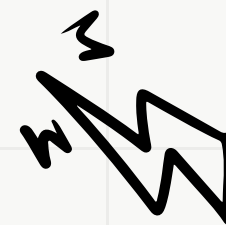


Navigating Difficult Conversations



What makes a conversation challenging?

Conflict, disagreement, complicated emotions and beliefs, grievance or bad news, are some of the most common ingredients of difficult conversations.

Why do we fear difficult conversations?

Difficult conversations can indeed seem challenging for various reasons, but what makes them scary is that they often involve very high stakes. Failure to do them well can result in a very high cost.

For example, conveying your dissatisfaction with the relationship to your partner can impact your relationship's quality, if not done well.



Similarly, critiquing your colleague's work or sharing an opposing view can seem daunting. What's more, it can often impact your workplace well-being, if it goes off-rails.

Did you know

According to a study done by a workplace startup, almost **70 %** of people avoid having tough conversations at work, fearing a bad fallout.

(Source: Inc.com)

From difficult conversations to courageous ones



Here are a few techniques to ease a difficult conversation and yield fruitful results.

Don't procrastinate

Don't wait too long to have the conversation. Address the issue as soon as it comes up to avoid resentment.

I will do it tomorrow!

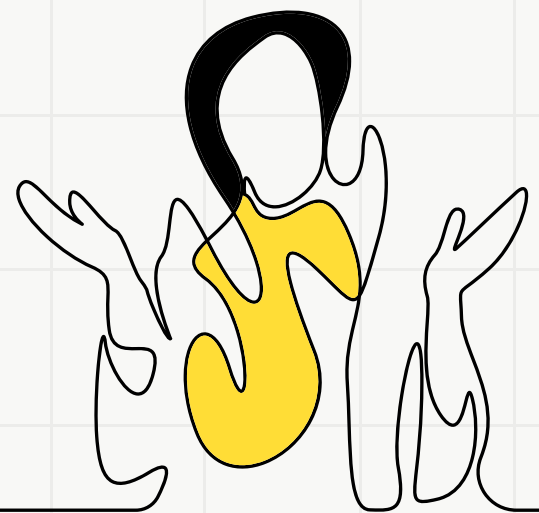


Evaluate your mindset

Spend some time understanding the mindset you are bringing to the discussion. Is it a conversation you want to be done with, or are you in it to prove a point?

Separate facts from conclusion

Avoid jumping to conclusions about someone else's intention unless it is made explicit.



Stick to the specifics

While discussing an issue, stick to the specifics. Don't use words like "always" "never". Avoid referring to past instances as well.

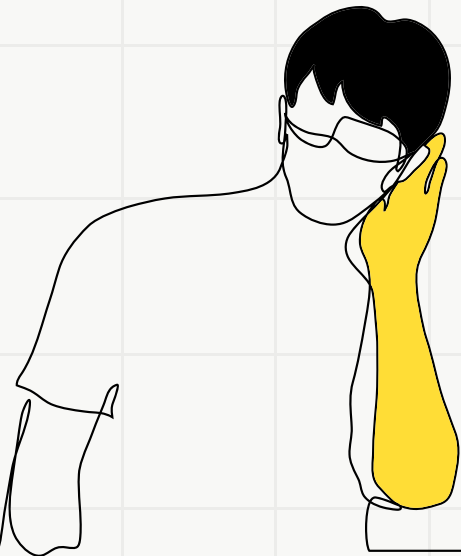
Ask and engage

Inquire openly, with curiosity, trying to understand why your counterpart thinks what he or she thinks.



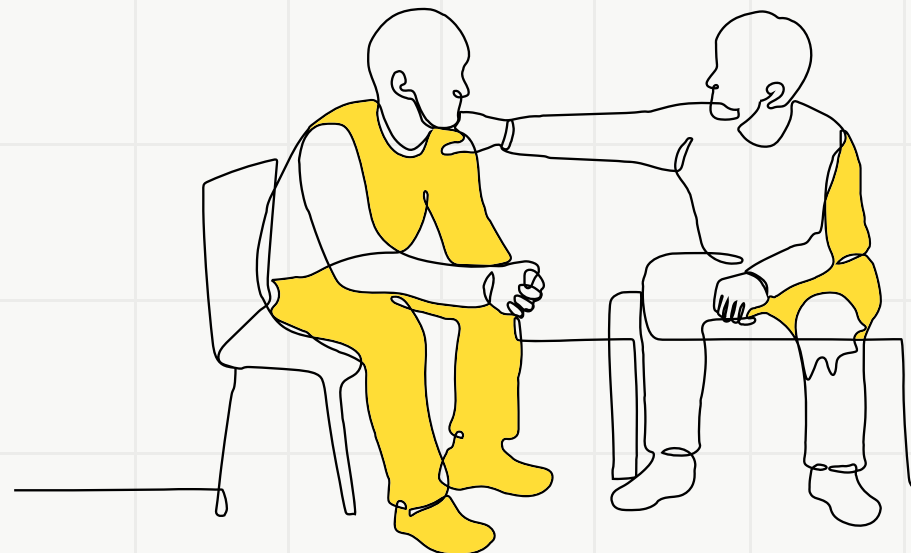
Be a generous listener

Don't treat the conversation as a chore that you need to be done with. Instead, give them ample time to respond and listen to what they have to say.



