

# How to Handle Tough Conversations Without Feeling Like a Jerk

Mastering Emotional Intelligence for Leadership Influence

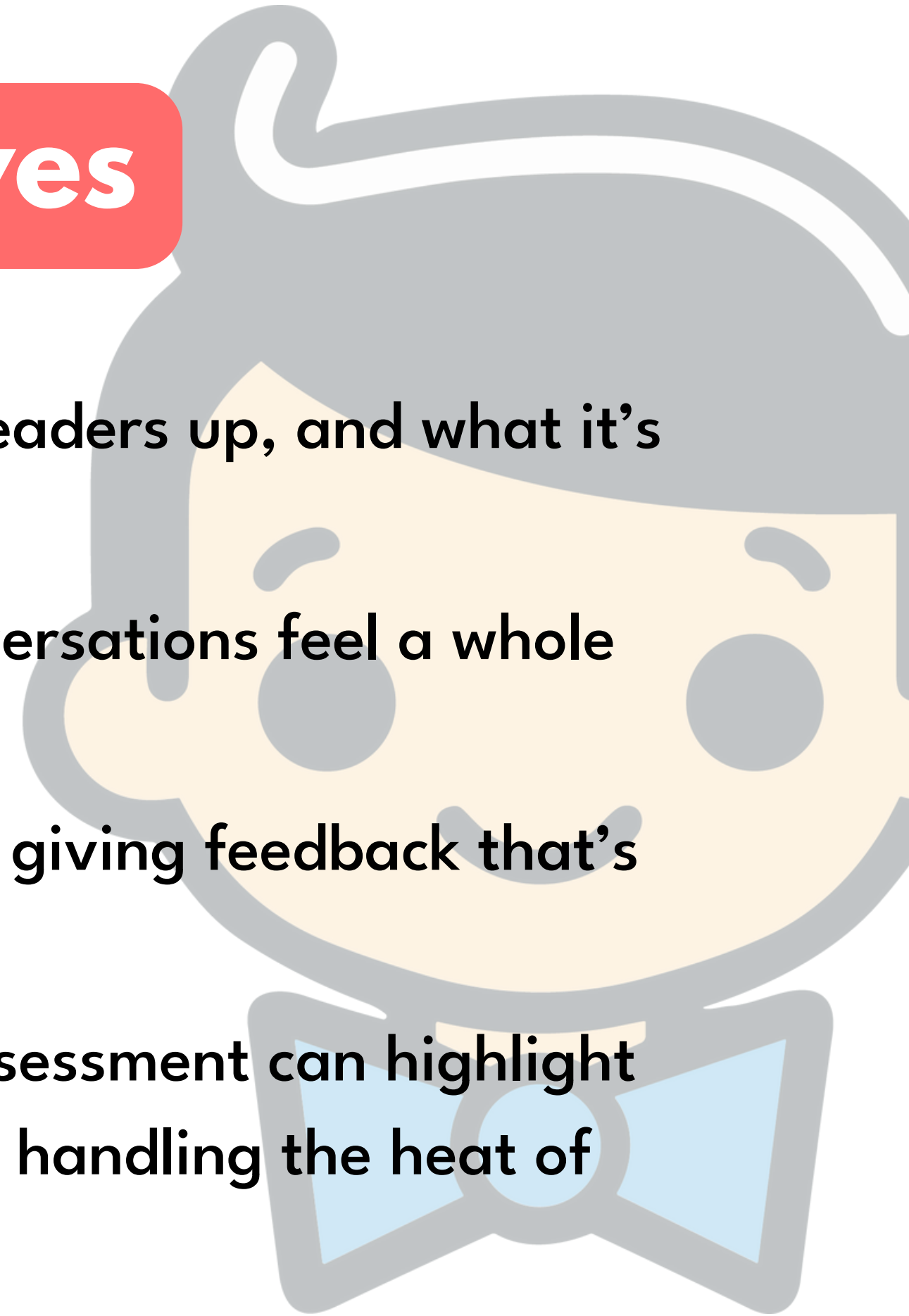


# What to expect

- 👉 No fluff approach to be a more influential leader without being a jerk.
- 👉 Interactive session that is designed to be engaging and participation is encouraged.
- 👉 Nothing for sale in this session.
- 👉 At the end, I'll let you know how to get your EQ Snapshot so that it will give you more insight into your EQ

# Learning Objectives

- ✓ We'll unpack why tough conversations trip so many leaders up, and what it's really costing them when they get it wrong.
- ✓ I'll show you the emotional skills that make hard conversations feel a whole lot lighter... and actually lead somewhere.
- ✓ You'll learn my go-to method, the "Clarity Oreo," for giving feedback that's honest and human.
- ✓ And finally, I'll walk you through how the EQ-i 2.0 assessment can highlight your superpowers and your blind spots when it comes to handling the heat of high-stakes conversations.



