



Discussing the Undiscussable: A Guide to Overcoming Defensive Routines in the Workplace

William R. Noonan

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Since his 1990 landmark book *Overcoming Organizational Defenses*, Chris Argyris has extensively researched and written about how well-meaning, smart people create vicious cycles of defensive behavior to protect themselves from embarrassment and threat. In *Discussing the Undiscussable*, Bill Noonan enlivens the scholarly work of Chris Argyris through the use of reflective exercises and easy-to-read chapters that illuminate the basic human experience endemic to the creation of defensive routines. This book offers hope for altering organizational defensive routines by leveraging the greatest opportunity for change—the way we think and act.

Discussing the Undiscussable provides a set of practical “how to do” exercises for detecting, surfacing, and discussing organizational defensive routines in a safe and productive way. The combination of text, business fable, and interactive and reflective exercises is versatile in its application to both individuals and groups. The companion DVD contains video vignettes of the book’s business fable where the actors model both defensive routines and virtuous cycles of behavior. Readers will instantly recognize what has long been going on in the workplace, and will be able to develop the skills to talk about it productively.

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