



Positive communication during difficult times

Annatjie van der Wath & Tanya Heyns

Overview of presentation

- A story to illustrate some aspects of relationships, communication, loneliness and togetherness
- What is positive communication?
- How to “do” positive communication?
- Positive communication during COVID 19

A story

“Big Wolf is sitting under a tree he has long considered his own, atop a hill he has claimed for himself. But this is no ordinary day — Big Wolf spots a new presence perched on the horizon, a tiny blue figure, “no bigger than a dot.” Big Wolf is chilled by the terrifying possibility that the newcomer might be bigger than he is.”



Themes

- Powerful
- “Important”
- Egocentric
- Wish to be powerful and have power
- To be the biggest and the best
- Suspicious
- Hostility

“Big Wolf saw that he was small and felt reassured. He let Little Wolf climb right up to his tree.”



Themes

- If someone is less powerful than you, its fine
- Ability to control others
- “Nothing to fear”

Big Wolf and Little Wolf

“Night came.
Little Wolf stayed.
Big Wolf thought that Little Wolf went a bit too far.
After all, it had always been his tree.

When Big Wolf went to bed, Little Wolf went to bed too.

When Big Wolf saw that Little Wolf was shivering at the tip of his nose, he pushed a teeny tiny corner of his leaf blanket closer to him.

“That is certainly enough for such a little wolf,” he thought.

Big Wolf picks his usual fruit for breakfast, but, seeing as Little Wolf isn’t picking any, grabs a few more than usual. Silently, he pushes a modest plate to Little Wolf, who eats it just as silently.”



Themes

- Selfish
- Egocentric
- “Tough”
- Not really willing to share
- Share because of some guilt feelings
- Do not want to appear “soft-hearted”
- Arrogant

“When Big Wolf goes for his daily walk, he peers at his tree from the bottom of the hill and sees Little Wolf still stationed there, sitting quietly.

Big Wolf crossed the big field - he turned around again. Little Wolf was still there under the tree. Big Wolf smiled. Little Wolf looked even smaller.

But when he reemerges from the forest by evening, the tiny blue dot is gone from under the tree.”



Themes

- Unwillingness to share/invite
- Superior
- Independent
- In control
- Not really willing/ready to co-operate or engage

“Big Wolf felt uneasy for the first time in his life.

He climbed back up the hill much more quickly than on all other evenings.

There was no one under his tree. No one big, no one little.

It was like before.

Except that now Big Wolf was sad.

That evening for the first time Big Wolf didn't eat.

That night for the first time Big Wolf didn't sleep.

He waited.

For the first time he said to himself that a little one, indeed a very little one, had taken up space in his heart.

A lot of space.”



Themes

- Loss
- Sadness
- Vulnerability
- Disappointment
- “A little one....” allowed himself to feel, to be weak



“He bargains the way the bereaved do — if Little Wolf returns, he vows, he would offer him “a larger corner of his leaf blanket, even a much larger one”; he would give him all the fruit he wanted; he would let him climb higher and mirror all of his exercises, “even the special ones known only to him.”

Big Wolf waits and waits and waits, beyond reason, beyond season.”

Themes

- Loneliness
- Longing
- Bargaining
- Despair
- Realised what he lost when it was too late

“And then, one day, a tiny blue dot appears on the horizon.

For the first time in his life Big Wolf’s heart beat with joy.

“Without you,” said Big Wolf in a very small voice, “I was lonely.”

