

THE
PAUSE
PRINCIPLE

**HOW TO KEEP YOUR COOL
IN TOUGH SITUATIONS**

CYNTHIA KANE

WILEY

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*This book is dedicated to you, the reader.
May it help you find more moments of
connection even when it's hard.*

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This book has come out of the years I've spent working with men and women on helping them change the way they communicate, to become more responsive instead of reactive. Daily I'm aware of the reciprocal relationship between me and those I work with. This work isn't easy, and it takes a lot of courage to first admit something needs to change and then seek out a way for it to happen. I am so grateful for all those who I've worked with over the years. Each person has left an indelible mark on my soul and has helped me to grow in so many ways.

Since I was five years old I knew I wanted to write books. It was a clear dream and goal that continues to this day. And while the road hasn't been easy or short, the two people who have been there since my days of writing poetry under my dresser late at night are my parents. For every moment you have been there, and I'm so appreciative of your never-ending love and support. For every twist and turn and fall, you've been there to help me up and keep me going, and for every smooth sail and opportunity you've been right there cheering me on. Thank you for all of it. I love you.

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Introduction

Through your actions as a leader, you attract a tribe that
WANTS to follow you.

—Seth Godin

Let me be the first to welcome you here to this book. I know you're busy, you've got calls to make, and emails to respond to, you have meetings and family obligations, you have a life to be lived. I know how hard it is these days to take the time to sit and read, even when we know a book has the power to change the way we see and interact with the world and those around us. Because of this, I promise not to take your time for granted.

So settle in, and start here, as this introduction provides the basic foundation you need to understand what this book is about, why it's different than other communication books out there, and what it's going to teach you. I promise, you won't find any fluff in these pages—it was written with you in mind.

What Is This Book About? And Why Is It Different Than the Rest?

There's a lot of difficult, awkward, and intense conversations that need to be had when you're a leader within a company that can be downright uncomfortable. I'm sure you can name a few you've had

even within the last week or month. And what's hard is that you want to treat others as you also want to be treated: to be fair and disciplined and to show your appreciation for your teams. Knowing their trust means everything, you want to make sure you have their best interest in mind and that you're continuing to create security for them and making the best decisions to help them grow as well as the company itself. While that's your intention, in the heat of a conversation, it may all come out completely different.

While not everyone is caught on camera like Travis Kalanick at Uber digging into one of his drivers, more and more of those in leadership positions are being called out internally for how their reactions or outbursts are causing a breakdown within company culture and environment. When we're in the heat of the moment it's hard to find the language to make it the best possible outcome. Where we want to bring people together and create a sense of trust and connection, instead we create a disconnect and divide, and soon our organization feels like a dysfunctional family—with rivalry, trying to one-up one another, and slamming the door too easily on the way out. Research from the Society for Human Resource Management¹ reports that in the five-year period between 2014 and 2019, toxic workplace cultures have driven 20% of US employees out of their jobs—at a turnover cost greater than \$223 billion, while *Forbes* reports that companies with strong cultures saw a fourfold increase in revenue growth.²

At the forefront of creating a thriving culture is the way those in leadership positions communicate, especially under pressure. And if you're noticing that it's more and more difficult to keep it together in stressful conversations, you're not alone. According to "The Learning Habits of Leaders and Managers"³ report, 50% of managers cited difficult conversations as the biggest challenge they face in their roles, and according to research by the US firm Gartner, 67% of managers feel uncomfortable with face-to-face communication with employees. This discomfort may be a reason we're seeing more recorded videos