

INSPIRING LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS

COURAGE



INNOVATIVE
CONNECTIONS

THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONS

The journey you are about to embark upon will **illuminate the power of conversations**.

Consider the conversations in your meeting rooms, at your kitchen table, on your neighborhood walk or at your favorite coffee shop. These rich conversations are generated by different perspectives, curiosity, and questions that matter. They become our catalyst for sharing our collective personal experiences that shape our future while supporting our human nature to stay in relationship with one another.

This trust activity ignites meaningful conversations. Capture the richness of sharing perspectives and insights as you explore these conversations inside your organizations and throughout your community. Challenge yourself to use these conversations to propel your growth as an individual, leader, and/or leadership team.

Rules for these conversations? There are none. This concept is built on the assumption that people are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. The answers are within each of us.

This activity is intended to widen your lens with additional perspective. As you talk with others or think about your experiences, capture your thoughts and reflections in the

space provided. Feel free to circle, highlight, or underline anything you are curious about or those words which resonate with you.

Next, find a partner, teammate, colleague, family member, friend, or leader to share your thoughts with and discuss your key takeaways. If possible, move the conversations to small groups/teams and then on to larger groups/teams. The format provides a consistent process for expanding your conversations and capturing what is on everyone's mind.

Enjoy!

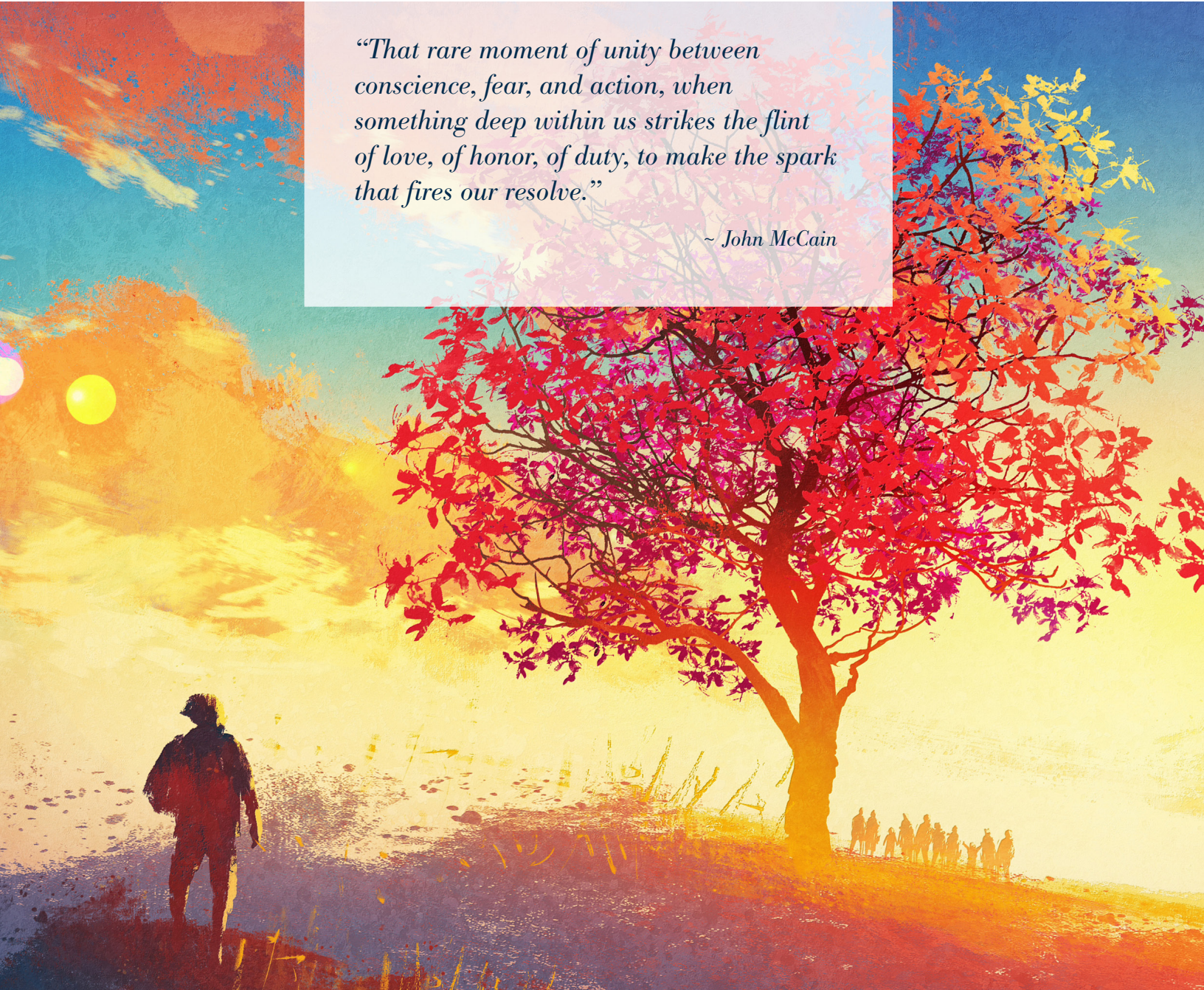
As you engage in your conversations, please remember to:

- Listen deeply.
- Speak from your voice.
- Take a risk.
- Put it out there.
- Encourage contributions.
- Connect diverse perspectives.
- Listen together for patterns and insights.
- Capture the conversation with words, illustrations, symbols, or any other device possible.



