



BLP 34. Two Easy to Avoid, Must-Have Conversations

Mark Carter & Mark Albrecht

Welcome to BLP. Today, Pastor Carter interviews Pastor Mark Albrecht, Lead Pastor of NorthBridge Church, founded in 2001 in Antioch, Illinois.

In this episode, they discuss the two types of conversations that are crucial to the health of your congregation or organization.

- **Hard conversations, embrace them.** // No one likes to have difficult conversations and our natural tendency is to avoid them, hoping the problem will resolve itself, which only makes matters worse. It's important to step in quickly and address the issue. Remember that confrontation, when it comes from a Christian leader, comes from a place of caring. You're calling others to a standard, as Christ-followers, and helping shape emerging leaders. Matthew 18:15 NASB *If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won a brother.* Procrastinating on tough conversations is, in a sense, a form of dishonesty, God wants us to be truthful. When you do bring something up, the other person will have thought everything was going well during the time you waited, and may feel lied to. You may fear the loss of the relationship, or that they won't understand what you're trying to convey, which can be true in the short-term. But, usually, over time, relationships are deepened and the person's respect for you is greater. Have courage and view this type of conversation as a discipleship tool to help people grow in Christ, a challenge to find and use their gifts, and help others learn to follow Jesus closer, with more intentionality.

Tips on how to have tough conversations:

- In a way that honors the relationship.
- Create a conducive environment.
- Pray through the conversation beforehand for the right timing.
- Be thoughtful, plan ahead, look them in the eye.
- Start with humility and love, not accusations.
- Ask them if what you're saying resonates. Give them an opportunity for feedback.
- Remember: you are modeling to everyone how these conversations should be done.
- Behavior that isn't addressed will be considered acceptable and you can lose respect as a leader. When the issue is addressed with the group (pointing out: 'that's not who we are'), those demonstrating better behavior are empowered with tools to have their own conversations about the issue.



- Use the “daddy stool”. What you allow, you are back-hand applauding. Say what you need to say.
 - If you expect the recipient won’t receive the message well, bring a third person, whom you both trust, to keep emotions in check.
 - Don’t own the other person’s reaction. Romans 12:18 NASB *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*
 - Your job is to be faithful, loving, direct. Trust God will use it.
 - Remember that you’ve been given responsibility and wisdom from the Lord to protect His sheep.
 - Create a culture where feedback is normal and goes both ways, model being coachable.
- **Defining statements, ‘This is who we are’.** // Whether negative or positive, your congregation will see themselves in the same way you describe them. They will become what you say they are. Make sure you speak words of life, vision, and aspiration. Cubs Baseball manager Joe Madden has a philosophy, [Respect 90](#), ‘We run hard from home to first base.’ He defined his team with this statement. Similarly, you have a powerful opportunity to speak into people, and this will also affect how they talk to others about their church. What you say becomes rooted in the DNA of your church. Who is your church called to be? Who are your staff and volunteers called to be? Your words weigh the most in the room and when they are negative, it hits hard. Be intentional, ask the Holy Spirit, ‘Be a guard over my mouth, so I only bring grace to the hearer’. Are you building strength or taking it away from your people? Share stories publically that exemplify who you are aspiring to be as a church, this is who you are becoming. Ask for honest feedback from your key people, whether positive or negative. Be up for the challenge.

“Lord give me the strength and (Holy Spirit-inspired) boldness to lead our church family, our organization well.” - Mark A.



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