

5 TIPS FOR HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

Whether it's sharing bad news with a client, providing corrective action, or talking with a colleague about an uncomfortable issue, difficult conversations often take a large mental and emotional toll on all participants. Here are some strategies to help these conversations go well:

1

REFRAME THE PROBLEM

Reframe the problem or issue in a way that finds common ground. The result is that, instead of having one person working against the other, both work together against the problem.

2

DON'T TRY TO "WIN" THE CONVERSATION

Trying to "win" turns the conversation into an argument and leaves you in a position where nothing gets positively resolved. Your goal is to share the information or to solve the problem together.

3

HELP THE OTHER PARTY FEEL SAFE

Reassure the other person that your intentions are positive, and be sure to maintain a respectful approach.

4

REMEMBER TO BE CURIOUS

Instead of making statements or asking questions that have a judgemental tone, get curious about the other person's perspective. Begin with questions or statements that start with "I wonder..." or "I'm curious..."

5

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION

Selecting a time that is not already emotionally charged will help the conversation go smoothly. If possible, give the person you are talking to advance notice so they have time to prepare.