COURAGE

Courage in organizations reflects a mindful and calculated process of critical thinking and risk assessment and is rarely impulsive. **Courage looks like a choice, action and/or behavior within reach, but often it is difficult to achieve.** It is something everyone desires or at least wants to be perceived as having. There is a head and a heart component to courage. At times, the heart and head are in opposition. A monument of courage feels as though it happens in a burst and lasts for just a moment. Throw in a contentious and challenging situation, a whole host of emotions, and some faith and you have a recipe for courage.



“That rare moment of unity between conscience, fear, and action, when something deep within us strikes the flint of love, of honor, of duty, to make the spark that fires our resolve.”

~ John McCain



Courage is a key ingredient of human resiliency. It requires us to take worthy actions despite potential risk. And, in our world today, it is a simple fact that everyday living can require an abundance of courage. Without it, we can easily become lost, stuck, or overcome with fear, rendering us unable to cope or function.

Courage does not have to be stereotypically heroic. It is seen in moments where people continually show up for their families, friends, employees, and most importantly, themselves despite all of life's challenges. **Courage requires us to be brave even when we don't want to be, or feel like we can be.**

So, as individuals, and as leaders, how can we be courageous, and help evoke courage in others?

For starters, we can:

- Model behavior that shows others that courage is not the absence of fear, rather it is the ability to stand up and respond in spite of it.
- Be truthful and vulnerable in the face of uncertainty.
- Allow others to express their fear, feel their emotions and then offer suggestions to help them let go of what is out of their control and rise up to meet each moment and each challenge as it comes.
- Help maintain perspective. Reframe others' mindset from the darkness of fear to the lightness of hope.
- Ask questions and offer advice that will inspire others to move in a direction they may otherwise not have chosen.

Some leadership experts believe that courage shows up in “crucible moments”—those experiences of critical struggles, challenge, or formative events that require action; one that will define you. Others believe that courage can be viewed in everyday behaviors and choices; that courage is up for display in all aspects of how we live.

Leaders experience fear, and their sense of self must be strong in order to stand up for what matters; what matters to them, their team, the organization and a broader society. **Just because you are a leader, it does not mean that you do not experience fear.**

REFLECT

What is your experience?

What are you afraid of right now, at this very moment in time?

What current situation requires your courage?

Joseph Campbell developed “The Hero’s Journey”; a way of viewing our life path and experiences. He states, “The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek.”

We can go into the caves we fear at any time, and there are often multiple caves from which to choose. We always have the ability to pick courage over fear and we must never confuse safety with comfort.



In her book, *Leading without Fear*, Dr. Laurie Cure shares, **“Fear comes in various shapes and sizes and requires us to bring forth a courage, strength, and perseverance that we seldom access without it.”** Each of us experiences fear differently based on specific circumstances we encounter, values and personality differences we hold, and how things that are important to us are threatened.

Here are some of the responses leaders gave when recently asked this question:

- I am afraid of becoming even more isolated and depressed, but I can't show any of that to my team or colleagues.
- I am afraid of losing connection to those important to me.
- I am afraid of losing my job and not being able to find another one.
- I worry I can never return to the way it was and I worry more that I don't want to.
- I find myself seeing the faces of my dying patients and I fear I will never be able to move past the trauma of what I see every day.
- I wonder if my kids can recover from the losses they are experiencing this year in school and with friends.
- I started a new job and I worry that no one really likes or respects me.
- I feel like I am wasting precious time in my life and I am afraid I will not ever become what I desire.
- I often feel like I don't know what I am doing, in leadership, in work, or at home. Who made me a leader anyway and what if I screw up everyone around me?

“You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”

~ C.S. Lewis



As leaders, we hold our fears and the fears of those around us. Parents know this well as they hold the fears for and of their children. Organizational leaders hold the fears of entire companies and national leaders hold the fears of the whole country. While we feel we need to carry this "burden", **we can lighten our load by allowing ourselves to be guides, like an escort on the journey, as opposed to needing to be the authority or the one who holds all the answers.**

As a leader, we invite you to evoke courage. Use the following tactics:

- Embrace and understand your own fears and their impact on you and your team. Insights arise from reflection and give you the courage to act.
- Model behaviors of authenticity and vulnerability.
- Be transparent with your own fears and be open to hearing and understanding the fears of others.
- Assess the risks and move forward thoughtfully. . . but move forward nonetheless.
- Plan for what you can and surrender the rest. Fear thrives in uncertainty. The more you can take back pieces of control, the more courageous you become.
- Maintain perspective. Fear shows up like your deepest concerns in the middle of the night. Fears are actually not as great as they feel in the moment.

