

EDDP 705 Assignment 2.3

EdD Transformational Change Leadership Portfolio – Reflection on My Two Artifacts

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I think it makes sense for me to discuss what I have learned first from my Crucial Conversation experience and then from the Style Under Stress (SUS) exercise because after having my crucial conversation with David, I see my SUS results differently than before. What surprised me most about my Crucial Conversation with David is that it actually worked. Things have been great around the office as well as at home since our crucial conversation. I went into the conversation expecting a lot of tension. That's how it's always gone with David and me. It's hard to keep family and work separate emotionally, no matter how hard we try.

The big thing I remember from my crucial conversation with David is how relieving it felt when I admitted that I contribute to the problem. I was relieved because it was true. I also felt relief when David reciprocated. That was huge to me. I think it was huge to him in the same way. I actually saw David's posture and face physically relax. I wonder if he saw the same in me.

It's easy to forget how important my tone and pacing during conversations can influence the direction of a conversation. I know this about myself. But it's easy to forget when there is work to do, especially when I am talking to David about it. After my conversation with him, I started noticing that I almost always exercise the techniques in my conversations with colleagues who are not my brother, automatically. I wonder if that is actually true. But I have not had tense conversations with anyone at work other than my brother, at least not that I remember.

I am starting to see how this degree program will actually make me an expert leader. Though some leadership styles can be instinctual, there are certainly skills one can learn, even when their instincts are good. I hope to keep learning about my leadership deficiencies so I can see the applicability of everything I am learning about transformational leadership in this and my other courses.

Reflecting on my SUS score, at first, I found it to be less immediately useful than my crucial conversation with David. The purpose of the SUS exercise was to identify my strengths and weaknesses, not to apply techniques during a conversation with my brother. However, in light of my crucial conversation with David, I think my SUS score means something different to me. I must be vigilant not just about my weaknesses but also about my strengths.

I know I can be very task-focused. I really like the idea of implementing tasks as efficiently as possible. I have read some about the Japanese business philosophy of Kaizen, which means every day, one of my goals is to become more efficient without sacrificing the quality of service my company provides. This exercise highlighted that this can be off-putting to work colleagues and, especially, my work colleague who is also my brother. So my style under stress in this regard can actually increase the stress of those around me. I know sometimes this style spills over into my home life as well.

My main takeaway from this assignment is self-awareness. I now recognize not only the areas I need to improve but also the strengths indicated by my scores. I believe I have a natural inclination to be a transformational leader, as one of my key goals in my work relationships is to help my colleagues achieve their own objectives—regardless of whether that means they move on to opportunities outside of my company. However, I am not immune to performing inadequately across the various aspects of effective management, especially when faced with stress. I'm uncertain about what might stress me in the future. It's possible that some of the areas I scored well in are because I haven't yet experienced stress in specific ways. I can definitely see how this relates to the crucial conversations assignment. If I work on managing my leadership style under stress, there may be less need for difficult conversations, provided I don't encounter new stressors that I am uncertain how to handle.