# Who the heck is Antoni?



**20 years in tech**

**6 careers**

**40+ certifications**

**Human connection expert**

**Certified EQ and ICF Coach**

**Global Keynote Speaker**

**Bowtie Afficionado**

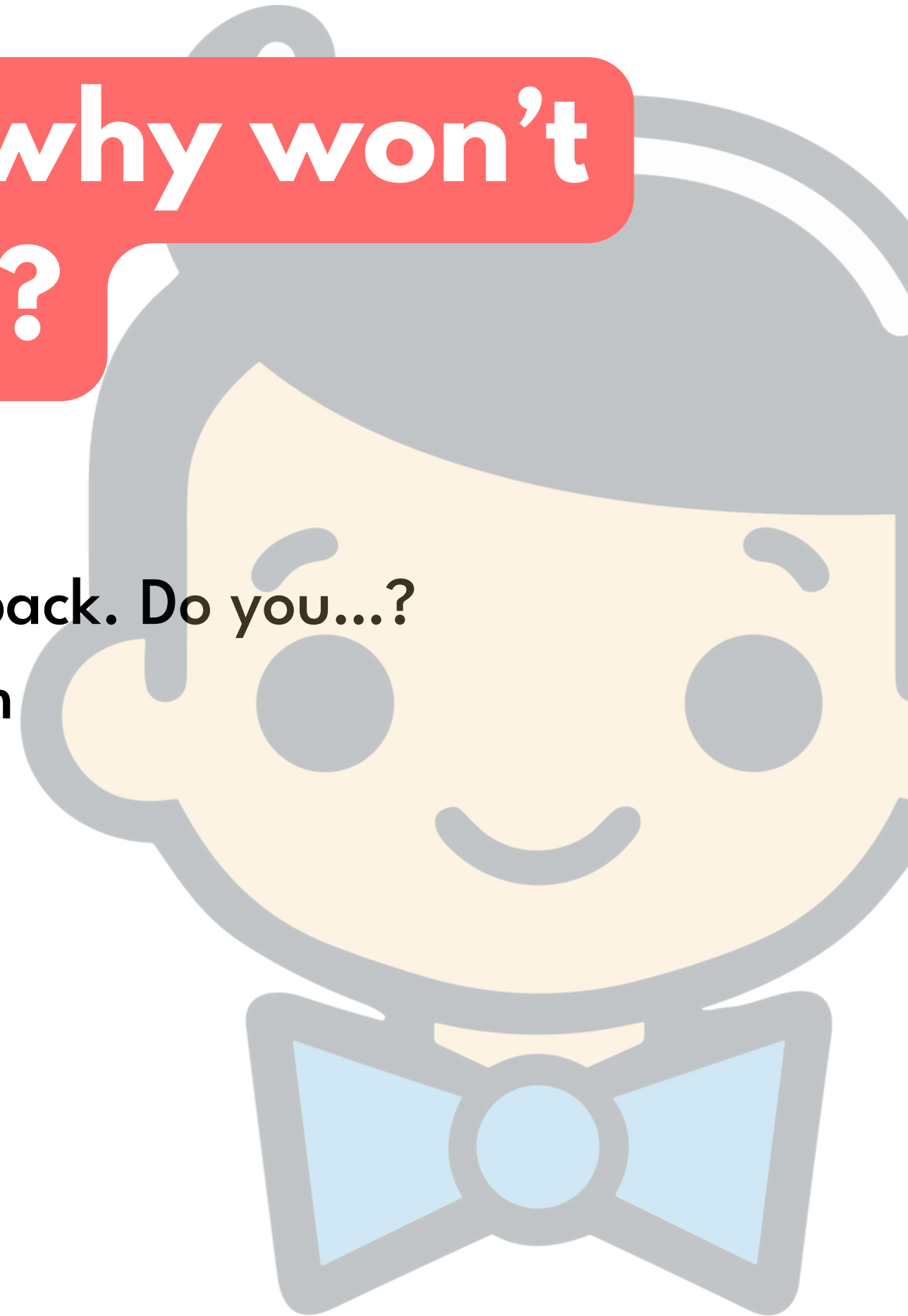
**Pizza Connoisseur**

# You know your stuff. So why won't your team listen?

## Scenario:

You need to give a high performer tough feedback. Do you...?