6 STEPS TO EVOKE COURAGE



Courage is about feeling the fear and doing it anyway. When we call forth our own courage, we invite others to do the same. We can be brave and afraid at the same time, but when we evoke the courage to act, we soar beyond our fears. These are the moments when we look back and realize that our fear served as a catalyst for some of our greatest moments.

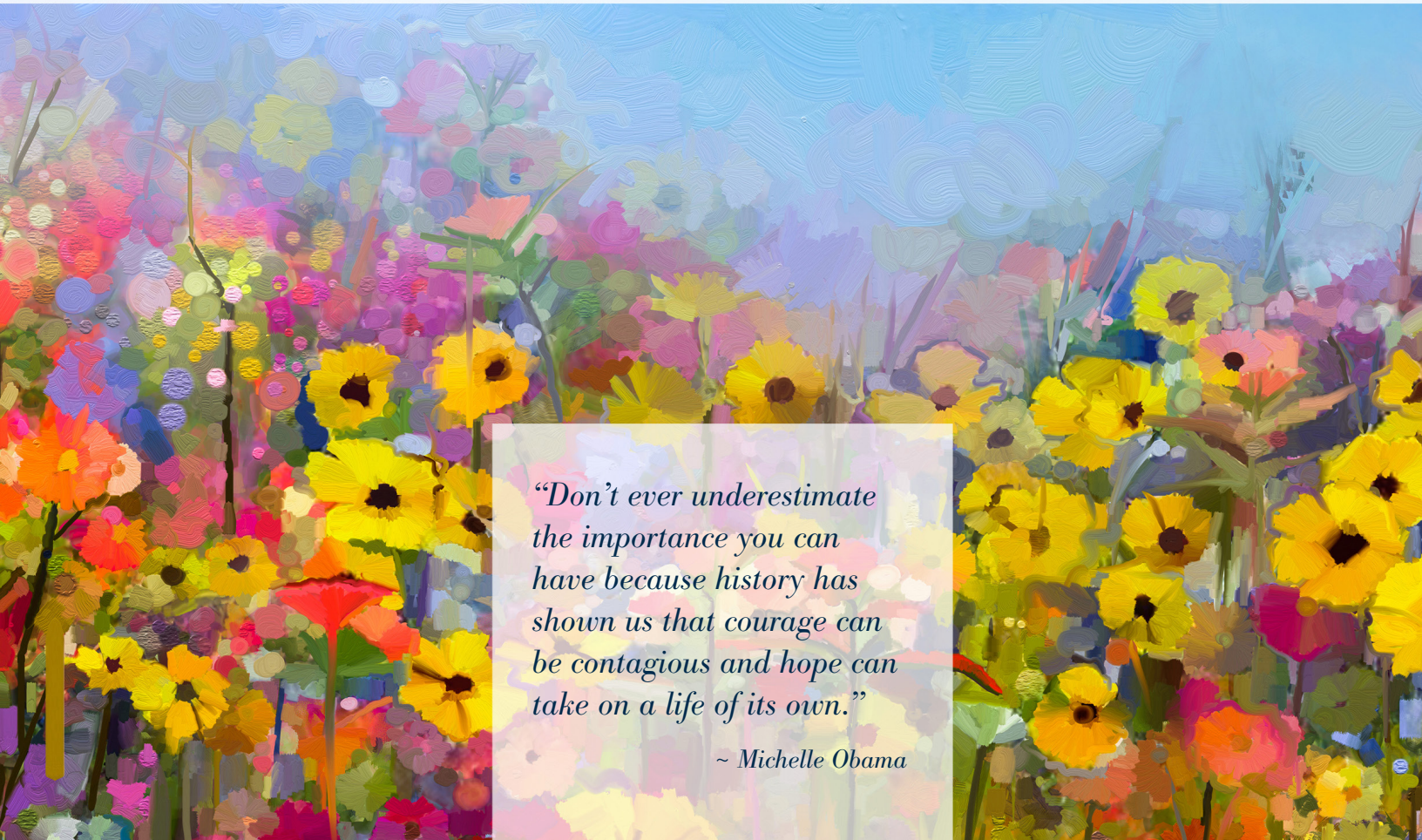


REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER CONVERSATIONS

How do you measure courage for you team, organization, or society?

Where are you being brave and afraid at the same time?

Where is our organization, team, and/or society demonstrating courage? Where is our organization, team, and/or society demonstrating comfort?



“Don’t ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.”

~ Michelle Obama



How do you measure your courage? That of your team, organization, society?

What do you think you should be paying attention to now?

What is one concrete step we can take towards courage (e.g. your team, organization, yourself, etc.)?

NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE YOUR MOVE

If you are experiencing difficulty achieving strategic outcomes, disharmony or fear among employees, poor team dynamics, trouble recruiting the right talent, or other team or organizational issues, we will help you unleash new possibilities and potential that result in sustainable change.

Through our processes and programs, you will find your voice, see your vision, and imagine what the right action for the future could be for you, your team, and your organization.

You will realize profound, sustainable transformation—both individually and organizationally—that starts now, and remains for years to come.



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