Episode 268: Building a Conflict-Capable Organization with Jeff Lay Discussion Starter

Use this guide to spark conversations with your HR team

1. A conflict-capable organization doesn't try to eliminate conflict — it builds the tools, language, and trust to navigate conflict in a way that can actually strengthen teams and drive innovation. How would we honestly rate our organization's conflict capability right now, and what's the biggest gap?

2. Addressing friction while it's still small — before the emotions escalate — is one of the highest-leverage conflict skills a leader can develop, and it's a gift to the other person who may not realize their behavior is causing a problem. Are we coaching our managers to bring things up early, or are we inadvertently rewarding them for keeping the peace?

3. When the conflict source is the leader themselves, coaching up requires a long runway of relational trust built before the moment of confrontation — and framing the feedback in terms of the leader's own stated culture goals. How prepared are our HR leaders and managers to navigate that conversation when it becomes necessary?

4. The CURVE framework — cared for, understood, respected, valued, and empowered — offers a simple diagnostic for whether employees are thriving in a healthy culture. If we asked our employees those five questions anonymously today, which dimension do we think would score lowest?

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