

Desmond O'Neill

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Navigating Hard Conversations with the PLAN Framework. Difficult conversations rarely fail because the issue is too big. They fail because people enter them emotionally loaded, poorly prepared, or more focused on relief than resolution. Desmond O'Neill introduces his PLAN framework—Purpose, Look/Listen, Ask, Next Steps—as a practical way to approach conflict with structure, discipline, and control. He shows how to clarify the real objective, keep emotion from hijacking the exchange, and say what needs to be said without creating unnecessary damage. Audiences gain a more direct, more strategic way to handle tension, accountability, and uncomfortable truths when avoidance is no longer an option.

Communicating Under Pressure. Pressure changes the way people think, listen, and speak. It shortens patience, distorts judgment, and makes even capable professionals more reactive than they realize. In this keynote, Desmond O'Neill shows audiences how to stay composed when tension rises, think clearly in real time, and communicate in ways that build credibility instead of eroding it. He breaks down what stress does to perception, why people misread each other when the stakes feel high, and how disciplined communicators keep a difficult moment from turning into a damaging one. The result is steadier leadership, sharper judgment, and more effective communication when it matters most.

Finding the Calm in the Chaos. When conditions become unstable, leaders are judged less by what they promise than by how they carry themselves. Teams watch for cues: Is this person grounded? Do they know how to think when the path is unclear? Can they be trusted when pressure starts to spread? In this keynote, Desmond O'Neill examines what leadership requires when certainty disappears and the room is looking for steadiness. He shows how strong leaders absorb pressure without amplifying it, communicate honestly without feeding confusion, and make sound decisions before perfect clarity arrives. This session sharpens a leader's ability to project calm, preserve trust, and guide others through volatility.

Ask Before You Assume: How Curiosity Leads to Better Decisions. Many conversations break down before the argument even starts. The damage begins when one person decides they already know what the other means, why they said it, or what comes next. Desmond O'Neill explores how assumption fuels defensiveness, weakens judgment, and cuts people off from the information they need most. He makes the case for curiosity not as softness, but as discipline—the discipline to pause, question, and keep gathering data before locking into a conclusion. Audiences come away better able to reduce resistance, uncover what is actually driving the interaction, and make smarter decisions before certainty gets them in trouble.

Read the Room Like a Pro: Spot Signals, Respond Smarter. The most important part of an interaction is often the part nobody says out loud. A delayed answer, a forced laugh, a change in posture, a shift in tone—small signals can reveal discomfort, hesitation, resistance, or uncertainty before words ever do. In this keynote, Desmond O'Neill teaches audiences how to sharpen their observational skills and respond more effectively to what people communicate beyond language. He shows what to notice, what to ignore, and how context determines whether a cue matters or merely distracts. People leave better able to read dynamics in real time, make stronger interpersonal judgments, and catch what others miss.