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Overcoming Uncomfortable Truths: How to Have Difficult Conversations and Maintain Professional Momentum

Gianina R. Baker, PhD

occrl.illinois.edu



4 ways that you can approach and deal with uncomfortable truths and conversations:

1. Recognize that your defenses are going to come up.
2. Breathe and try again.
3. Believe people when they tell you their experience.
4. Try to let go of whether this means you are good or bad.

<https://www.oneheartcounselingcenter.com/uncomfortable-truths/>



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Q & A



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About OCCRL

OCCRL researchers study policies, programs, and practices designed to enhance outcomes for diverse youth and adults who seek to transition to and through college to employment.



Strengthening Pathways for All Students Through Research and Leadership

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Wearing multiple hats

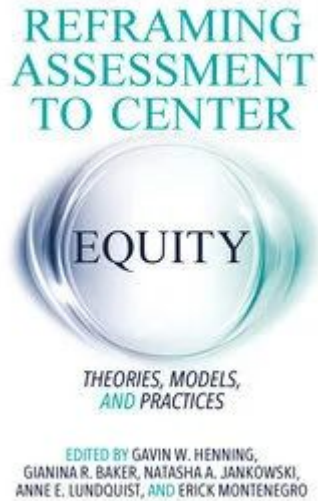




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Maintaining professional (and personal) momentum

Professionally...



And well, personally...



Central Illinois Business Magazine's 40
under 40 Woman of the Year, 2020



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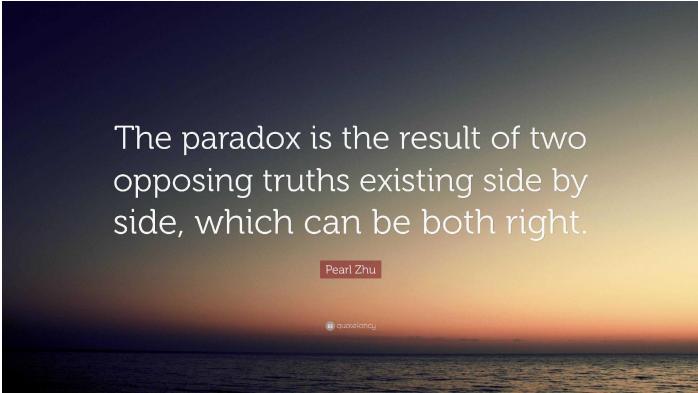
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The Need for Uncomfortable Truths



The paradox is the result of two opposing truths existing side by side, which can be both right.

Pearl Zhu

@pearlzhu

Truths are not alternative facts

Can be dichotomous/reason for “truths” and not “truth”

Requires a level of vulnerability

“I HAVE to have this conversation...NO, you GET to have this conversation.”



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9 Uncomfortable Yet Liberating Truths About Life: Accept Them to Permanently Change for the Better

<https://ayotheauthor.com/7-uncomfortable-yet-liberating-truths-life-accept-permanently-change-better/>

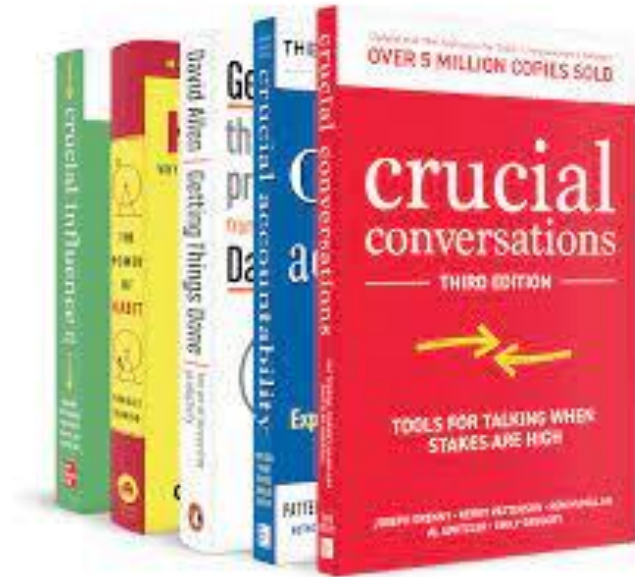
1. The World Will Never Quit Poking You
2. Things Will Never be the Way They "Should" Be
3. No One is Coming to Save You
4. No Matter What You Do, Someone Will Dislike You
5. You're Never Going to be Satisfied
6. Everything is Your Fault
7. You'll Never Find the Perfect Time Start
8. Human Beings Aren't Rational
9. Luck Plays a Gigantic Role in Your Life



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A start...



