



THE POWER OF **HEALTHY** TENSION

UNITE YOUR TEAM.
SPARK CHANGE.
GET UNSTUCK.

A PROBLEM TO SOLVE

- Requires “**Either/Or**” thinking and assumes there is a **right** and a **wrong** answer
- **How it began:**
 - Safe **or** Unsafe
 - Correct **or** Incorrect
 - Good **or** Bad
- **Being Right** = SAFE, CORRECT, GOOD





THE ISSUES THAT CROSS MY DESK ARE HARD AND COMPLICATED
AND OFTENTIMES INVOLVE THE CLASH, NOT OF RIGHT AND WRONG
BUT OF TWO RIGHTS.

AND YOU'RE HAVING TO **BALANCE** AND **RECONCILE**
AGAINST **COMPETING VALUES** THAT ARE
EQUALLY LEGITIMATE.

Barak Obama

44th President of the United States

A TENSION TO **MANAGE**

- Requires “**AND**” thinking
- Also called Polarities, Paradox, and Conflicting Values
- The situation is complex and often chronic
- Focusing on one value to the neglect of the other will eventually work against you



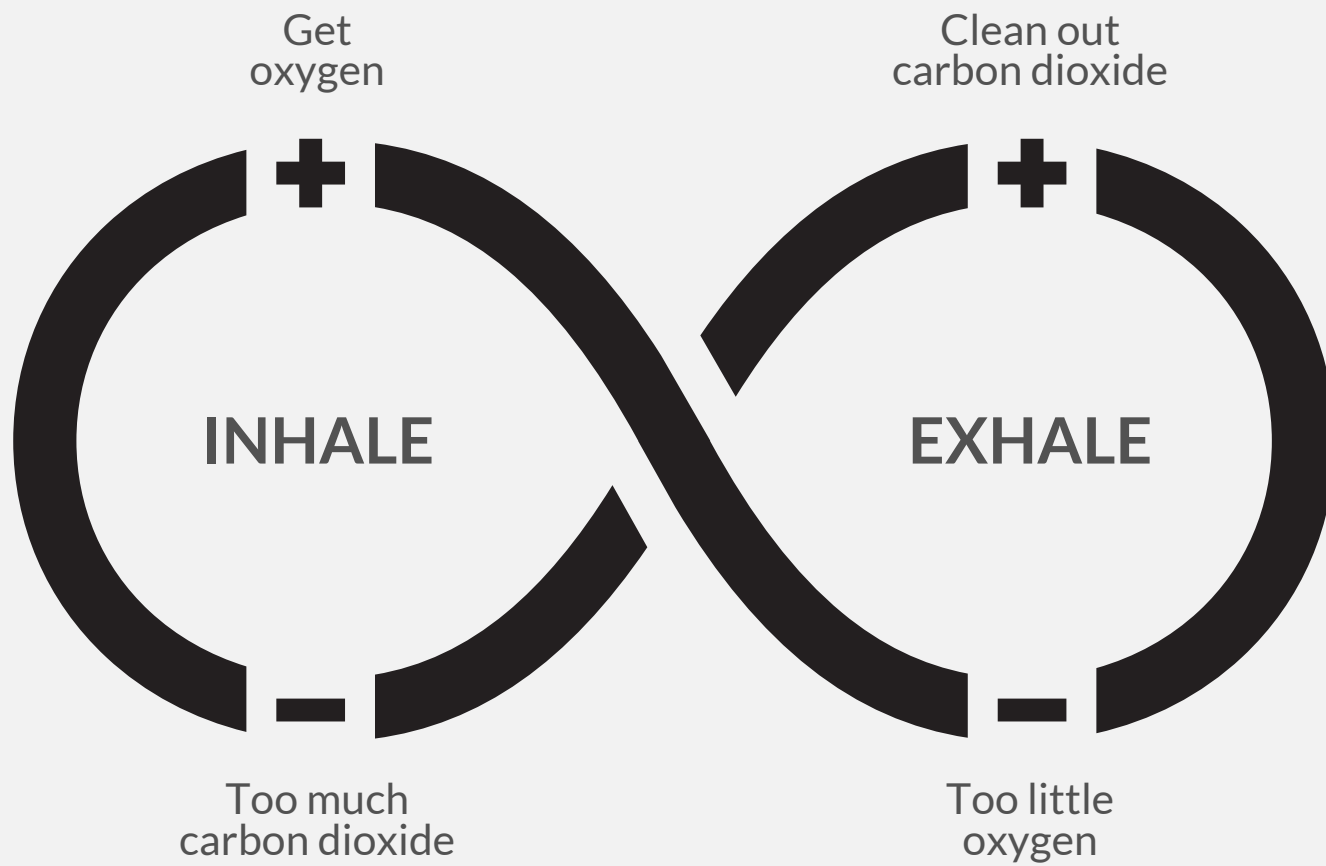


THE TEST OF A FIRST-RATE INTELLIGENCE

**IS THE ABILITY TO HOLD TWO OPPOSED IDEAS
IN THE MIND AT THE SAME TIME,**

AND STILL RETAIN THE ABILITY TO FUNCTION.

