



7 Tips to Make Your Next Difficult Work Conversation Easier

From the moment you interview for a position to the moment you leave it, work life is filled with conversations and situations that are challenging and uncomfortable. These difficult situations are often ignored in hopes they will go away, but of course, over time they inevitably grow from bad to worse. It's not easy to address these situations, but with the right mindset and strategies you can learn how to make any difficult work conversation easier AND get the results you want. Start with the tips below.

1. **Start with your mindset:** Determine what thinking has caused you to avoid the conversation you know you should have. What do you think might happen? What assumptions have you made? What have you convinced yourself is true without knowing that it is? Then tell yourself a different story focusing on the benefits of finally addressing the situation.
2. **Focus on the result:** Among all of the concerns and fears, focus on the results you are seeking. Remind yourself that the situation will not resolve itself. When you begin the conversation, start with a mutually agreed upon goal and focus the conversation around that.
3. **Commit to making it happen:** The longer you wait, the worse it will be. Commit to making the conversation happen and then go ahead and schedule it. Congratulate yourself on making it happen and think about how good it will feel to have done it.
4. **Call out the elephant in the room:** Even if it's just your own. Set up an environment of honesty and transparency to help clear the air of any negative emotion or history that either of you is bringing into the conversation. Own up to any mistakes you have made along the way and apologize for them. It will be helpful to do this in the beginning to get it all out.
5. **Strive to understand the other side:** This is not all about you. The goal is for you and the other person(s) to resolve the situation in a way that feels good for both sides. Do not go into it just looking out for yourself. Focus on the result that will feel successful for both of you.
6. **Check your assumptions:** Ask a lot of questions and seek clarity and understanding throughout the conversation. Remember, the goal is a mutually successful result, not just getting what you want. To do that, you need to really understand where the other person is coming from and what they want. Be open to fully listening and commit to that understanding.
7. **Let go of what you can't control:** How other people react or respond is their choice. It is not reasonable or even possible for you to try and control it. Have the conversation in good faith, do your part to make it a productive and positive experience and strive to get to that mutually beneficial result. Accept that not every conversation will turn out as you hope.