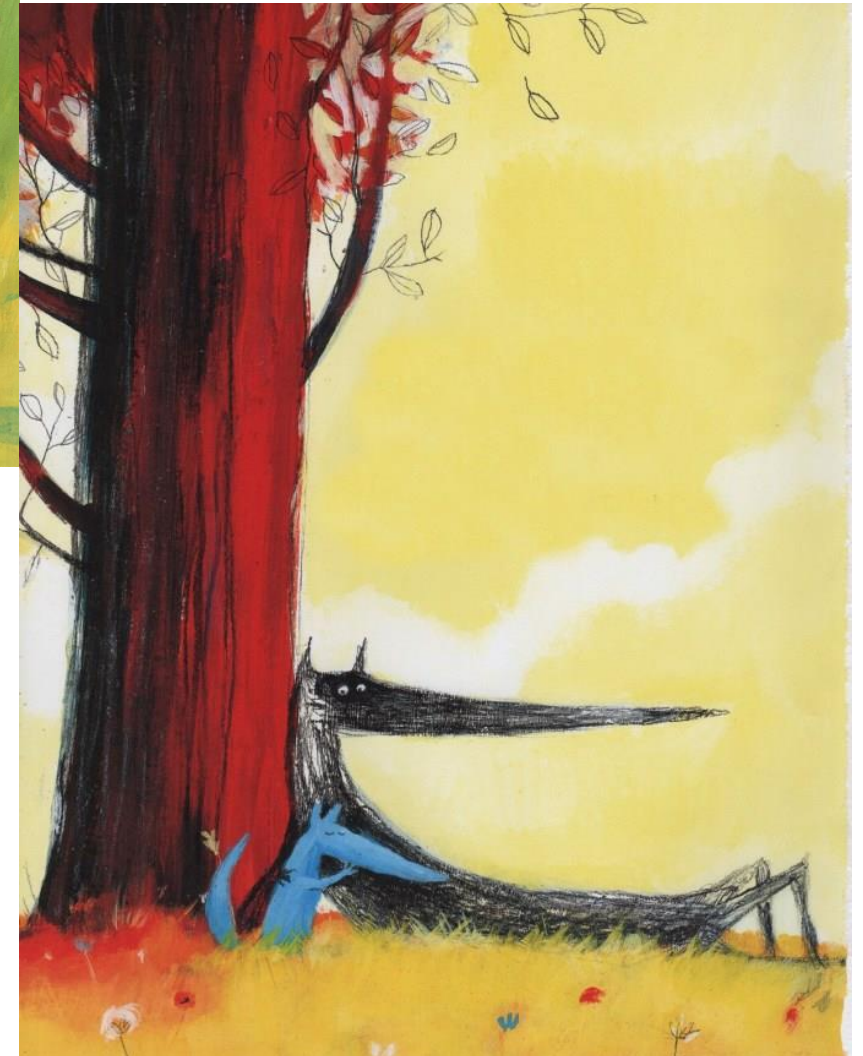
“Little Wolf took a step closer to Big Wolf.

“Me too,” he said. “I was lonely too.”

He rested his head gently on Big Wolf’s shoulder.

Big Wolf felt good.

And so it was decided that from then on Little Wolf would stay.”



Themes

- Joy
- No need to explain
- Openness
- Honest sharing of feelings – acknowledge vulnerability
- Mutual sharing of feelings
- “A step closer...” - closeness
- Touch (gentle touch)
- Togetherness
- Sharing and caring

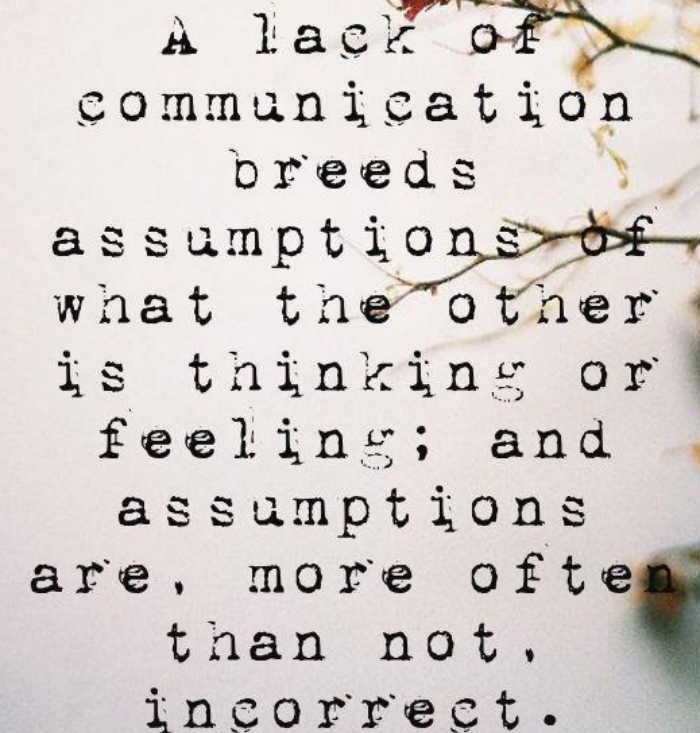
What is positive communication?

