

Touchstones #4

Confidentiality, Possibility What about this Touchstone challenges you and how is it a gift for you? How have you seen this Touchstone at work in professional or personal circumstances? What are you curious about when you consider this Touchstone?

MIKE SAVER APR 24, 2023 06:24PM UTC

Observe deep confidentiality

If we trust that others will observe deep confidentiality, we will show up more authentically and whole heartedly with them and vice versa.

A holder of stories

Confidentiality signals the ability to honor the authentic expression and stories of others.

Challenge

I am so often struck by the brilliant things others share, and it can be hard for me to remember that their brilliance is not mine to share. I want *everyone* to know. This is a growth edge for me.

Challenge

Sometimes what I say is confidential and private. Some of it no longer applies to who I am at a later date.

Holding the stories of others brings up issues about our capacity to hold and our responsibilities.

Double confidentiality is good. What I say belongs to me and I control what I've said and trust that it won't be brought up again—even out of kindness. I own what I said.

Challenge

Similar to allowing people to speak their truth. Confidentiality allows the person to be authentic at that moment, and there may be growth over time. In breaking confidentiality, we may move people back to where they were before changing.

Brings up the issue of differentiating confidentiality from learning and silence.

Gift

Reminds me of when my dear friend asked me not to share her cancer diagnosis. Realized that any desire I had to share was about me and not about helping her.

Gift

Knowing others are holding what I shared, without having to talk more with me about, it is really moving.

Curious

Should I have amnesia about what I have heard in confidence, or do I let it change me?

Gift

Being able to contain what is said to that space and not take any of it outside.

Gift

The "double confidentiality" aspect of this touchstone is truly liberating--that is, the part of the touchstone that says others in the circle will not follow up with you outside the circle itself. It frees me to be much more revelatory in a circle, and it bonds me more closely with circle members in knowing that trust of confidentiality is strong.

Curious

In personal life, is it possible to maintain deep confidentiality in one relationship in a way that does not close something off to another. How can I not come off as holding something back, and

perhaps leaving space for others to make up their own stories about what they don't know?

Challenge

Trusting others to be completely respectful of this.

When I have had the experience of having someone trust me with a confidential story, it changes me, affects me, helps me understand a little more of what it is like to walk around in someone else's shoes. It reminds me of the astounding beauty and complexity, as well as the astounding commonality of human experience.

Gift

There is something so loving and selfless about honouring confidentiality, because it feels like it goes against what we want to do which is ask more questions, talk about what he heard, get an update...all for our own sake. We put our needs aside to protect the space of others.

Confidentiality vs. silencing — coded. People lose their power to affect change because of this dynamic.

Collective strength. Sometimes requires diverging stories — double edge to confidentiality. Who gets to make the choice is the person speaking.

Playing with what we deem needs to be confidentiality. Holding tensions between vulnerability, confidentiality — does confidentiality give those stories more power? Yes, there's safety in it. Are we giving the confidential things outsize power?

How present can I truly be for this person?

Brene Brown – Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind. How are we defining confidentiality. Lay out when I will break confidentiality. How do we clarify to make it understood in a kind way?

I'm curious about what we do with the stories we hold? Although we agree to keep confidentiality, should we also treat the person differently based on what they shared?

This can be clear and not clear at the same time. Have to think all the time about what is my story, what is someone else's story.

Needs to be the choice of the person who shared.

We know that its our story, and we choose with whom we want to share that. Empowerment.

Sharing problems and challenges, but not wanting it known who those are coming from. Difficulty to address concerns without more information. Can be really hard.

Trust & Boundaries - demarcating of the lush space inbetween. Safe space inbetween

Safety is built when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share, and are not repeated to others without our permission.

Challenge

So important to be clear on precisely what the parameters of confidentiality are in any given setting. I take deep confidentiality to mean that not even anonymised stories can be shared elsewhere without permission.

Gift

Safety in anonymity... (It seems these posts are anonymous, right?)

If the stories are anonymous, they become more shareable, belong to all of us. And can perhaps be spoken more honestly. (There are more complex thoughts behind this about the personal and the impersonal..., the particular and the universal...)

Personal Experience

In my (very small) community people often relate to each other in different contexts over many years and move in and out of spaces where confidentiality is expected. I've witnessed situations where people have forgotten years later where they heard a certain story and that confidentiality was expected. Not done maliciously or even carelessly but there is still harm when confidentiality is broken years down the line. Not sure how this can be avoided.

Know that it's possible

Counter-cultural

In the US, we are so conditioned to work toward a goal and think ourselves a failure if we don't reach it. This TS helps us let go of

that a bit.

