

About the leader's pilot program

What is a curly situation?

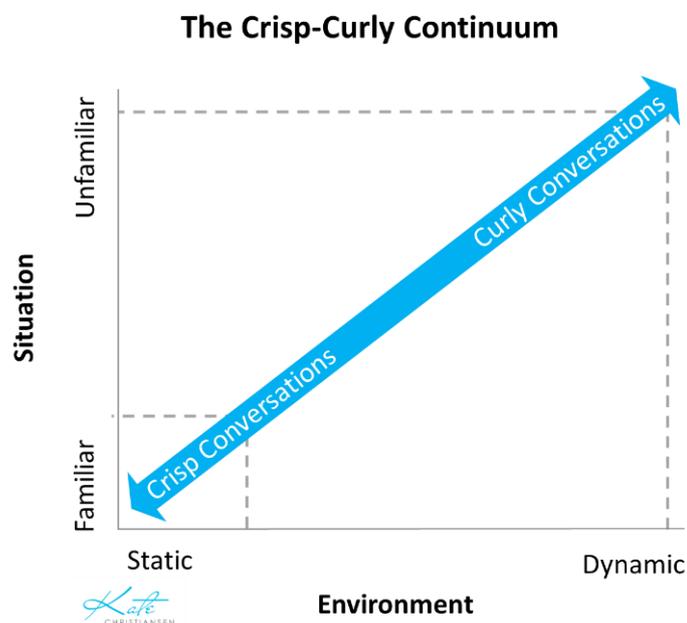
Have you ever found yourself facing a curly situation and feeling a little unsure as to what to do about it?

I reckon this is something most of us experience from time to time.

A curly situation is one in which the majority of elements are new to us.

For example, new context, new challenge, new information, new skills needed etc. The more 'new elements' a situation has, the curlier it becomes. And, the less we can rely on what we know, the skills we have or the experiences we've accumulated to get us through.

A curly situation is also one in which the different elements seem 'tangled' together and it's hard to distinguish where one issue ends and another one starts.



When are Curly Conversations needed?

As I explained in a [previous video](#), problem-solving conversations tend to fall somewhere on a continuum.

At one end, we have *Crisp Conversations*.

These 'A to B' conversations are about the everyday challenges that need to be addressed in order to keep your business or organisation

delivering products and services to its customers.

Crisp Conversations draw heavily on the knowledge and experience we already have. While they can still be challenging, the content for these conversations lives squarely in our comfort zone.

Because we draw on what we know and what we've done before, Crisp Conversations feel comfortable and straight forward.

Consequently, they enable us to assess the situation relatively quickly and work out what to do. At the other end of the continuum are *Curly Conversations*.

As their name suggests, Curly Conversations are less straight forward and more 'round about' than their crisp counterparts.

Curly Conversations require us to learn, generate new insights and explore what we know, from different perspectives. The answers that we need don't exist in our heads, although we'd really like them to.

Curly Conversations challenge us to reach beyond the boundaries of our comfort zone so we can address the unique situation we're facing.

Why are Curly Conversations so challenging?

Many leaders I work with are pretty good at working out where their situation fits the Curly-Crisp Continuum.

Things get tricky, however, because these two types of conversations are fundamentally different to each other. They involve different mental muscles and require us to completely shift the way we think, the questions we ask and the problem-solving approach that we take.

This is where we often become stuck.

Even those we know we need to have a Curly Conversation with our team but we don't have time or the brain-space to think it through and design it. And, because (by their very nature) Curly Conversations take our us beyond our comfort zones. Many of us are understandably reluctant to venture into the unknown, without a guide rope to return home.

This makes the easier, faster, more familiar Crisp Conversations more attractive and so we gravitate towards them. And, these kinds of conversations become particularly attractive when we're under time pressure or the curly situation is critically important.

This mismatch has consequences.

When a Crisp conversation approach is used to address a Curly Situation, teams tend to start the conversation in the wrong place, from the wrong perspective. Consequently, they limit their options and end up in a Spiral of Compromise, hurtling towards a potentially a bigger problem at the other end.

When Curly Conversations are used to address Curly situations, teams start with an open mindset. Their relationship with the issue is more curious than adversarial and teams are able to detach and see it from multiple perspectives.

These conversations generate more possibilities and have a higher likelihood of identifying the best solution. This kind of conversation moves the issue forward and makes it another coil on the Spring of Success.

What is a Curly Conversation Kit?

This brand new tool is for leaders whose teams are facing Curly Situations but don't have time (or the appetite) to design the conversation needed to achieve success.

These kits, along with the online support, provide the guide-rope leaders need to confidently take their team's conversations into the unknown.

The kits include:

✓ **Conversation Starter**

Original and clearly presented content that gets team members thinking before you meet.

✓ **Leader's Guide**

Step-by-step instructions that explain what to do before, during and after the conversation.

✓ **Question Guide**

Designed to give your conversation the right pace, flow and outcome.

✓ **Prompt Slide Pack**

Use during the conversation to keep the discussion focused and on track.

✓ **Action plan**

A structured way to capture what has been agreed and what needs to happen next.

✓ **Communication Templates**

Giving you a starting point from which to guide your team.

What's involved in the pilot program?

As a pilot program participant, you will:

- have access to the full Curly Conversation Kit. You will be able to keep the kit after the pilot is finished.
- have access to online support to help you use the Kit with your team during the pilot period
- have the opportunity to have a one-on-one 20-minute debrief discussion with Kate after you've used the kit.

By signing up to the pilot program you agree to:

- use the kit to run a conversation with your team
- do so between the 14th September – 19th October 2020
- share your experiences when using the kit via a short post-session questionnaire.

Any information that you provide will be treated as confidential.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



* Suitable for online and face-to-face team conversations

Catalyst Conversation Kit includes:

- ✓ **Conversation Starter**
- ✓ **Leader's Guide**
- ✓ **Question Guide**
- ✓ **Prompter Pack**
- ✓ **Action Plan**
- ✓ **Communication Templates**