F. Scott Fitzgerald



+

POSITIVE RESULTS

+

POSITIVE RESULTS



-

NEGATIVE RESULTS WHEN OVERDONE

-

NEGATIVE RESULTS WHEN OVERDONE

THE POWER OF HEALTHY TENSION



IDENTIFY YOUR
CRUX TENSION



MIND YOUR
BIAS



LEARN THE
LANGUAGE



MAKE INFORMED
DECISIONS

TIM ARNOLD

The
POWER
of
HEALTHY
TENSION

Overcome Chronic Issues
and Conflicting Values



*Unite Your Team.
Spark Change.
Get Unstuck.*

FOREWORD BY
DONALD MILLER

**LEAD
WITH
AND**

*The Secret to Resilience
and Results in a Polarized World*

TIM ARNOLD

THE THRIVING WORKPLACE SERIES

VOLUME 1

**NEXT-LEVEL
TEAMWORK**

*The 5 Tensions to Manage
for High-Performance Teams*

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THE THRIVING WORKPLACE SERIES

VOLUME 2

**LEADING
CHANGE**

*The 5 Tensions to Manage
for Successful Transformation*

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COMMON TEAM & LEADERSHIP TENSIONS

TASK FOCUSED AND RELATIONSHIP ORIENTED

FOCUS ON PEOPLE AND FOCUS ON RESULTS

HAVING EXPECTATIONS AND EXTENDING GRACE

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS AND FOCUS ON THE TEAM

TRUTHFUL & CANDID AND TACTFUL & DIPLOMATIC

FOCUS ON MY PART OF THE ORGANIZATION AND FOCUS ON THE WHOLE ORGANIZATION

REALISTIC AND OPTIMISTIC

CENTRALIZED COORDINATION AND DECENTRALIZED FREEDOM

COLLABORATION AND INDEPENDENCE

MANAGE COSTS AND MAINTAIN QUALITY

STIMULATE INNOVATION & CHANGE AND PRESERVE TRADITION & STABILITY

FOCUS ON THE SHORT TERM AND FOCUS ON THE LONG TERM

GIVE FREEDOM AND HOLD ACCOUNTABLE

CONFIDENCE AND HUMILITY

LOGIC AND GUT FEELING

STRUCTURE AND FLEXIBILITY

PLANNING AND ACTION

PROFIT-FOCUSED AND PURPOSE-DRIVEN

CARE FOR SELF AND CARE FOR OTHERS

WORK AND HOME



POSITIVE RESULTS

- Higher quality work
- More energy, engagement and fun
- Efficiency due to less back and forth



POSITIVE RESULTS

- Boost productivity by dividing and conquering
- People can focus and work more flexibly
- Skills are developed by 'just doing it'



NEGATIVE RESULTS WHEN OVERDONE

- Not able to get things done and focus
- Slowed down by having to constantly coordinate
- Creates unnecessary codependency