- A) Wait for them to realize it, to empower them
- B) Focus on the positive
- C) Be direct as it's the best approach
- D) Address it clearly and constructively



# Why Tough Conversations Feel So Hard

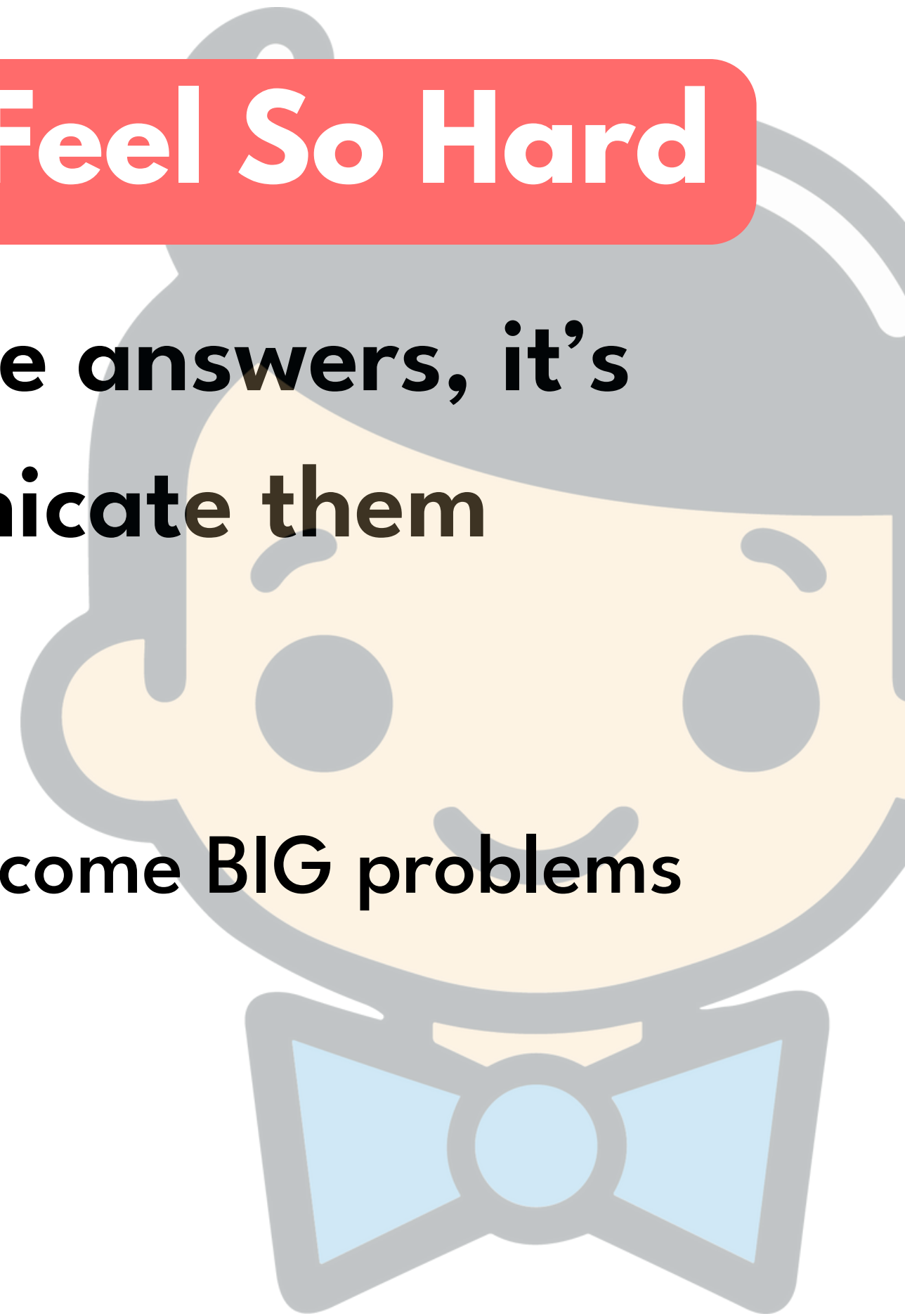
**Leadership isn't about knowing the answers, it's about knowing how to communicate them**

