

HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH GRACE



Effective communication is the cornerstone of great relationships. Whether you're communicating with friends, family, coworkers, your partner, or even strangers, everything goes smoother with effective communication. *You get more of what you want and the other party is happier too.*

Even difficult conversations – when handled with grace and composure – can be beneficial to your relationships.

Consider using these tips the next time you face a tough conversation:

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1. **Face the issue as soon as possible.** It's tempting to put off difficult conversations. However, not dealing with the issues can make them worse. In addition, it can prolong the anger and resentment you feel.
 - *Find the courage to face the other person and make the conversation happen.*
2. **Prepare before the conversation.** Consider all aspects of your concerns. You may benefit from making a list of points you need to discuss. How will you address these issues?
 - Try to find the heart of the issues, so you don't get lost during the conversation. A good analysis can save you time and effort later.
3. **Decide what you want to accomplish.** What is your ultimate goal with this conversation? It's important to have clear goals in mind ahead of time so you can stay on topic.
 - What kind of an outcome do you want?
 - Do you want to see things change? In what way?
 - Do you want the other person to apologize?
4. **Give yourself time to calm down before you discuss the issue.** If you're angry or hurt, it may not be the best time to talk. *It's more effective to enter a difficult conversation with a calm attitude.* If you're too hurt to see past the emotion, put off the conversation until later.
 - Try to see the issues from multiple perspectives and the other side.

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5. **Understand the importance of silence.** Silence isn't a bad thing during a difficult conversation. You don't have to fill every minute with words.
 - Silence can be used to give you both a break and a chance to figure out what to say next. It can help you analyze the previous words. Pauses can also help you both maintain calm.
6. **Watch your emotions.** During the conversation, you'll benefit from controlling your emotions. Focus on staying positive and calm.
 - Controlling your emotions may not be easy, but it's important. Difficult conversations can dissolve into madness if emotions take over. *Try focusing on the other person's feelings and long-term impact of your behavior.*
7. **Think about your relationship.** Friends, coworkers, spouses, family members, and others have unique relationships with you. The way you talk to them will stay in their memory.

Difficult conversations are easy to ignore, but ignoring them is a slippery slope into frustration. Instead of hiding from the issues, consider how you can resolve them. Your relationships will benefit greatly when you can work together to find solutions.

Learn to handle these tough conversations with grace and, over time, you'll find fewer and fewer issues that you have to resolve.

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