

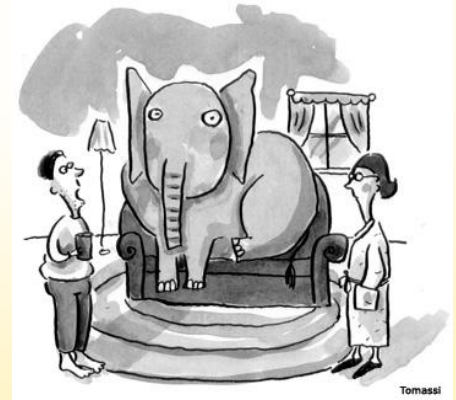
# Pondering Point

There are instances in life where we know we should be having the tough talk; a conversation with someone else we keep putting off. *Are we scared of what the fallout will be?* Maybe we've tried to have this conversation before and it went badly. **Either way, it is taking up vital amounts of our mental and emotional energy and keeping us from being fully productive.** If we never address the issue it will only fester and compound itself, we can take steps now to uncover the giant elephant in the room.

*Are we sure we know what the 'elephant' is?* We can make a lot of assumptions about the issue and the intentions of other people. The impact of another's behavior does not always equal their intent. *What is so tough about this topic?* Sometimes the issue is only tough to us. Once we stop hiding behind phone calls and emails and take the lead to open the conversation, we may find it goes smoother than we expected. *What do we want to achieve with this discussion? What do we want to walk away with?* If we open up with that then our intentions are on the table and we can begin a productive conversation where both parties work towards well-stated outcomes. **We spend so much energy worrying and fretting and possibly making the elephant larger than it is.** Think how much lighter we will feel with the weight off that pesky elephant on our backs!

## Are you avoiding any TOUGH TALKS?

*Stop feeding the elephant!*



**Imagine... conserving your energy by turning your negative monologues into a productive dialogue.**

### — From Pondering to Practice —

#### **Activity:**

Have a group of people reflect on a tough talk they had with a family member, a friend or a work partner and discuss the questions below.

- What issues made it a tough talk?
- Did you anticipate the intentions and reactions of the other person before the conversation started?
  - Were you accurate about their reactions?
  - Did you feel the conversation was successful?

#### **Reflection:**

Reflect on a tough talk that you may need to have with someone.

- What do you think is the true issue at hand?
  - Break down each issue – what is important about each?
- What do you anticipate your emotional triggers to be?
- What do you ultimately want out of this conversation?

Pinpointing the true issue(s), recognizing our emotional triggers and articulating what we want to accomplish will lead to a successful and productive discussion!

#### **Book Suggestion:**

##### [Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss what Matters Most](#)

By: Bruce Patton, Douglas Stone, Sheila Heen, and Roger Fisher

*We came across this book title numerous times while reflecting on this topic – join us in researching this promising resource!*

***"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you must stop and look fear in the face."***

- Eleanor Roosevelt