## **Pain points**

**Leaders avoid feedback → Small issues become BIG problems**

**Sugarcoating → No real change happens**

**Being too blunt → Trust erodes**

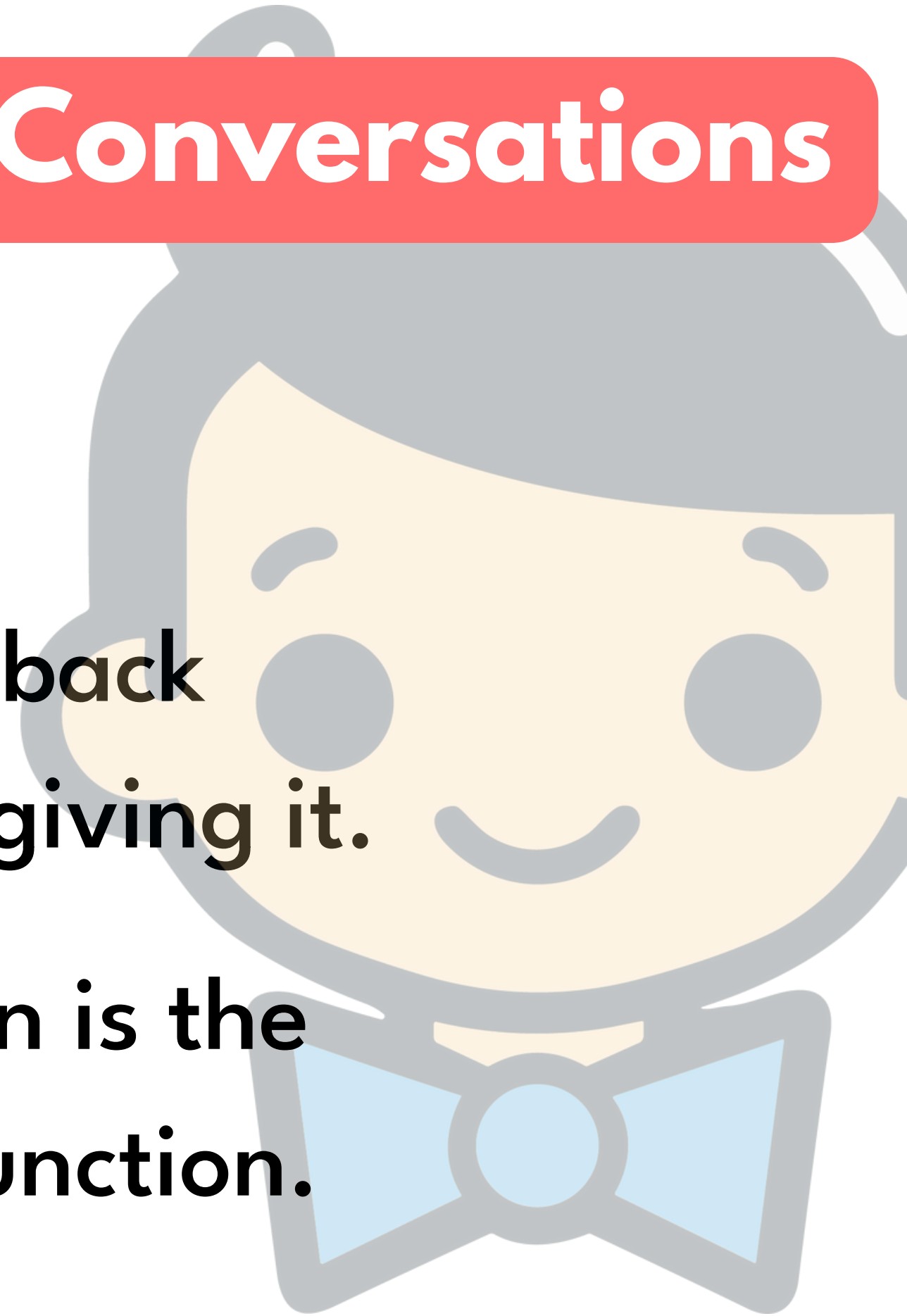