Interaction based on positive attitude

Aimed at mutual understanding and satisfying for all the parties involved.

Constructive, effective, supportive and coloured with good emotions

Positive intention, initiative, adaptation, empathic listening and social support



A lack of communication breeds assumptions of what the other is thinking or feeling; and assumptions are, more often than not, incorrect.

Why positive communication?

1. Increased Confidence
2. Better Efficiency
3. Employee Engagement
4. Great Working Environment
5. Stronger Management



How? Recognize recurring negative patterns and change

- When stimulus , I my *typical reaction* .
- Our brains have a natural tendency to follow neural pathways that already exist.
- That doesn't mean that all our patterns are serving us well, or that we can't change the ones that aren't.
- For example, "when I get angry, I become negative." I learned it from my Dad, so it's engraved in my mind.
- With awareness, you have the ability to notice ... and then I can chart another course, to practice positive communication.
- But the first step in the process was to simply recognize that pattern in myself.



How? Be Brief

Most people say more than necessary

Especially when nervous or angry.

Write, edit, and rehearse what you want to say - concisely as possible.

Don't drown your core message

<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/102105116538012409/>

<https://the20minuteguide.com/parents/helping-with-words/positive-communication/>

“Don't use words too big for the subject. Don't say 'infinitely' when you mean 'very'; otherwise you'll have no word left when you want to talk about something really infinite.”

– C. S. Lewis

How? Be Specific

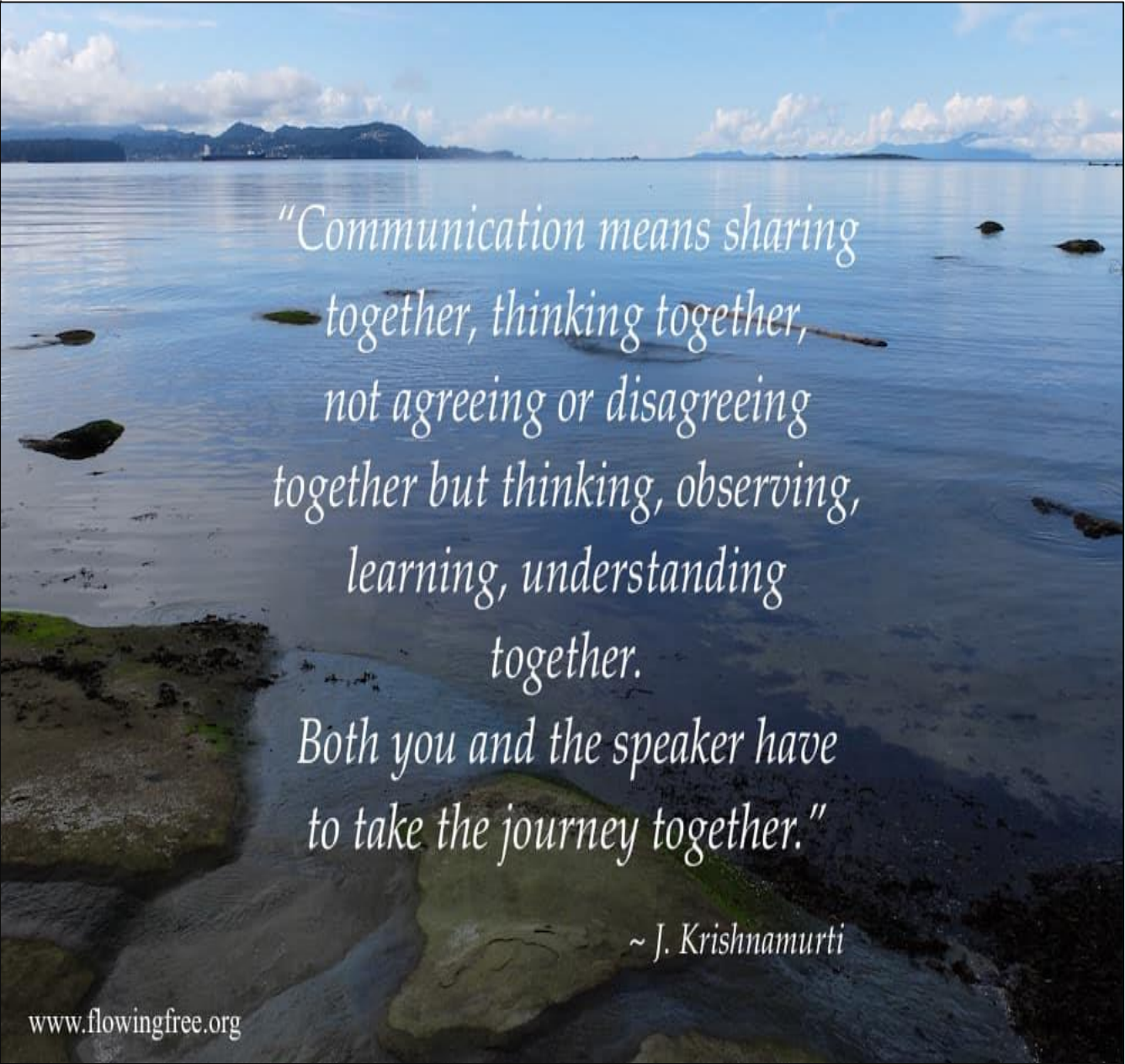
Vague requests are easy to ignore or misunderstand.

