ • Enhance your skill at facilitating interesting conversation: https://coachingforleaders.com/facilitate-great-conversations/

Depending on the context of the relationship you have chosen to work on, one additional idea is to simply engage in conversation about how you could improve the relationship. For example, by simply asking ‘what can I do to improve our relationship’.

1. Hira, S. N., & Overall, N. C. (2011). Improving intimate relationships: Targeting the partner versus changing the self. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 28(5), 610–633. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407510388586>



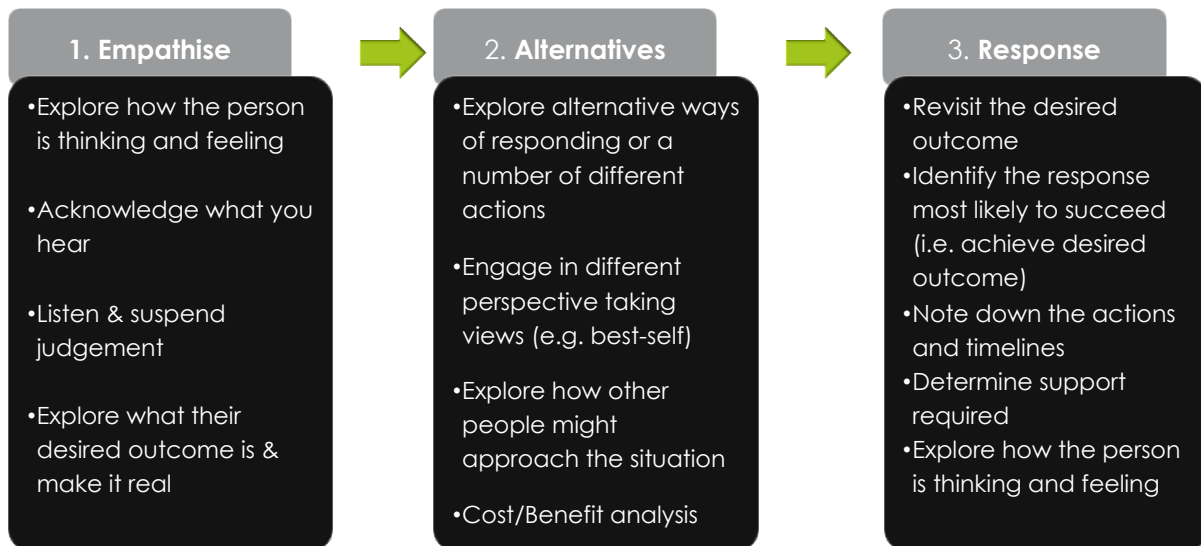
Helping others respond to challenging situations

There is a lot of great research on how we can best help others respond to challenging situations. Some of this research is noted below. Some of it can seem counter intuitive which is another reason why it's worth reflecting on.

1. When helping others, it's important to manage your own emotions and demonstrate appropriate emotions for the context of your discussion. It is important not try and bring positivity to the conversation as messages of positivity can deny others a very real sense of struggle and can isolate them further. The Age and SMH recently printed an article on this topic: <https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/health-and-wellness/it-s-ok-not-to-be-ok-experts-say-it-is-time-to-ditch-toxic-positivity-20200820-p55nh9.html>. While there is no right way to be, you have to be fit for context, generally calm and caring. You should avoid words and phrases like 'everything will be fine' and 'look on the bright side'.
2. Listen and coach as much as possible and provide advice only where necessary or invited to give it. This is particularly important when you have been in similar situations and overcame them. In such circumstances we can be quick to jump in offering advice on how to overcome something and appear particularly confident in our suggested approach. It is harder to empathise with people if we've been in their shoes. Known as the **empathy gap phenomenon**, research has shown that:
 - a. People generally have difficulty accurately recalling just how difficult a past challenging experience was.
 - b. People who have previously overcome a challenging experience know that they were able to do so which makes them particularly confident in their understanding of 'how to'. When people feel calm and confident they often have trouble appreciating the current 'hot' affective state of others.
3. Generally, plan and be intentional. It only takes a few minutes of consideration to demonstrably improve your approach. Ask yourself questions like:
 - a. What environment is the best for this conversation?
 - b. What emotion do I want to project and how will I do that?
 - c. What words and phrases should I avoid?
 - d. What's my purpose for this interaction?
 - e. What's my intention for this interaction?

The E.A.R. coaching model for helping others

The model presented below is a cognitive reframing model that can be used as a guide for a coaching/mentoring conversation to help someone identify the best possible response to make to a challenging situation.



It's also worth thinking about:

- Setting up an environment that facilitates connection.
- Using purpose and vulnerability to foster trust and relatedness.
- Using open questions and mindful listening to hear and grasp how the person is thinking and feeling.
- Acknowledging what you've heard to signify your understanding.



