

HOW TO TAKE THE CHALLENGE OUT OF CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS



Have you noticed a surge in the frequency of challenging conversations you're having with the people in your team during these exceptionally demanding times?

How equipped do you feel to handle these conversations? Do you take them in your stride or do they fill you with dread?



Here's some tips and techniques you can use **before** and **during** your conversations to take the challenge out of challenging conversations.

BEFORE

CLARIFY

Clarify what the situation is. Think broadly about what's happened or what will happen next, and develop insights and perspective on the reality of the situation.

PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

Develop new insights by putting yourself in their shoes. Consider what skills they have, how willing they are to take action, what beliefs they hold about the situation and which of their values you could offend.

PREPARE QUESTIONS

Think about what questions you want to ask to help the other person explore some of the perspectives you've considered. Questions enable you to open a two-way dialogue and can reduce the challenge.

FOCUS ON THE WIN-WIN

Focusing on win-win outcomes will help you adopt a positive mindset and set the tone. Think about what the outcomes could be and reduce your uneasiness by knowing a mutually beneficial outcome is possible.

DURING

FOCUS ON FACTS

Keep emotions out of the conversation. Be empathetic but focus on the facts. Make some objective observations and give constructive feedback about the situation.

STAY IN ASK MODE

Ask questions rather than tell or advise. Avoid phrases like 'have you?', 'could you?', 'what about?' and 'why?' as they're often suggestive, leading or accusing and might trigger negative reactions that derail you.

IDENTIFY JOINT OUTCOMES

Minimise risk by identifying joint outcomes that could arise. Use the questions and win-win outcomes you've prepared to help guide the conversation and be ready to listen carefully to what is being said.

BE AWARE OF YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Don't let your preparation stop you from being flexible. Be careful not to let any assumptions you've made lead the conversation. Keep asking questions to clarify if your assumptions are correct.

CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

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