

The Courageous Conversation Compass

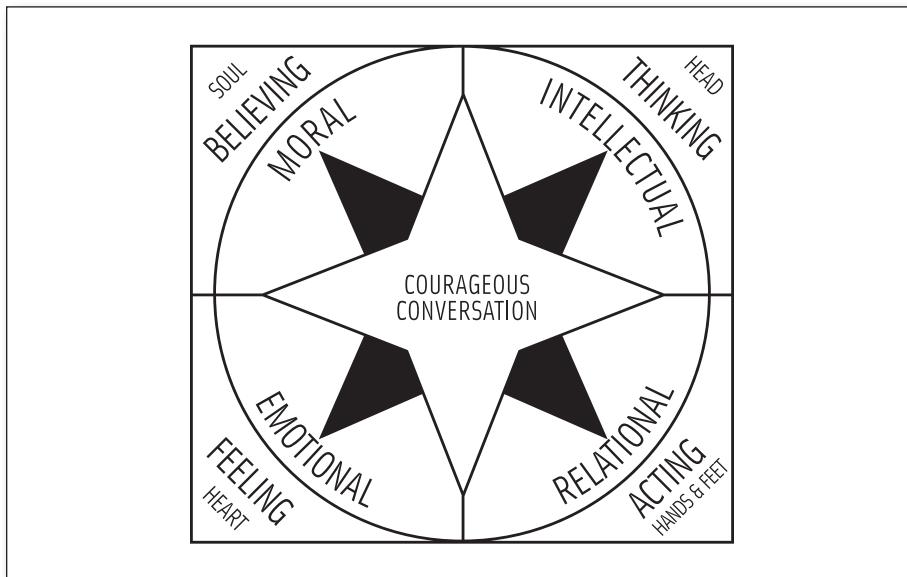
Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) has said, “In order to create a cohesive community and a consensus on how to proceed, school people must have the occasion to engage in democratic discourse about the real stuff of teaching and learning” (p. 336). Part of this “democratic discourse” is providing enough time and space in the Courageous Conversation so that every educator’s perspective and experience can be listened to and affirmed. The Fourth Condition of Courageous Conversation asks us to use the Courageous Conversation Compass to determine the place of engagement at which each participant in the dialogue is processing the content.

Video



The Compass
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Figure 2.1 The Courageous Conversation Compass



I developed the Compass as a personal navigational tool to guide participants through these conversations. It helps us to know where we are personally as well as to recognize the direction from which other participants come. Collectively, it leads us to a mutual understanding of our varied beliefs and opinions and helps us locate the sources of our emotions and actions or lack thereof.

On the Courageous Conversation Compass, I have identified four primary ways that people deal with racial information, events, and/or issues: emotional, intellectual, moral, and relational. These are the four points or cardinal directions of our compass.

- *Emotionally*, we respond to information through *feelings*, when a racial issue strikes us at a physical level and causes an internal sensation such as anger, sadness, joy, or embarrassment.