

Tackling Tough Conversations

Use these simple techniques to handle difficult conversations the right way.

Plan Ahead

Your nerves or emotions can take over during a difficult conversation, making it hard to speak clearly and calmly. To avoid this, plan and practice what you want to say beforehand.

Have an Open Mind

To get the most out of your conversation, leave your assumptions at the door. Aim to go into it with an open mind and try to see things from the other person's point of view.

Be Upfront

To help give a clear way forward, be upfront about your desired outcome from the get-go. Do you want an apology? An acknowledgement of your perspective? A change in future behavior?

Time and Place

Avoid having a critical conversation in public or in a distracting setting. Instead, choose a private, quiet and relaxing location.

Avoid "You" Statements

"You" statements can make the other person feel attacked. So, instead of saying, "You keep forgetting to do what I ask!" say, "I feel really upset when [insert task here] doesn't get done."

Take a Break if Needed

If things become too heated and there doesn't seem to be a resolution in sight, respectfully suggest a timeout. A brief break is a great way to reset and relax.

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It often seems easier to avoid an issue rather than addressing it. But the benefits of facing tough talks head on are substantial.

Benefits of Having Difficult Conversations

Clarity
Misunderstandings can get cleared up. You can also gain a better understanding of the other person's needs.

Closeness
Getting through a difficult conversation can make a relationship stronger and more authentic.

Closure
Instead of letting what's bothering you fester, having a tough talk allows you to resolve issues and gain closure.

Confidence
Becoming someone who's willing to have tough conversations is a great confidence booster!