Translate requests into concrete behavior.

Refer to specific behaviors instead of thoughts or feelings - makes change observable and measurable.

You can avoid many disputes by clearly expressing your expectations.

Be clear, not blunt!



*"Communication means sharing
together, thinking together,
not agreeing or disagreeing
together but thinking, observing,
learning, understanding
together.*

*Both you and the speaker have
to take the journey together."*

~ J. Krishnamurti

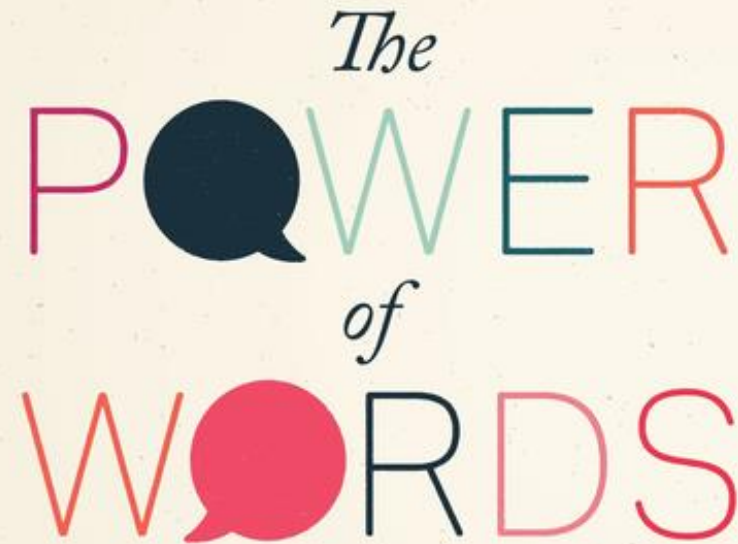
www.flowingfree.org

Describing what you want,
instead of what you don't
want.

Shifts from critical and
complaining to supportive and
doable.

Being positive decreases
defensiveness and rebellion
and promotes motivation.

How? Be Positive



How? Label Your Feelings

A description of your emotional reaction to the problem can help elicit empathy and consideration.

State your feelings in a calm, non-accusatory manner.

