

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS: 10 TIPS FOR SHOWING UP WITH CONFIDENCE

### BE A CURIOUS ALIEN

1

When you think about entering a difficult conversation you may be approaching the dreaded conversation with a closed-off, protective stance. Being curious about what you might learn or what you might hear creates an openness and willingness to be more present. It actually will create a "safe and secure" dynamic between you and the other person. You can use the line: "You have a very good reason for \_\_\_\_\_ (for example, believing that I don't care)" in order to demonstrate your curiosity.

### GET INTO A WISE MIND STATE

2

The wise mind refers to a balance between your reasonable and emotional states of mind. So getting into a wise mind state means being aware of your emotional vulnerabilities and making sure that you keep them regulated, or in other words, keeping your emotions in check.

### HAVE COURAGE AND TAKE THE LEAP OF FAITH

3

Feel the fear and do it anyway. Tell yourself: "I can handle it. I am safe. I am good enough." Fake it till you feel it.

### BEING HEARD DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

4

Ask to be "mirrored" so you feel confident that the other person understands your point of view (not necessarily agrees with it). Mirroring means they repeat back what you said.

### BE DIALECTIC

5

Remember that two opposing ideas/perspectives can co-exist at the same time. Find the essence of truth in all perspectives.

### BE REAL

6

People respect and are more willing to listen when you approach them with vulnerability. You can start a conversation with, "This is a difficult conversation for me and I am willing to give it a try."

### PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

7

People are wired to pay attention to how you say something at a greater percentage (70%) than to what you say. Slow down the pace, lower your volume, change your tone, take a breath, even change your physical stance. People are affected by the tension or ease with which we speak.

### WHEN THE TENSION SHOWS UP, PAUSE!

8

The tension is there to let you know that either you feel like you are not being heard or understood or the other person feels like they are not being heard or understood.

### DEFINE THE OTHER PERSON'S WORDS

9

When someone is speaking to you and emotions are escalating, then asking the other person to define their words buys you time and increases understanding on both sides. This also creates greater clarity for everyone. For example: "What did you mean when you said \_\_\_\_\_?"

### VALIDATE, VALIDATE, VALIDATE!

10

Validation lets the other person know that you are listening and understand them. This is the MOST effective tool to deescalate a situation. Validation does not mean agreement. Use the expression: "It sounds like you \_\_\_\_\_." Or, "What I heard you say was \_\_\_\_\_."