# The Cost of Avoiding Difficult Conversations

## The Data

**90% of employees want feedback  
but 50% of managers avoid giving it.**

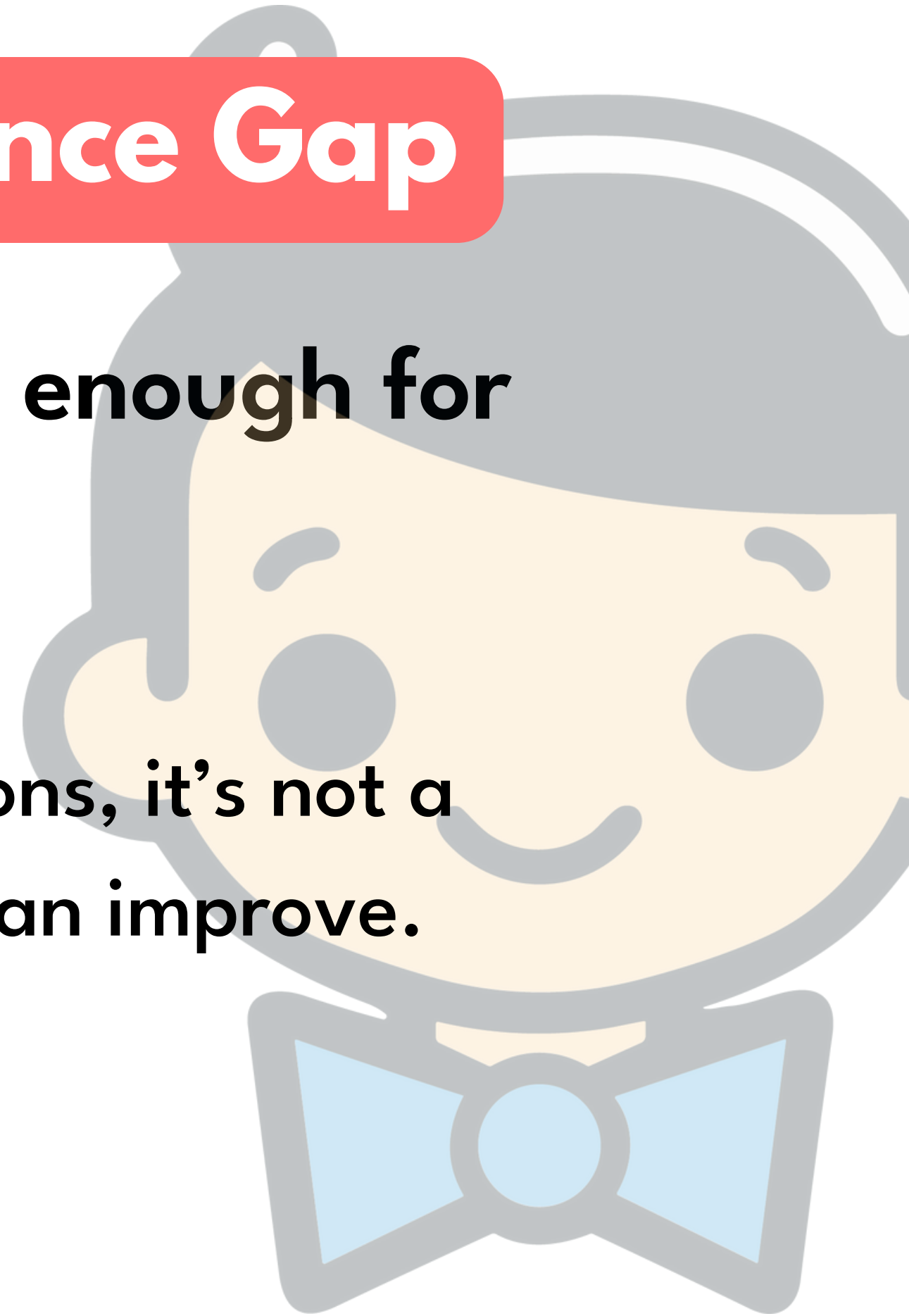
**Lack of clear communication is the  
#1 cause of workplace dysfunction.**



