



How to Make Difficult Conversations Great

Difficult conversations are the ones no one likes because they often don't go well. They are the conversations that feel risky, scary and even dangerous in some way, yet are also often ones we really should be having because that is where change happens.

Nothing is more important to clearing up misunderstandings, repairing damaged relationships and strengthening teams and communities than investing in these difficult dialogues.

The How to Have Difficult Conversations course provides you with a deceptively simple step-by-step model to rely on and follow. The model enables you to prepare for any difficult conversation and to engage and move through it to a collaborative outcome.

The course can also give individuals, teams and workplaces a common language to face and deal with issues. It strengthens confidence and skill so conflicts don't spread into countless hours of avoidance, stress, mistrust and misguided actions that make the situation worse.

You come out of the course feeling more empowered, clear and, most importantly, with a plan for how to take productive action.

THE COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The How to Have Difficult Conversations course teaches the best ways to:

- Prepare for any conversation systematically and effectively
- Generate the confidence and courage to get the conversation started
- Uncover your deeper motivation, energy and power to keep going
- Get your individual voice, thoughts and ideas heard
- Keep the dialogue organized and on track
- Deepen the understanding necessary for more innovation
- Create collaborative resolutions where all parties can leave satisfied
- Sustain the new arrangements and benefits of the conversation

THE MODEL

The Difficult Conversations model, based on over 50 years of teaching and mediating combined, teaches eight powerful steps to transformation. Whether experienced in a self-directed/on-demand format, or with Group Coaching, the course helps learners develop these eight vital steps through instruction, worksheets and tools. It's not just theory, but practical application.

PREPARATION PHASE

1. **Find Your Motivation** – You will gain a tool to help you consider the risks and benefits in having the conversation and learn how to find your motivation for engaging at all.
2. **Build your Power** - Consider and access various sources of power that increase your confidence and ability to influence the other person constructively.
3. **Set up the Conversation Well** – This step ensures there is thought put into how to ask for the conversation and a plan for how to manage emotions in the conversation.

ENGAGEMENT PHASE

4. **Establish Connection** – Research shows how a conversation starts is often how it ends. Discover a tool to give you a way to start the conversation well and with intentionality.
5. **Introduce the Problem** – A key step in a constructive, collaborative conversation is to separate the person from the problem. Walk away with a greater awareness of how that works and a tool to help you specify what you want to talk about neutrally, using behavioural terms, with a specific example or two to illustrate.
6. **Develop Understanding** – Learning to have an in-depth conversation is key in opening to new, innovative solutions. Learn the key skills and questions to do that, such as:
 - What is the biggest concern about each of the topics above? How come?
 - What's a positive thing that could come out of this conversation?
 - What are the important needs that each of you have?
 - What is most important - and why?
7. **Innovate and Problem Solve** – Only when there is a better mutual understanding of the matter at hand, can imagination and creativity be called upon to create. You will have a checklist to make sure you are on the right track.
8. **Follow Up & Evaluation** – Learn the value of creating follow up conversations, to check in and tweak your new understandings and any actions plans. You will also receive a self-evaluation tool, to keep you learning what worked and what you would like to do differently in your next transformative conversation.

COURSE FEATURES

- Participants have private, individual access to the course for one full year.
- The course is self-directed and on-demand, so participants can manage and pace their learning to suit their own needs and timing.
- The course is comprised of a series of short, easy to consume, five to ten minute videos and PDF worksheets and tools. Videos adds up to approximately 2.5 hours of viewing time total.
- The course starts with a Welcome Module, which orients the learner to the whole course, and is followed by 8 modules, organized according to the 8 steps in the model, making it easy to follow and easy to go back to, for access to one or two of the steps for depth.
- The Welcome Module also includes a handy overview of the entire model which participants can use to go back to, for review and a quick refresher.

YOUR FACILITATORS

Gordon White and Julia Menard have been teaching and helping individuals, organizations and communities with their difficult conversations for over 50 years combined. They bring their experiences as mediators in the trenches of workplace conflict as well as their years in academics to all that they do. Both have taught at the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the Justice Institute of BC for over two decades, as well as at their Centre for Leadership, and Masters level courses in conflict. They are the creators of the How to Have Difficult Conversations Course as well as the founders of the On Conflict Podcast and the On Conflict Leadership Institute. Through their podcast, they've introduced listeners to some of the top conflict resolvers in their field, as well as to leaders who have tackled important organizational conflict issues. The Institute's mission is to mentor leaders to create conflict competent cultures. Both Gordon and Julia are dedicated to the pursuit of a better way to create more compassionate dialogue spaces and to unleash more creativity and innovation in the world.

Check out the On Conflict Podcast at: www.onconflictpodcast.com

Check out the On Conflict Leadership Institute at: www.onconflict.com

"This course has really useful material/structure. The modules/topics are a nice, digestible length, with fantastic use of short, clear, relatable examples. I really liked the real-time back and forth between Gordon and Julia, that they are actually doing this together. Extremely well done!" - Steve Mason

*"Truly flowed like a recipe – Jamie Oliver style with 8 ingredients for perfect comfort food."
- Laraine Ashpole*

"I really enjoyed the course and I laughed out loud a few times! The demos of conversations and attitudes that are often present during difficult conversations were spot on. I really appreciate having access to the course for a year so that I can come back to it and review the videos. Thank you so much for creating the course! - Rachelle Dumesnil-McLeod