

## Keys for Difficult Conversations

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- I. Preparing for the Conversation
  - A. Self-Reflection and awareness of emotions
    - Be curious about your FOO. Understand how you learned to handle conflict growing up.
    - Know your buttons to understand when they've been pushed.
    - Care cycle before having the conversations.
    - Ask the Lord what the conversation is "really" about
  - B. Clarify the purpose and desired outcome
    - Determine your motivation for the conversations
    - Resist the urge for cons (convincing, complaining, criticizing, controlling, correcting, condemning, coercing, or changing)
  - C. Gathering relevant information and facts
    - What are the facts?
    - Who is involved?
    - Is it a one-time issue or is there a theme/track record?
    - What is the impact to the person?
    - What is the impact to the relationship?
    - Ask the Lord for your role in this conversation
  - D. Plan the approach
    - Know who you're talking to- love language, enneagram
    - Determine the best time or day and day of week
    - Identify the desired outcome
    - Pray for those involved
- II. Setting the Stage
  - Be prepared
  - Discuss goals for the conversation
  - Care for the big picture and the person
- E. Active Listening
  - Give undivided attention
  - Use reflective listening and paraphrasing
  - Validate emotions and experiences
  - Pay attention to your personal buttons
- F. Effective Communication
  - Use "I" statements to express thoughts and feelings
  - Avoid blame and judgment- never shift blame during the conversation
  - Take responsibility and continually ask "What can I learn from this?"
  - Be mindful of non-verbal cues
- G. Managing Conflict
  - Recognize and address defensive behaviors
  - Encourage open-mindedness and be willing to compromise

- Seek common ground and shared goals
- Keep growth, eternity, and relationship at the forefront
- H. Responding to Emotionally Charged Reactions
  - Remain calm and composed
  - Validate emotions without escalating the situation
  - Offer support and reassurance
  - Stay honest and present focused
- I. Problem-solving and finding solutions
  - Collaborative problem-solving approach
  - Brainstorm and explore different perspectives
  - Identify actionable steps and follow-up plans
  - Realize that sometimes the best next steps might be to part ways, end the relationship
- J. Build Connection
  - Find common ground you can use to build safety
  - Offer connection with the other person
- III. Closure and follow-up
  - Summarize key points and agreements
  - Express gratitude for the conversation
  - Establish a plan for ongoing communication and support
- K. Self-Care and Reflection
  - Recognize the emotional impact of difficult conversations
  - Practice self-care and seeking support if needed
  - Reflect on lessons learned and personal growth
- L. Conclusion
  - Remember importance of difficult conversations and growth and understanding
  - Embrace these conversations as opportunities for positive change
  - Remain confidence in your ability to navigate difficult conversations with grace and compassion.