# The Emotional Intelligence Gap

**Why IQ & technical skills aren't enough for leadership**

**If you struggle with tough conversations, it's not a personality flaw it's an EQ skill you can improve.**



# The 9 EQ Skills That Make Tough Conversations Easier

Emotional Self Awareness

Emotional Expression

Assertiveness

Empathy

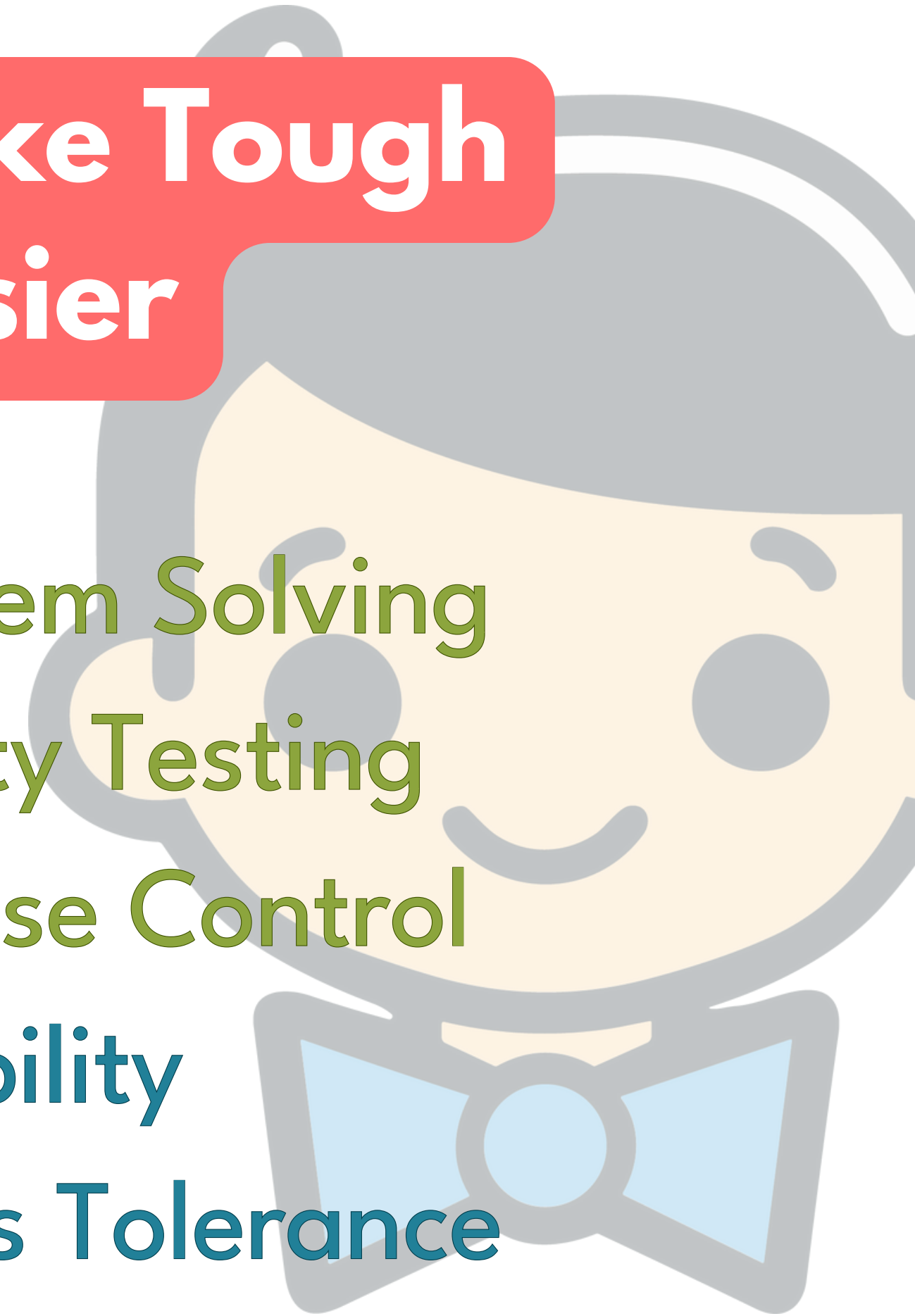
Problem Solving

Reality Testing

Impulse Control