Rowan Williams

From Meeting God in Mark:

“How does god work? Subtlety slowly from the very depth of being. Or steadily irresistibly like light reaching corners of a room. He works outward from the heart of being into the life of every day - not inwards from some distant heaven. This is how god works....”

Effective circles may plant a depth charge so deep below you just don't see it... but as it works itself out slowly to eventually transformation.

An observation

Possibility bubbles up in me, even when everything points to the contrary.

Know that it's possible

A gift that offers promise and possibility to difficult situations and conditions in my life, relationships, and work in the world.

Shifts perspectives = possibilities :)

experiencing

subtle shifts, movement, pivots, emotions, delayed insights

Unfolding

I love the metaphor of life unfolding before us -- that we can trust that life will continue to unfold as we're ready for it. And if things get to be overwhelming, we have the option to refold a piece back up for a bit. Kind of like a picnic blanket.

Challenge

Incredibly difficult touchstone to hold with family members and deep rooted relationships

Gift

Gives me confidence that what is there is sufficient for what I'm called to do.

This helps me to attend to whether I'm nurturing the seeds or am I letting them go fallow.

Gift

Example of how core values and TS related. Value of hope — knowing that things are possible even if I don't see the way gives me hope to continue the journey.

Gift

Difficult work situations. Hearing about consequences but lacking a full picture. Knowing it's possible allows me to let go of insecurities and stay with the mystery of the unfolding.

"Emergent/emergence". Something is taking form and readying itself to come into being. Mystery is holy and divine. Something immense is happening. Can return to "emergence," which resonates for me as an act of faith.

Gift

This is not data-driven. It's about mystery and magic. We may not have data in this moment. Even the unsaid things are meaningful and part of the experience. "Blessing all that has been said, and all that has been unsaid."

Challenge

In our outcomes driven world, it can be hard to know that something came out of the interaction. this is a good reminder.

Gift

A bit of detachment from the outcome allows me to receive something bigger than what my imagination would have created.

Challenge

Harder to apply this TS in professional and personal life. Trust and grace involved. We're in process, which is a good thing.

Challenge

Requires trust and faith in the process.

Whatever I needed to leave with

is often a thing I don't actually know when I arrive. It's in looking back on an experience that I usually see what it was that I needed,

and what is now possible that may not have been before.

Challenge

It just might be that I can't bear to hear all that the inner teacher has to say to me all at once.

Gift

Another invitation into not having every thing all figured out by 5pm today.

Challenge

...continuing to pay attention to the seeds in the days to come and not get caught back up in 'business as usual'!

Realizing a more just social world requires collective effort and reimagining our systems/structures. The work we do today is akin to planting and nourishing seeds for a better tomorrow.

Challenge

I find the intentions I often set at the beginning of an experience seem somehow small and narrow at the end - like I don't even know what I don't know. And yet, setting intentions is so important as we begin

Question I ask myself

What does "knowing that it is possible mean for me in this situation?" Sometimes it leads me to what might appear to be a more passive sense of trust or optimism. Sometimes it leads to me to a tenacious drive towards action, to the active nurturing of the seeds that have been planted, and that I believe will grow.

At work in personal life

I have learned in recent years that there is no expiration date on this touchstone. We can come away from experiences and have them becoming more meaningful, or differently meaningful, or meaningful for the first time many years later. I have recently been delving back into books that were my favorites as a child and, turning to wonder, wondering why I resonated so much with them. I have learned much about myself by doing this.

Gift

This one really frees me. I know that when I enter these doors I can not only come in with my intentions and hopes and at the same time set them aside to what else lies ahead. There's room to

be surprised and not to rush as well. There is time for all of it somehow, here and after.

Curious

The circle is it's own healthy world. How do you keep the seeds growing outside the circle where the soil is less nurturing and often full of toxins?

Challenge: Can be cynical — some people have been very damaged. Have doubts that everyone's inner teacher can be trusted. Wonder if it is possible for everyone.

Thinking about reward systems — Often hold tension with the urgency of our time and understanding that we're playing the long game.

This touchstone helps me move through the resistance and fear I have about my (and our communal journey). It also helps me trust that everything I need is "right here", not based on something I missing and need to be sold.

People go at different speeds. Some seeds have time to sprout later.

...to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.

Gift/Challenge

I experience it as both a gift and a challenge that what I needed when I arrived might look different to what I thought I wanted.

Challenge

..to not be impatient, to be patient.

Lack of imagination keeps things from happening. Believing things are possible activate it.

The seeds that were planted — value of wait time. Deeper responses. Applies in so many areas of our life if we just give the time.

Hold open in any conversation or community; this notion of believing that there is good/possibility that can come from challenging conversations is helpful.

Is it a discovery process through the circle itself or is it something you noticed you needed before you entered?