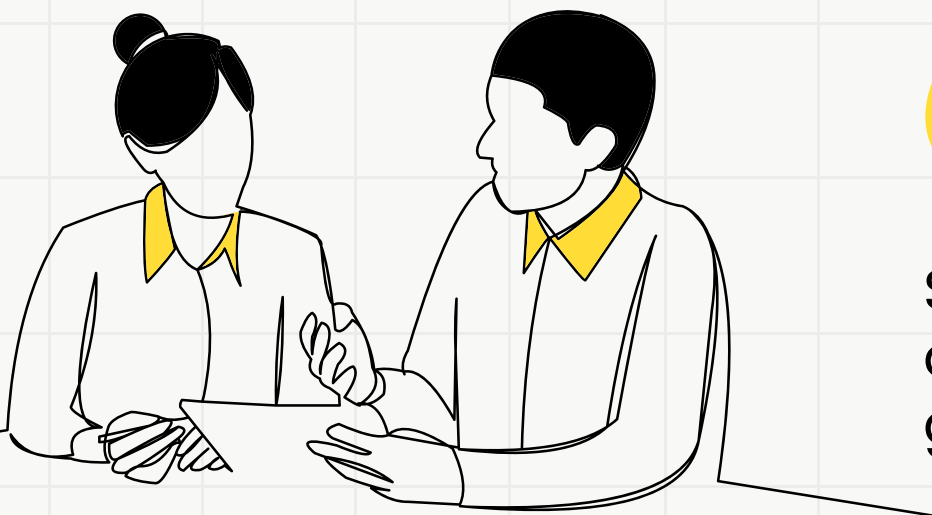
Be empathetic

Listen to their part, clarify doubts, and find out their perspective, don't assign blame beforehand.



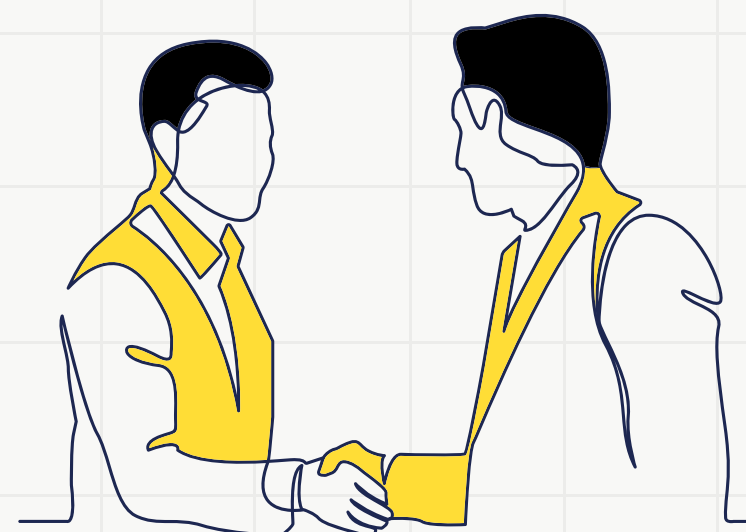
Clarify and summarise

Summarise what they said and ask follow-up questions. This will ensure that there are no gaps in the communication.



Work towards a solution

Don't have the conversation with the intent of being right. Engage creatively and try to find a solution that addresses everyone's concerns.

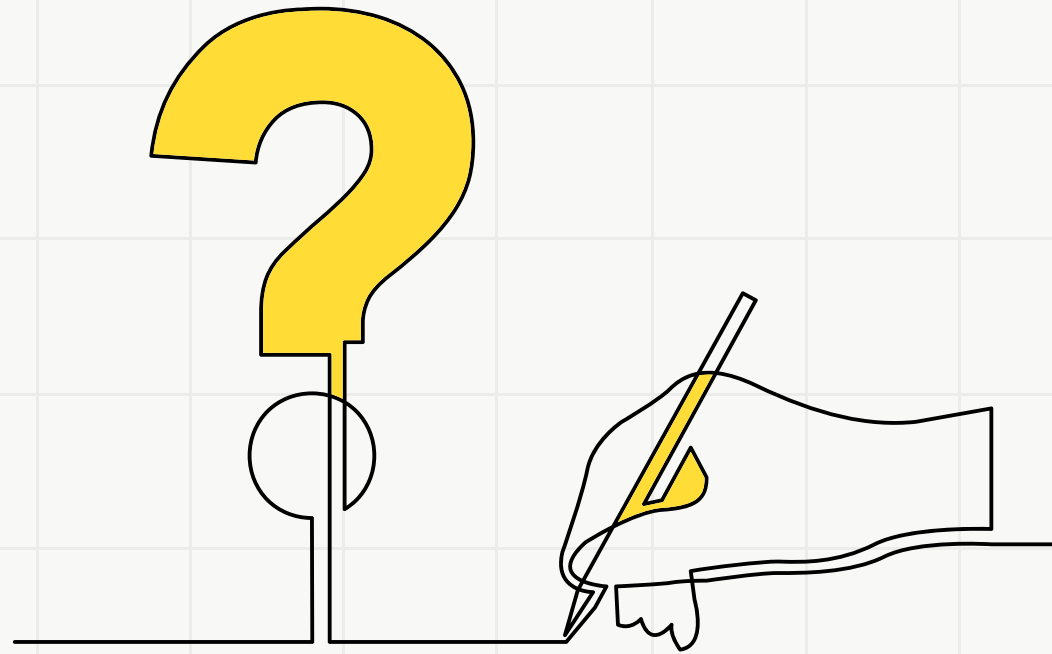


Courageous conversation toolkit:



Don't know where to start? Consider using these powerful questions.

- What do you think?
(For general interpretation)
- What leads you to think what you think?
(For facts and reasoning)
- What would you like to accomplish?
(To understand goal)
- What is the most important thing to you? (To gauge concern)
- What do you suggest we do?
(Proposal for concrete actions)



Difficult conversations are as inevitable as they are necessary. However, it's possible to have them eloquently and with grace, without impacting your present or your future.

Additional Resources

You can also use these additional resources or log on to our website **1to1help.net** to get more information on communicating effectively with ease.

- Assertion: A style of Communication
- What to Avoid while Communicating
- Communicating in a couple