Flexibility

Stress Tolerance



**There are so many skills**

**These are learnable skills that can make tough  
conversations easier and more effective!**

**Time to apply them!**



# Self-Awareness

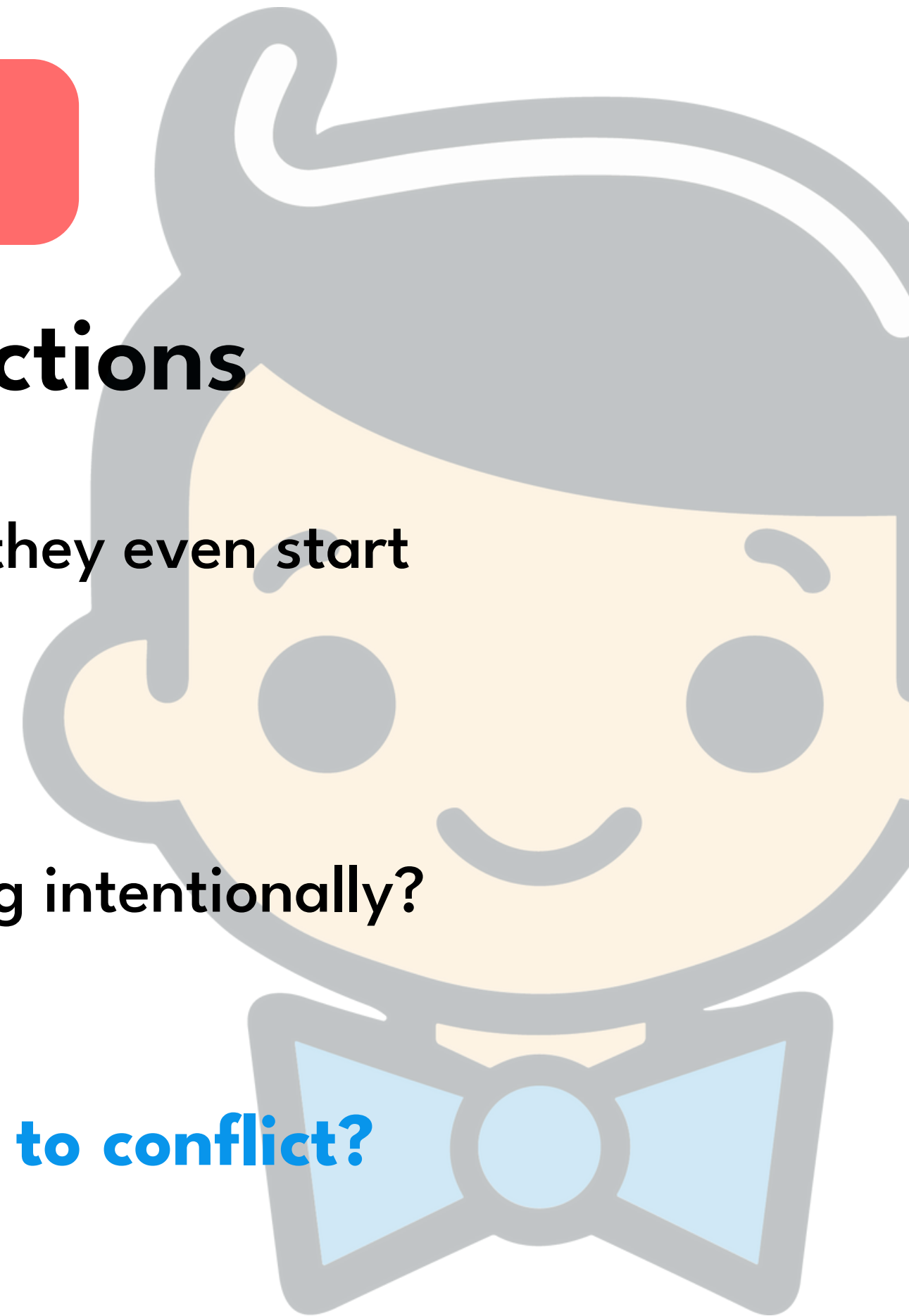
## Managing Your Own Reactions

Most tough conversations go wrong before they even start

**Self-check before speaking**

Are you reacting emotionally or responding intentionally?