Don't become too
preoccupied with
what is happening
around you

Pay more attention
to what is going on
within you

-Mary-Frances Winters-

Work Word of the Day | www.letsstalkaboutwork.tv



How? Offer an Understanding Statement

Prevent defensive behaviour

Build empathy, which will help the relationship

Listen and engage

In a crisis, employee communication is often the thin thread that holds everyone and everything together.



How? Take Partial Responsibility

Sharing in a problem, even a tiny piece of the problem, decreases defensiveness and promotes collaboration.

Accepting partial responsibility does not mean taking the blame or admitting fault; it communicates “We’re in this together.”



How? Offer to Help

When phrased as a question, an offer to help can communicate non-blaming, problem-solving support.

“Would it help if...?” Or simply, “How can I help?”

A little goes a long way to improve communication and generate ideas.



HOW TO HAVE A LOVELY DAY



Smile at strangers
Slow down
Say thank you
Give lots of compliments
Dress nicely
Wear perfume
Observe and listen
Be charming
Laugh
Wish others a lovely day

How? Positive phrasing

- Highlight what can be done
- Suggest alternatives and choices
- Be aware of whether your phrasing and language is positive or negative
- Avoid negative words:
 - Avoid words like cannot, will not, unable to etc.
 - Phrase sentences in a manner that avoids negative words but conveys the same meaning.
 - For example, instead of saying “This cannot be done if you do not provide ABC”, say “if you can provide ABC, we can complete XYZ in record time”.

Positive Communication Skills

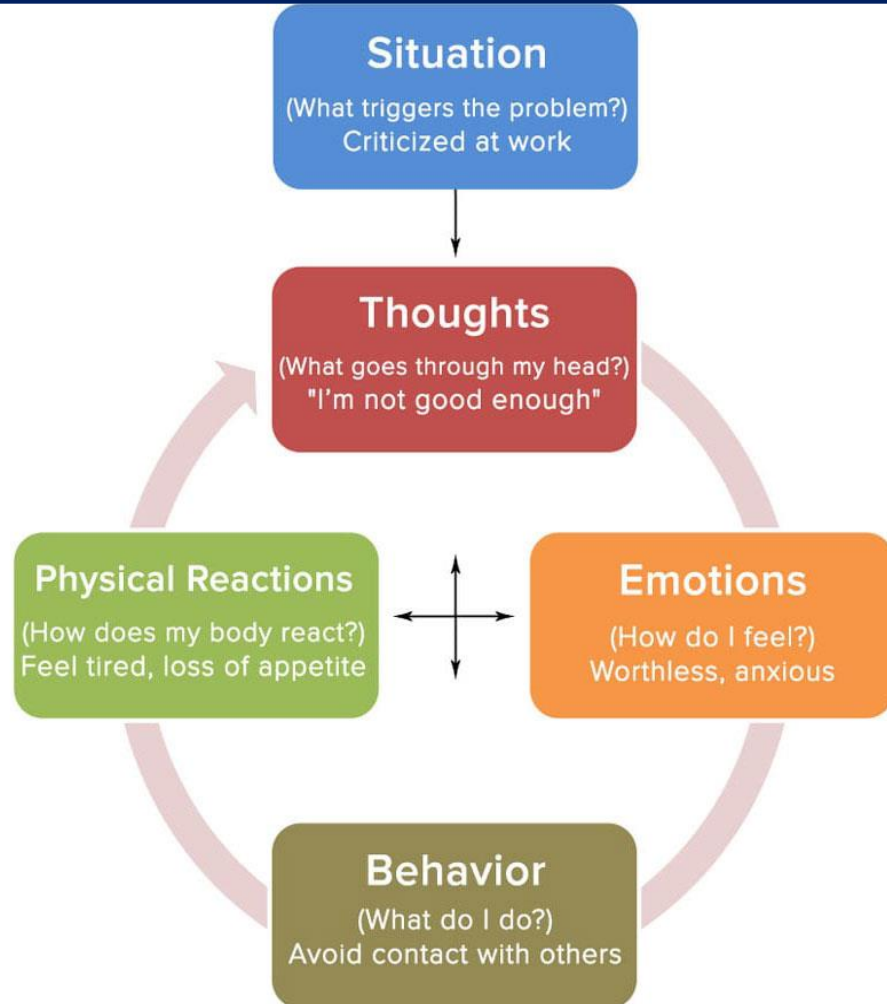
Description



Positive Communication Skills	
Fix Ups Change what we say, how we	
Speed/Rate Are you talking too fast?	
Time Are you talking too much?	
Listen Listen to what the other	
Use good Volume Not too loud or too quiet	
Use Eye Contact Look but DON'T stare	

