Wholly Shift:
Moving from Dangerous Discourse to Extraordinary Dialogue

Nicole Lance | Eric M. Bailey
We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.

- Albert Einstein
UNDER STRESS, OUR BRAINS TAKE SHORTCUTS

@Eric_M_Bailey
@nicolemlance
1. The Illusion of Certainty
2. Perceptions vs. Reality
3. The Fight to Be Right
4. The Power of Distinction
5. Power of Context
6. Transformation of Empathy
Our Brains Like to Project Certainty (even when there is none)

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Warning!!!

Even Though You Know About It,
The Illusion Of Certainty
Will Come Back To Bite You.
MAYBE THAT’S THE ILLUSION OF CERTAINTY

• I know what to expect
• I’ve been to so many of these sessions before
• I know what you’re going to say
• These things are a waste of time
Illusion of certainty has us say,

I Know,

I Know,

I Know
The only things in life that we can learn are things that we don’t yet know.

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Now, Who Are We?
We Do Things Differently. Intentionally.
How We Serve

Team Retreats
Organizational Training
Strategic Planning
Diversity & Inclusion
Community Engagement
Executive Coaching

We Do Things Differently. Intentionally.
Meet Nicole

Nicole Dailey Lance · 1st
CEO at Lance Strategies

Lance Strategies
Arizona State University
Meet Eric

Eric M. Bailey
President, BSIG; #1 Bestselling Author of #TheCureForStupidity; Keynote Speaker; Facilitator; Honorary Commander Luke AFB.

Bailey Strategic Innovation Group
Saint Louis University
Meet Eric

Kotter International
Change Management Consultant
Mission:

We Serve Those Who Serve

#thecureforstupidity
Vision:

We Will Change the Way the World Communicates
Let’s experience it!
1. The Illusion of Certainty
2. Perceptions vs. Reality
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6. Transformation of Empathy
Without distinction, we can’t even know what we’re missing

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Without distinction, people make “COMMON SENSE” errors and it’s not their fault. It’s your opportunity.
HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY?!
HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY NOT KNOW THAT?!
HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY SEE IT THAT WAY?!
Subtext:
YOU’RE AN IDIOT.
There are two things that get in the way of productive dialogue.
OUR MOUTHS & OUR BRAINS
Define Dangerous Discourse

- Important Content / Subject
- Personal Connectivity / Emotion
- Disagreement / Conflict
How are we at Dangerous Discourse?

We Stink!
Ironically, the more dangerous the discourse, the less likely we are to handle it well.
We Can Change Dangerous Discourse into Extraordinary Dialogue
Goals of Extraordinary Dialogue

• Learn
• Find the Truth
• Produce Results
• Strengthen Relationships
Perspective, Context, and Understanding

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Context ≠ Data
Alignment of Purpose
Look for Common Desired Results
Ask Yourself

2 Questions
What Do I Truly Want?
What Do They Truly Want?
Understanding = Group IQ
The More Context and Understanding, The Better Decisions the Group Makes
Decisions Made Without Your Perspective / Context...
No Buy-In
No Engagement
Almost Any Debate Can be resolved by listening to find mutual purpose
Okay, but how do we recognize Dangerous Discourse?
PHYSIOLOGY OF DANGEROUS DISCOURSE
WHY DO WE STINK?
WHY DO WE STINK?
WHY DO WE STINK?
Glancing?

“The mere presence of cell phones, reduces our cognitive capability.”

University of Texas Austin Study
2 Reasons

1. Your brain actually has to work to avoid distraction... Giving you fewer resources to think

2. When you glance at the phone, your brain switches tasks, switches back, and gets back up to speed.
62% of Workers WASTE at least 60 minutes / day

89% of Workers WASTE at least 30 minutes / day
Destruction from Distraction
1. The Illusion of Certainty
2. Perceptions vs. Reality
3. The Fight to Be Right
4. The Power of Distinction
5. Power of Context
6. Transformation of Empathy
PERCEPTION ≠ REALITY
The state of things as they actually exist, RATHER THAN AS THEY MAY BE PERCEIVED or might be imagined.

PERCEPTION X

REALITY

A way of understanding or interpreting something.