**Live Poll: What's your default reaction to conflict?**



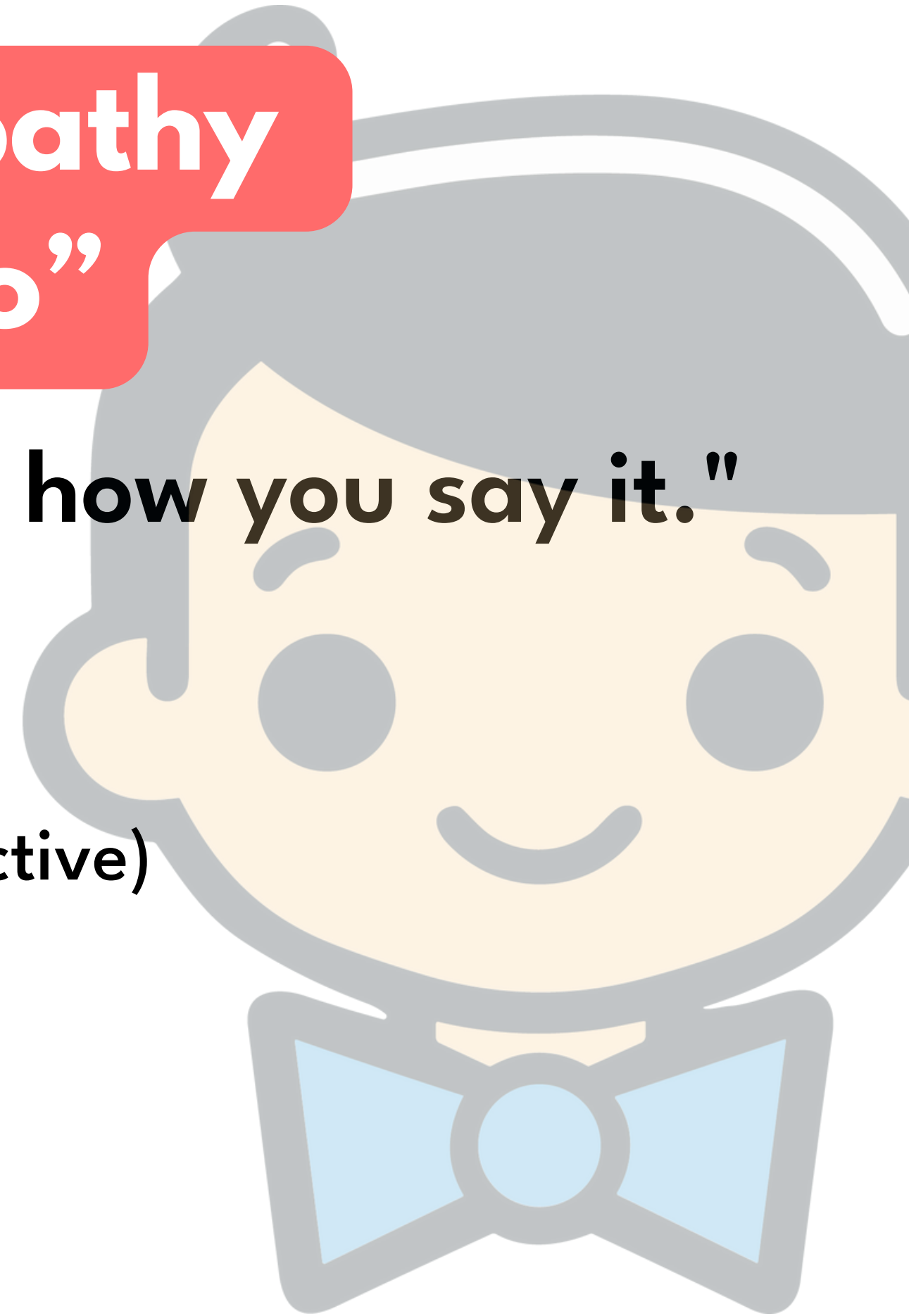
# Assertiveness & Empathy

## “The Clarity Oreo”

**“The problem isn’t what you say, it’s how you say it.”**

**The Clarity Oreo Method:**

- 1 Be clear about the issue (no fluff)**
- 2 Show you care (acknowledge their perspective)**
- 3 Offer a solution (forward-focused)**



# Assertiveness & Empathy

## “The Clarity Oreo”

### Example:

**BAD: “You’re always late. Get it together.”**

**GOOD: “I’ve noticed you’ve been late to standups this week. I want to make sure you’re supported. Is everything ok?”**



# Handling Pushback Without Losing Your Cool

**"What do you do when someone gets defensive?"**

## **3-Step Process:**

- 1 Pause.** (Impulse Control)
- 2 Validate.** "I hear you. Here's what I meant..." (Empathy & Emotional Expression)
- 3 Refocus.** "Here's what we can do moving forward." (Problem-Solving & Flexibility)



# Quick Self-Assessment

## How Confident Are You in Tough Conversations?

### Live Poll

**Scale of 1-10**

**7 or lower? What holds you back?**

**8 or higher? What makes you confident?**

**If you're not where you want to be, don't guess...  
get data on what's holding you back**



# The EQ-i 2.0 Assessment

## Your Leadership Blueprint

**EQ isn't something you have or don't have.  
It's a skill you measure and improve.**



# Master Tough Conversations With EQ

**The best leaders don't  
avoid tough conversations.  
They master them.**





# Get your Free EQ Snapshot

Scan this QR code



Or go to

<https://talk.ac/smilingbowtie>

and enter this code when prompted

EMOTIONAL



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