



**TUTORIAL:
HOW TO SAY HARD THINGS**

STEP 1

PREPARE FOR THE CONVERSATION



GAIN CLARITY AND MANAGE EMOTIONS

- Separate what happened (the facts) from how you FEEL about the situation and the ASSUMPTIONS you are making about WHY it happened.
- Clarify your motives for having this conversation. What do you want to change or improve as a result?
- Develop questions you want to ask and additional information you need to gather during the conversation.
- Think about the impact this issue is having on the work, other people, the culture, the customers, the bottom line, etc.
- What expectations do you have going forward? What might happen if those expectations aren't met?
- Create your talking points based on this information.

STEP 2

SET THE STAGE FOR THE
CONVERSATION



KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND OPEN DIALOGUE

- Thank the person for joining you in this conversation.
- State the reason for the discussion and share the facts as you know them. PAUSE and see if the other person will take accountability on their own without you having to go any further.
 - If they do not, continue with why this set of circumstances is concerning/frustrating/baffling (insert emotion word here) for you. In other words, your motive for wanting to have this conversation.
- PAUSE and see if the other person wants to respond or offer up additional information or share their own perspective.
 - If they do not, invite them into the conversation using questions like:
 - Can you help me understand what is going on? Why is this happening?
 - What am I missing?
 - Were you aware of this?

STEP 3

ENGAGE WITH CANDOR & COMPASSION



MAINTAIN FOCUS AND SET EXPECTATIONS

- Allow time for processing and initial discomfort on the part of the other person. Don't rush things.
- If the person fails to see that the issue you are discussing is a problem, or they believe it to be someone else's problem, use these questions to gain accountability:
 - What do you gain from this behavior? What benefit do you receive from doing/saying _____?
 - What is this decision costing you? What do you lose when you _____?
 - What can you do to resolve this issue? How can you prevent this from happening again?
- PAUSE and let them respond to each question you ask. Don't be afraid to repeat or rephrase the question to get a response.
 - If they share information that is impacting their behavior, potentially offer supports or flexibility, if appropriate.
 - If needed, share the answers to these questions from your perspective.

STEP 4

WRAP IT UP



BRING THE CONVERSATION TO A CLOSE

- Reiterate any agreed upon understandings.
- State your expectations for what you would like to see in the future.
- Share potential consequences if a situation like this happens again.
- Thank the person for having this conversation with you.

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