Summary

In this session we have:

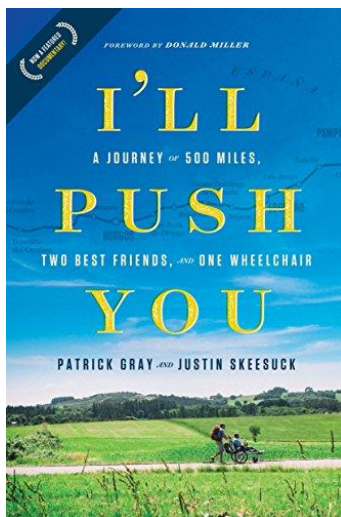
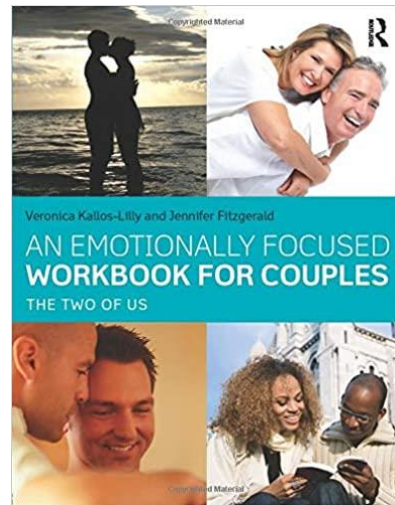
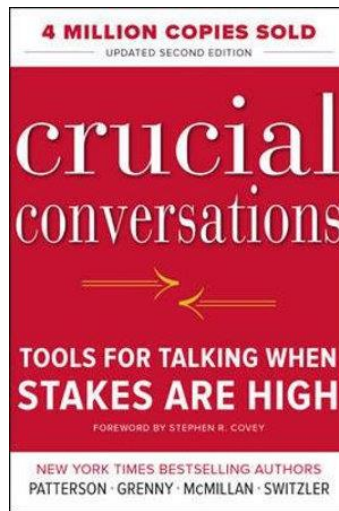
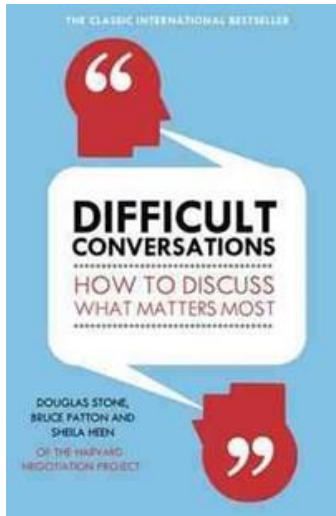
- explored ways to improve our day-to-day social interactions and identified new ways we can do more to be a positive influence on others
- identified ways to improve a close relationship
- looked at some principles and a model to help us help those facing challenging circumstances.

What is something that has stood out for you today?

What's been most relevant to you?

What will you do to better invest in your social interactions and close relationships?

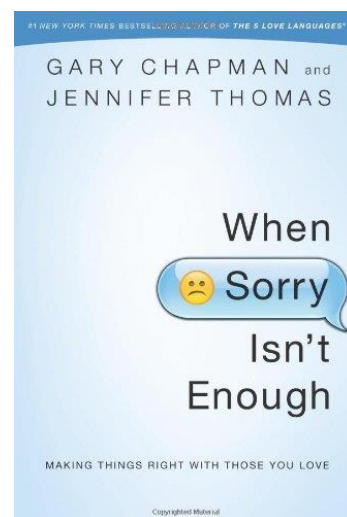
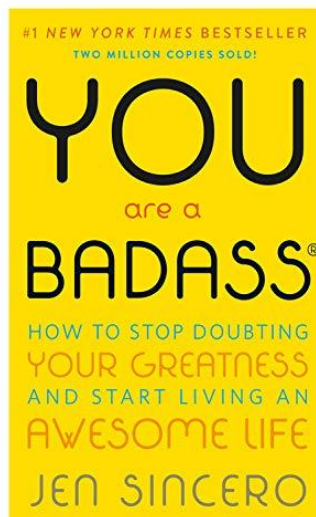
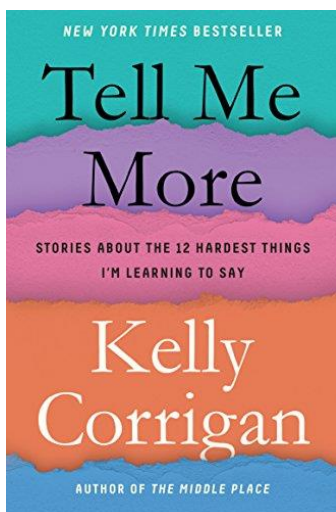
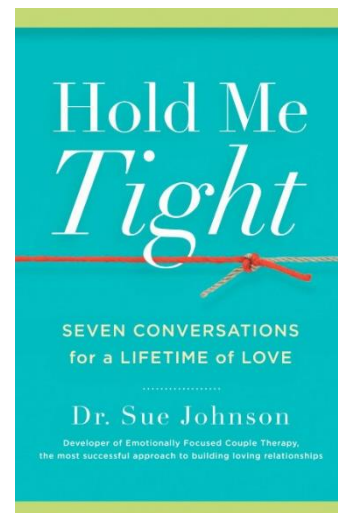
Recommended reading



MICHAEL S. SORENSEN

**I HEAR
YOU**

THE SURPRISINGLY
SIMPLE SKILL BEHIND
EXTRAORDINARY
RELATIONSHIPS





Game changing for business. Life changing for people

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