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How? CBT



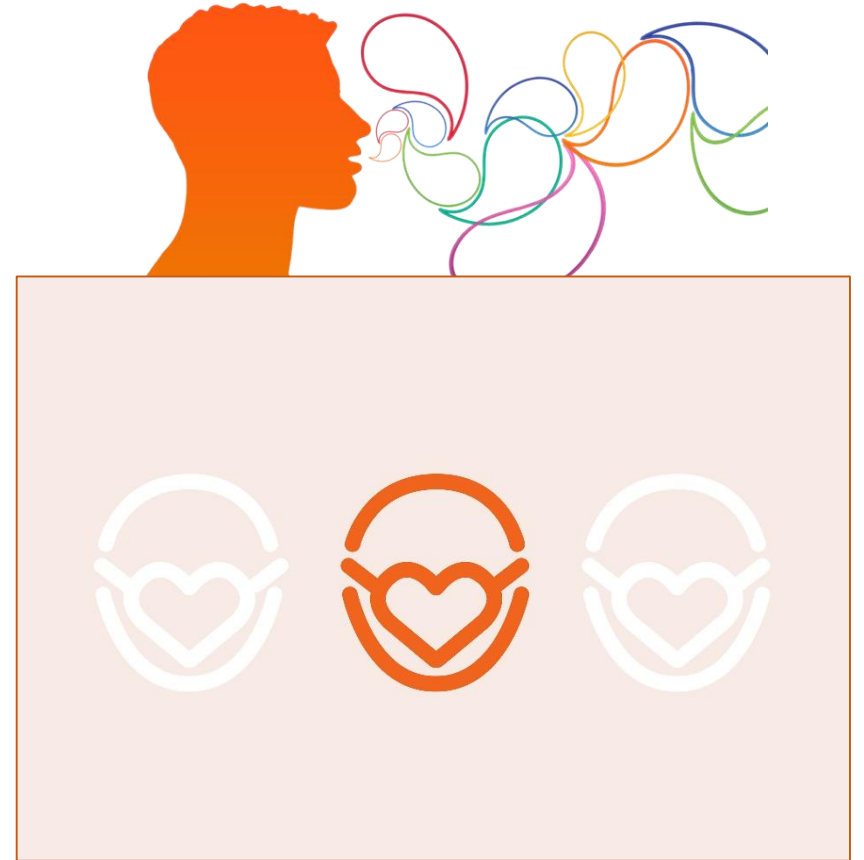
CBT targets cognitive distortions - thoughts that includes the tendency to:

- over-generalise situations,
- focus on negative ideas and events,
- and fail to appreciate positive outcomes.

CBT teaches a person to embrace a more realistic and balanced worldview, which eases strain on emotions and stress levels.

Positive Communication During COVID 19

- Recognize that the coronavirus pandemic will affect the way people hear, interpret, and respond to information in many different ways
- Don't deny but don't catastrophize.
- Focus conversations – whether they're about COVID-19 or not – on “what you could do in a situation” instead of on “what could happen”.



Positive Communication During COVID 19

- Focus on action
- Be ready to adapt
- Focus on the facts you have, and what actions you are taking because of those facts.
- Acknowledge that this climate may be the new normal for some time
- Now is also a great opportunity for managers to roll up their sleeves and get into the trenches
- Practice humility, leave ego at the door and do the work you need to make life easier for everyone during this time.
- Be open and transparent about your own struggles and explain what you're doing to help others.
- Everybody is on edge, so prepare for this response and don't take it personally.

*It's okay to not have
it
figured out yet.*

@dizzygbrnatto3

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