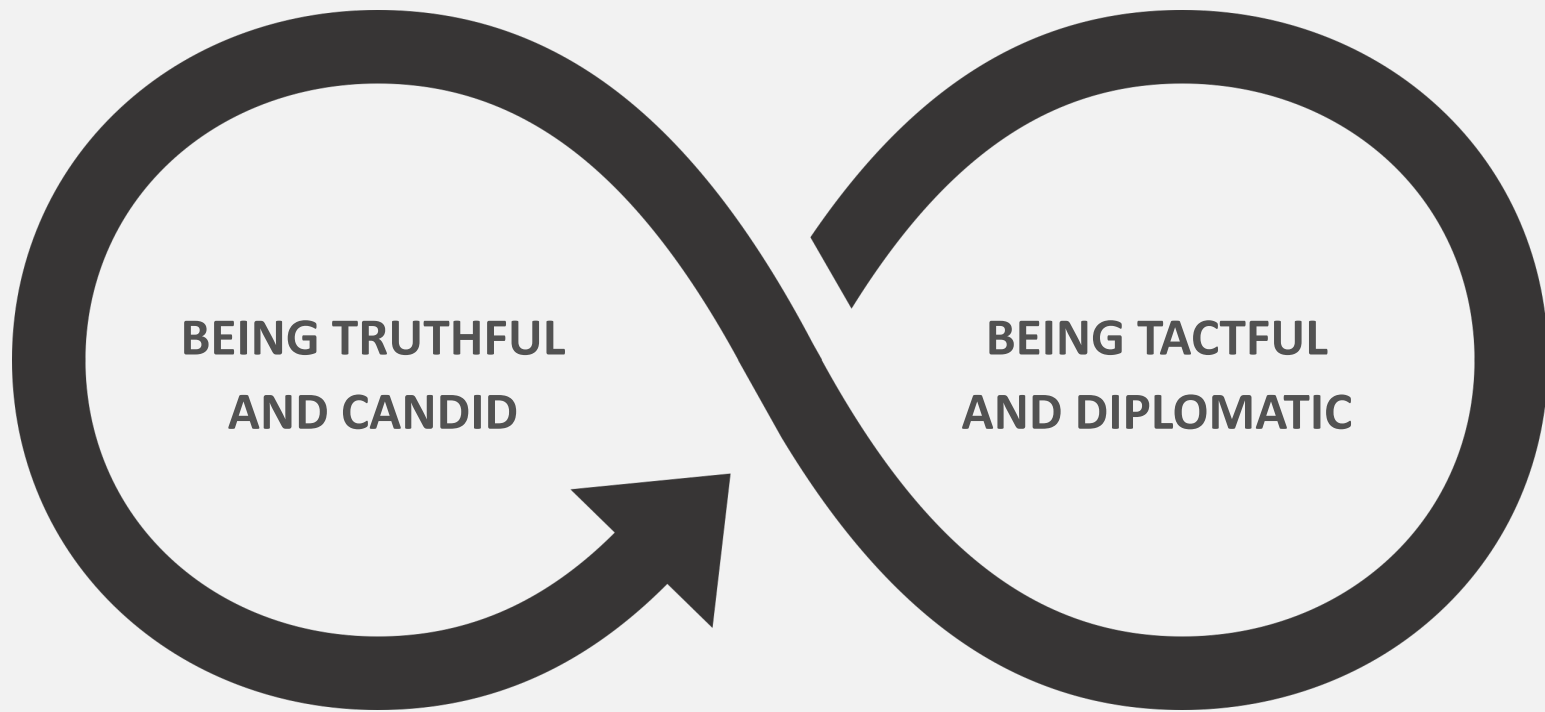


NEGATIVE RESULTS WHEN OVERDONE

- Quality declines due to lack of feedback
- Work is less fun and relationships suffer
- Duplication and mistakes due to silos and blind spots

**WHAT DO
YOU SEE?**







Norah O'Donnell 🇺🇸 ⚙️ @NorahODonnell · Oct 10

“Clear is kind, unclear is unkind. Stop – stop avoiding the tough conversations because you think you’re being polite or kind to people – that’s not kind.”

-@BreneBrown



👍 Like

💬 Comment

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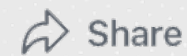
Adam Grant  @AdamMGrant · Sep 13

“I was just being myself” isn’t an excuse for disrespectful behavior. It signals a lack of concern for others.

Authenticity without empathy is selfish. Authenticity without boundaries is careless.

Be true to your values but show regard for others’ values.

[#ThursdayThoughts](#)







A TUG OF WAR CONVERSATION

GETTING UNSTUCK

COMMUNICATING TENSIONS

- Look for **WISDOM** in the resistance
- Focus on **INTERESTS** not **POSITIONS**
- Replace the word “**BUT**” with the word “**AND**”





OUR **TRUTH** IS NEVER
THE TRUTH

Niebuhr



EITHER / OR THINKING
IS THE **ENEMY OF**
CREATIVITY

Donald Miller

“Am I going to support the group that wants to centralize **OR** the group that wants to decentralize?”



“How do we get the benefits of centralization **AND** the benefits of decentralization?”

“Am I going to hold on to my values **OR** accept the change proposed?”



“How am I going to hold on to my values **AND** gain the benefits of the change proposed?”

FINAL ACTIVITY

- Using the **HEALTHY TENSION WORKSHEET**, map out your crux tension.
- **ACTION STEPS** – Something to start, stop or continue doing to gain or maintain the positive results of this value.
 - What? Who? When?
- **RED FLAGS** – Measurable indicators that this value is being overdone
 - What? Who Owns It? So What?

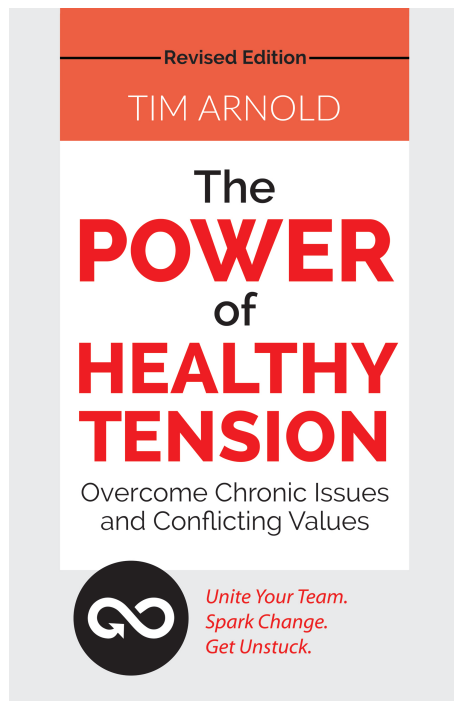
PAIR & SHARE

1. **Identify you Crux Tension**
 - Personally and in your team
2. **Mind your Bias**
 - Are you clear on your biases?
 - Do you have an opposite?
3. **Learn the Language**
 - Use the 3 values for Getting Unstuck
4. **Make Informed Decisions**
 - Go slow to go fast
 - Map tensions!



NEXT STEPS

www.healthytension.ca/resources



amazon

01 **DOWNLOAD**
SLIDES & RESOURCES

02 **SIGN UP**
FOR NEWSLETTER

03 **STAY**
IN TOUCH