(The Way I Believe It To Be / World View / “Truth”)
PERCEPTION → REALITY
What You Say Or Do Matters Less Than What They Hear Or Feel

(Reality)

(Perception)

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When in Danger, We Survive Using

Fight

Or

Flight
Signs of Flight

• Masking
  – Sarcasm / Sugar Coating
• Avoiding
• Withdrawing
Signs of Flight - Masking

• Sarcasm

“Oh yeah, that’ll work like a charm. Require all salaried employees to track their hours everyday so we can save a few minutes?! Where do you come up with this stuff?”

Meaning: That probably won’t work like you want it to.
Signs of Flight - Avoiding

• Avoiding sensitive issues

“Do you like my idea for the employee recognition ceremony?”

“Well, recognition *is* good...”

Meaning: I don’t, it’s half-baked and I’m concerned that it may be self-serving.
“What do I think of your idea???
Umm... I think I hear my boss typing an email. Gotta go.”

Meaning: I don’t think that our relationship can handle critical feedback.
Signs of Fight

• Controlling
• Labeling
• Attacking
Signs of Fight - Controlling

• Cutting others off
• Overstating the facts
• Speaking in absolutes
• Using directive questions to steer the conversation
“Any idiot can see that this is the best solution. Don’t you agree?”

Meaning: I want this. Don’t disappoint me.
Assigning a label to a person or idea so that we can dismiss them as a stereotype or category.
“Your idea is practically Neanderthal. Any normal person would go with my idea.”

Meaning: I can’t argue based on merit, so I’ll attack you instead.
Signs of Fight - Attacking

Beyond trying to win... trying to make them suffer.
“You want to go rogue? Go ahead and see what happens.”

Meaning: I will get my way on this even if I have to bad-mouth you and threaten some vague punishment.
When We’re In Fight or Flight, we Get Caught in The Fool’s Choice
Fool’s Choice

Be honest (and disrespectful)

Be respectful (and dishonest)
HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLES
For Illustration ONLY...
Council member wants exception
“Not an option”

Be honest (and disrespectful)
“We’re really not supposed to, but... I suppose we can make it work this time.”

Be respectful (and dishonest)
City Manager Is Late
“Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on mine.”

Be honest (and disrespectful)
“Sure, it’s no problem. We can make it happen.”

Be respectful (and dishonest)
Department Head Doesn’t Care About Deadlines
“Too bad, so sad. You’ll have to wait two weeks.”

Be honest (and disrespectful)
“Well, I guess it’s not too big of a deal to open the system back up so you can submit your staff report…”

Be respectful (and dishonest)
The Lie We Tell Ourselves

WE MUST EITHER
BE RESPECTFUL (AND DISHONEST)
OR
BE HONEST (AND RUDE)
Be honest

Be respectful
“I’m sorry Council member, we need to stick to the rules on this one. However, I could help you accomplish it this way...”

Respectful AND Honest
“I understand schedules are busy and things come up last minute. If this is critical for City business, here’s how we can make it work. I’d also like to set up a different way of working with you to make sure we can meet deadlines in the future. Last-minute requests can create a lot of extra work.”

Respectful AND Honest
“I understand this is important, but we’ve already passed the deadline, and it will need to wait until the next agenda.”

Respectful AND Honest
In Extraordinary Dialogue
You Can Even Be Respectful
Of Someone You Don’t Respect

@nicolelancestrategies
Mastering your story
Mastering your story

Question your conclusions

- Did you tell yourself a story without facts or perceptions?
- What meaning are you adding to the action you observed?

Question the stories in your mind behind the actual events that took place (facts)

- Why would a reasonable, rational person do or say this?
- What’s your role in the conflict?
BONUS PRO TIPS for Extraordinary Dialogue
Step Out
Make Safe
Step In
8 Second Wait
You May Be Invisible To The Public You Serve. They Don’t Understand You. And You Serve Anyway.
Always Remember: 
The Work That You Do 
Matters More Than You 
Can Imagine, 
To More People Than You 
Can Imagine
Thank You!

Give Us a High 5 On Your Way Out

Grab a Signed Copy of The Cure for Stupidity for $20

Nicole@NicoleLanceStrategies.com
Eric@BaileyInnovationGroup.com