

From Blunt to Boldly Diplomatic

A 3-Step SPIRAL™ Reflective Micro-Tool for Cultivating Fortright Diplomacy Under Pressure

When directness is a strength, it can become a sharp edge under stress. For leaders with a high value on truth, clarity, and justice, the line between authenticity and abruptness can blur, especially when emotional charge is high. While being frank may feel like leadership, it can unintentionally damage trust if not paired with emotional awareness and timing. This tool helps you shift from reactive communication to grounded, influential expression.

When tension rises and urgency creeps in, your message may come from pressure rather than purpose. This micro-tool supports the shift from unfiltered reaction to clear, connected expression.

Step 1: Catch the Edge

"What's charging this message?"

- What emotion or urgency might be fueling this response?
- Am I speaking to be right, or to be understood?
- How might this land in their system?

This step surfaces what's beneath your impulse to speak, creating a gap between emotion and expression.

Step 2: Centre the Intention

"What am I really trying to say?"

- What truth or boundary matters most here?
- What do I want the other person to walk away with?
- How can I say this most concisely, with fewer, clearer words?
- What tone would I use if I deeply respected this person?

This step reconnects you with your leadership intention, so your message reflects strength and care, not heat. And it helps you distill your voice into something powerful, not padded.

Step 3: Speak from Ground

Ground is that place inside you than knows. It's stable, not reactive. When you speak from the ground, you're not trying to win, fix, gain approval, control, or protect. You're simply communicating with clarity, presence and enoughness.

"What does leadership sound like right now?"

- Choose a language that is direct **and** generous.
- Try: "Here's what I'm seeing, and I want to share it with transparency and respect."
- Use breath or pause to pace your delivery, especially before key words or phrases.

What the difference?

Bluntness prioritises release. Diplomatic clarity prioritises relationship. One is reactive, the other is responsive.

This step matters because it allows you to be fully honest without rupturing connection and building trust rather than proving a point.

"I communicate in a way that others can receive, not just react to"

With practice, this tool helps you transform your natural directness into powerful influence. It doesn't ask you to soften your speaking, only to deliver it in way that honours both your integrity and the relationship. Over time, this creates more psychological safety, deeper respect, and wiser conversations.