

Your Quick Guide to Navigating Difficult Conversations

None of us are immune to having difficult conversations in the workplace. But challenges don't have to burn bridges. In fact, when done well, these conversations can actually become learning opportunities and build trust. Here are a few tips for navigating challenging conversations no matter who it's between or what the issue at hand may be.

1. **Act quickly with an intentional meeting**

When you see a challenge arise, it's wise to nip it in the bud as quickly as possible. Challenges distract and demotivate, resulting in lost productivity and engagement. Tackle issues head on by creating an intentional meeting with those involved.

Creating a shared agenda before your conversations will ensure everyone is on the same page prior to the discussion, allow each person to set the items they'd like to address, and streamline the conversation when it happens. It also provides transparency which is a great way to build trust before even diving in.

In difficult conversations, it's easy to let emotion take over, so an agenda keeps everyone focused on the task at hand and accountable to the topics created for the meeting.

2. **Maintain a solution-based mindset**

Difficult conversations can feel like a "me vs. them" situation, but ultimately, you're working toward a mutual goal: your organization winning.

Set the tone before the conversation by letting everyone involved know that the goal is to find a solution that will serve the organization as a whole. This also ensures the conversation stays away from a blame game and serves its purpose: coming together for a team win.

3. **Create the space for two-way feedback**

Try to frame this conversation as a team effort. You're working together to improve. And while something that went wrong may indeed be the fault of one person, feedback is easier to hear when you don't feel singled out or loaded down with a ton of blame. [More on tips for delivering negative feedback here.](#)

Asking for feedback from the other party is a great way to start the conversation and show that you are also looking to learn, grow, and improve. This levels the playing field and ensures the conversation goes both ways.

4. **Look for opportunities to coach, rather than manage**

Around Leadr, we live by this mantra, “people want to be led and developed, not managed.” Go into every conversation with a mindset of “how can I act as a coach in this space.”

Rather than seeing yourself as a leader, think about yourself as a coach - someone to guide, advise, and develop your team members rather than command them. This, again, levels the playing field and reduces any anxiety others may have coming into this situation. [More on leading with a coaching mindset here.](#)

5. **Keep the conversation going**

People don't change overnight and most issues aren't resolved after one conversation. Create an ongoing dialogue with the person or people involved by setting a recurring meeting (even if it's only 20 minutes) to discuss progress, learnings, or new challenges.

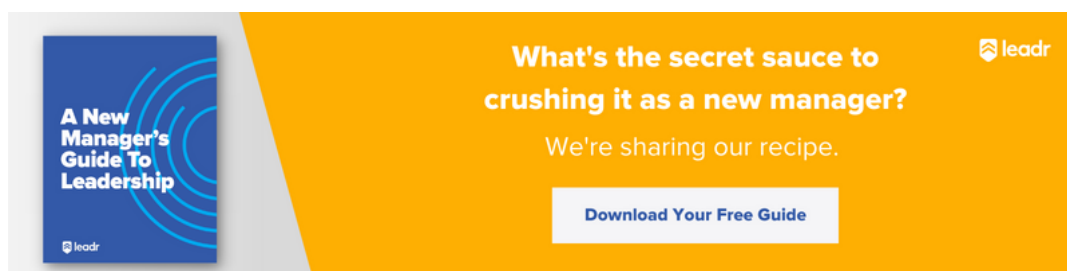
This isn't to dwell on the past, it's to acknowledge room for growth and embrace the opportunity.

Caring for and developing your staff means having difficult conversations that help your team members identify areas of growth. While this isn't easy, it's necessary for long-term success and worth the challenge.

We want to hear from you! More questions about difficult conversations? We'd love to address them on an upcoming webinar. [Send us your most pressing questions here.](#)

I hope this quick guide reminds you that even challenges can be opportunities for growth.

Lead on.



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