# Conversas Corajosas

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In our lives, we have all experienced different types of conversations, some that flow naturally, that are **productive** and **enriching**, and others that are **tense**, **painful** and end up hurting the feelings of those involved.

But, have you ever thought about what differentiates these situations? What makes a conversation light and vibrant, or what elements must be fought so that communication is not done in a violent way?

In this sense, author Elisama Santos explains that relationships are like a dance: you need to connect and be in the same rhythm as the other party, only then can you dance to the same song.

But to dance well with others, first of all, it is necessary to know how to dance well alone, to know our steps, gestures, rhythms and tastes, in this way we can **authentically engage**.

So, ready to get to know the type of dance that works best for you and your relationships? Keep reading this summary to learn more!

## Main ideas of the book

- Fear will always exist, but courage helps us move forward anyway;
- It is critical to establish and defend our boundaries;
- Our value is not in how much our characteristics are socially accepted;
- We're bigger than our flaws;
- Emotional blackmail is present in most relationships;
- You need to know yourself and your priorities to get what you want;
- Listening and seeking to understand people's needs is the best way to achieve effective communication;
- It is an illusion to believe that we have control over everything that happens to us;
- Our energy is best used when we follow the cues of our feelings and understand what they say about us.

## To whom is this book indicated?

Reading this book is essential for people looking to develop their **communication skills**, learn more about ways to **establish relationships** and **strengthen connections**.

Therefore, the content of the book is applicable in various areas, whether in personal or professional life.

# Overview of the book

## How to have the courage to be happy with who you are?

In the first chapter of the book, the author talks about the element that she considers essential to maintain good relationships: **courage**. She explains that it is something that manifests itself in different ways depending on the situation.
In the different events that people experience, each one can be courageous in a different way, either through acts, when making a difficult decision, or as a feeling, such as "having more will than fear and moving forward, even scared".
Fear is an element that seeks to protect our integrity as much as possible, but for that it makes us avoid any type of risk, keeping us in our comfort zone. However, Santos explains that this is not a good option, because in order to grow we have to experience challenging situations.
Therefore, it is very difficult to define a concept for courage, but it is an idea that involves making peace with fear and moving forward, accepting our vulnerability and understanding that the result of our actions is not what defines us.
In this way, we are able to understand that, even with all the **flaws and imperfections**, we have the ideal size and courage helps us to face, accept, welcome and defend our own size.

## Do you know what really matters to you?

The relationships we have with ourselves greatly influence our interactions with other people. Therefore, it is essential to **know what is really important for our life**, because only then are we able to externalize this and, consequently, achieve what we want.
The limits we set serve to determine what our priorities are and how far we are willing to go. The author explains that there is no emotionally healthy and balanced relationship that does not need these demarcations. **A relationship that doesn't allow us to say "no" is too difficult a relationship to be in**.
However, in a survey carried out through her social networks, Elisama Santos asked her followers if they were afraid or difficult to say "no". In the 300 responses obtained, the vast majority reported difficulties in setting limits in relationships.
She explains that this happens because **we often confuse giving up our limits with love**. It is essential to maintain relationships by choice, not because we think we depend on it or that they depend on us.
The writer also points out that **non-violent communication** is not a tool to influence people, but a way to connect with our priorities, which is the starting point for a courageous conversation.
In order to **better understand our priorities**, the author suggests the following questions:

- What's happening?
- What am I feeling?
- What do I want/need/want/need/hope?
- What can others do to help me meet this need?

From there, it becomes easier to make requests and position yourself in a **crucial conversation** in a way that makes sense for your aspirations, desires and limits. Defending them makes your life better.

## How to avoid emotional blackmail in difficult conversations?

Emotional blackmail is very much present in our relationships. According to the author, this is because the traditional education system is based on blackmail. “You will only get the toy if you tidy up the room!”, for example.
But it doesn't have to work that way. Elisama Santos explains that **blackmail arises when there is a lack of knowledge of other ways of acting**. To protect yourself from this dynamic when someone tries to blackmail you, she provides the following tips:

- Have no doubts about your quality and capacity;
- Don't take it personally. As has been said, blackmail is learned, in most cases, in childhood;
- What's the worst-case scenario if you say "no" and set your limit? Face your fear!;
- Avoid giving immediate answers. Urgency is one of the key features of blackmail;
- Reflect on what is being discussed or requested;
- If possible, plan out the content and timing of the conversation ahead of time, thinking about possible emotionally healthy responses.

On the other hand, Santos also indicates strategies to better understand the actions that **trigger** blackmail and, based on that, use other approaches to the conversation:

- First of all, recognize that it's a learned pattern and don't feel like a villain for having used blackmail in your life;
- Keep in mind that there are other strategies;
- Understand that no one is obligated to anything, so make your requests in a non-violent way;
- Accept that the other party has the right to say “no”;
- It's your responsibility to learn to deal with the feelings that come with receiving "no" as an answer.

## How to understand what the other person really means?

Knowing how to listen is key to **conducting a courageous conversation**. In this sense, the author emphasizes the importance of **empathic listening**, which seeks to find and understand the priorities of the other party during a conversation.
To that end, she suggests the following:

- **Know how to separate your judgment from reality**: we can't help but judge, but we can learn to critically analyze and understand what doesn't make sense with reality;
- **Remember that you can make mistakes**: it is difficult to get it right and understand right away what the other person needs, but it is important to show that you are willing and motivated to understand;
- **Focus on needs**: always think in terms of needs, this makes it easier to see what the other party is asking for.

In the same way that it is important to accept our flaws and imperfections, for a **communicative person** to be successful, it is essential to keep in mind that no one is perfect and, therefore, one cannot demand it. During difficult conversations, no matter how difficult, try to be kind and actively listen to what the other person is saying.

Often, while the other party is still communicating, our thoughts are already on what we are going to hit back. In this way, it is impossible to understand what the other is going through and, consequently, to act empathically.

# What do other authors say about it?

In the book "The Art of Reading Minds", author **Henrik Fexeus** teaches how to adapt your speech by identifying and evaluating the other person's body posture and non-verbal language, so it is easier to find something in common and connect with the interlocutor.

In this sense, **John C. Maxwell** explains, in his book "Relationships 101", how the art of knowing how to listen and understand the other person's side serves as a basis for cultivating successful relationships.

Author **Reshma Saujani**, founder of the NGO Girls Who Code, emphasizes in her book "Brave, Not Perfect" the importance of having the courage to put yourself as a priority.

# Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

- Accept your flaws and imperfections;
- Understand that no one is perfect and never expect that from people;
- Don't try to transform the other party, but understand what they need;
- Ask more and affirm less;
- Be aware of your boundaries and defend them;
- Before a conversation, adjust your expectations;
- When speaking, don't be self-righteous;
- Don't try to control the other person or their way of thinking.

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