

On How To Manage

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

10 Top Tips

How often are you faced with a conversation you would rather not have? Typically, they relate to addressing colleagues regularly being late, tackling underperformance, or confronting behaviours that are impacting your team's performance. These conversations often feel awkward. uncomfortable, or even confrontational, so much so that people regularly avoid them altogether. A strategy that rarely makes things better and leads to issues festering, an increase in tension and toxic workplace cultures.



Be crystal clear about what you want from the conversation. Not having a plan is like going for a walk in the woods without a map. You will end up somewhere, but it is unlikely to be where you intended.



Accept that the other person also has a set of needs. This can be the hardest part of the process, seeing the situation from their point of view. You may well be certain you are right,

Prepare For Two Perspectives

but so will they. Understanding both sides helps you approach the conversation with empathy and confidence.



Select a neutral, private space that allows for open

and honest discussion. Confidentiality matters-discreet room with no glass windows and good soundproofing to help both parties feel comfortable



Practice Active Listening Give the other person your full

attention, acknowledge their perspective and let them speak freely without interruption. Active listening will help create a bridge of trust and rapport, even if you disagree. Learning how to fully attend and understand their perspective demonstrates you value what the other person has to say.



Approach the conversation with curiosity and a willingness to learn. Despite your preparation and research, you

probably do not have the full picture. An open mindset helps you understand the scope and depth of the

Stay Open-Minded

-and ensures you are addressing the right issue.



Look Beneath

What is said at first is unlikely to be the whole issue, especially if you hold a position of seniority or authority. The other person may say just enough to get through the process or tell you what they think you want to hear. Gently explore beyond their initial comments to find out what is really important. You

The Surface

will simply be back in the same place a few weeks later if not.



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Stay grounded

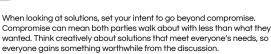
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Focus On The **Future** Respond to challenging comments in a way that does not imply blame. Conversations are more effective when

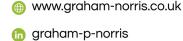
that enable progress.

they explore the past only to make progress in the future. Develop ways to reframe negative comments into those









about how to manage these conversations is through experience. Mistakes are an inevitable part of the learning journey - but so is progress.