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Using paper, please reflect on:

1. What's an uncomfortable conversation you've had recently?
2. What's a conversation you want to have but are nervous about?

What prevents you from having said conversation?



What if I told you having crucial conversations...

- Can actually strengthen friendships?
 - “Is it the case that everyone, like me, puts on a brave face when confronted by uncomfortable truths and goes along with whatever the others desire?”;
<https://www.happiness.com/magazine/personal-growth/uncomfortable-truths-how-to-tell-someone-no/>
- Is a responsibility of all of ours?
 - “To whom much is given, much is required.”
 - “with great success comes great responsibility.”
 - “with great power comes great responsibility.” Spiderman
- Often reveals miscommunication and allows the opportunity to inform?
 - Can often see the need shared language
 - May need someone with facilitation skills



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Additional Considerations

- Data is important, but not the only thing
 - Champaign needs assessment
 - New York Times article:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/19/upshot/race-class-white-and-black-men.html>
 - Personal experience can also be important if listened to
- Targeted universalism
- “Change moves as the speed of trust” George Kuh



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What topics regarding postsecondary education do you want to discuss with others that may seem controversial?

Responses

Retention of faculty

Evaluation

Poor leadership

Stereotypes

academic classism

Institutional outcomes

Expectations

Questioning value of college

Social emotional learning

Wrap around services

grades are arbitrary and not reliable

Policy

Sustained poor performance

No clear pathways

Artificial intelligence

Tolkenization

More pay for CTE faculty

"soft" sciences are lesser

Pay

Belongingness

Tolkenization

Racialized segregation

Workloads

AI

Access

Funding

DEI

Mentalhealth

Privilege

Certificates

Systemic barriers to students

Racism

why FDP are low paid

Not meeting expectations

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Considerations for maintaining professional momentum

- Do the next right thing!
- Tap in, tap out
- Be vulnerable
 - Racism Untaught workshop
 - On what topic do you consider yourself comfortable? (entry level)
- Rest but don't quit
 - "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Audre Lorde
- You can be well-liked or well-respected, but not both.
 - "If you just set out to be liked, you will be prepared to compromise on anything at any time, and would achieve **nothing**."—Margaret Thatcher.
- Choose your battles

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

"Choose your battles wisely. After all, life isn't measured by how many times you stood up to fight. It's not winning battles that makes you happy, but it's how many times you turned away and chose to look into a better direction. Life is too short to spend it on warring. Fight only the most, most, most important ones, let the rest go."
~ C. JoyBell C



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Additional Resources

What do you see as the hope, maybe even radical hope, in doing racial equity work?

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REACH collaborative RACIAL EQUITY for ADULT CREDENTIALS in HIGHER ED

REACH Collaborative Microsite [View →](#) Featured Work: Racial Equity for Adult Credentials in Higher Ed [View →](#)

Summary

The REACH Collaborative brings together a network of teams from six states – California, Colorado, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia – along with coaches, equity champions, and a host of intermediary partners to strengthen credential pathways with the supports and curricular alignment that post-traditional adult learners of color age 25-64 need to reskill and recover from the pandemic. Coordination of the REACH Collaborative is led by Education Strategy Group (ESG) in partnership with the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) at the University of Illinois, and the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education, with generous support from the Lumina Foundation. In collaboration with our learning partner, DVP-Praxis, the REACH Collaborative helps to build the capacity and tools for equitable system change and improved adult student outcomes hopefully resulting in a 2% increase in credential attainment across 130+ community colleges through its intentional framework for developing academic pathways focused on three main pillars —credentials to degrees pathways, bundled and sequenced supports, and culturally sustaining practices—for racially minoritized adult learners.

Meet the REACH Equity Champion Consultants!
Content shows biographies of Equity Champion Consultants as of May 2022.

Goal	Further Resources
The goal of the REACH Collaborative is to attain a 2% increase in credential attainment for enrolled Black, Hispanic, and Native American adults, ages 25-64, at participating community	Discover the REACH Collaborative microsite , which provides project details by state as well as briefs on the three main pillars of this work: credentials to degrees pathways, bundled and



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**Office of Community College Research and Leadership
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
College of Education**

Champaign Office

51 Gerty Dr
Champaign, IL 61820

Chicago Office

Illini Center
200 S. Wacker Drive, 19th Floor
MC-200
Chicago, IL 60606

www.occrll.illinois.edu

occrll@illinois.edu



Dr. Lorenzo Baber, Director

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