COMMUNICATIVE SELF-CARE

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Propositions:

• Every communicative interaction creates, maintains, or changes a given relationship

• Most, if not all, communication has an afterlife
Cultivate curiosity in difficult situations

What is really going on here?
What have I not yet understood?
What undiscovered options exist?
What is wanted or needed by those involved?
What needs to change in order for useful dialogue to take place?

Self-Care Practice: Explore your world
You: You left the meeting yesterday looking really upset. Do you have a minute to chat?

Colleague: What’s the point? You never listen to me anyway. (Attack)

You: I thought you might overreact if I asked... (Attack + Provoking the other person’s worst self)

Colleague: [Walking away] I’m done. Run the meetings without me from now on... (Making things worse)

For more information see Dana Caspersen’s book, *Changing the Conversation*
Don’t hear attack

Shift how you listen, asking:
“if this were said without attack, what would I have heard?”

“What’s the point? You never listen to me anyway.” →
“I have something important to say, and I do not feel heard.”

Self-Care Practice: Breath & Body Check-In
Talk to the other person’s best self

Shift your communication approach by nurturing doubt in your own certainty and exploring basic goodness.

“...I thought you might overreact.” → “I had no idea you felt this way...”

Self-Care Practice: Track Self-Talk
If you are making something worse →

Shift how you engage, asking:
“am I causing this conflict to escalate?”

“I am done...run the meetings without me.” → acknowledge your contribution...

Self-Care Practice: Pause, Exhale, Acknowledge, Contemplate, Engage
You: You left the meeting yesterday looking really upset. Do you have a minute to chat?

Colleague: What’s the point? You never listen to me anyway. (Attack)

You: I didn’t realize you felt this way. Did I do something that caused you to think I don’t listen to your ideas? (Resisting the urge to attack & cultivating curiosity)

Colleague: The meeting ended before I could share my concerns, and I felt hurt because I really care about the success of this project. Do you have time to listen to my ideas now?