



## **How to Have Difficult Conversations** **A Self-Directed, On-Demand, On-Line Video Course**

Knowing how to have difficult conversations is a key leadership skill in the workplace and in life.

Yet, most of us only know one way to navigate differences. We either avoid having difficult conversations, because we think we are keeping the peace or we don't know how to bring it up. But then the small stuff builds up into one big, and avoidable, mess. Or we bring up the tough topics, but our bluntness makes such a negative impact, the message gets lost.

Both are common strategies and neither gets us what we want: productive and authentic conversations. We need to be honest with each other and to be kind. How do you do both?

The **How to Have Difficult Conversations** course is a deceptively simple, step-by-step process you can rely on and follow. The course is based on the experiences of two mediators with over 50 years of teaching, coaching and mediating combined. The two have put that knowledge and experience into eight very practical, simple and powerful steps to help you prepare for any difficult conversation and to engage and move through it to a collaborative outcome.

The **How to Have Difficult Conversations** course gives 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 complete the course feeling more empowered, clear and, most importantly, with a plan for how to take productive and respectful action.

### **WHAT YOU LEARN IN THIS COURSE**

The **How to Have Difficult Conversations course** teaches a step by step way to:

- **Prepare** for any conversation systematically and effectively
- **Generate confidence and courage** so you can get the conversation started
- **Uncover the motivation** to keep going
- **Get individual voices heard** in a constructive way
- **Deepen the understanding** necessary for more innovation
- **Create collaborative solutions** where all parties can leave satisfied
- **Sustain the new arrangements** and benefits of the conversation

## THE 8-STEP DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS MODEL

This course leads you through 8 steps to prepare yourself, to engage and to follow up – all three phases of any difficult conversation. You will watch short videos and use an accompanying workbook. The goal is to feel more prepared to engage any difficult conversation in a respectful and collaborative way. You start with a **collaborative mindset**, then use the 8 steps, as follows:

### PHASE ONE: PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE CONVERSATION

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. **Acknowledge Power** - Consider and access various sources of power that can increase confidence and the ability to influence another 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.

### PHASE TWO: ENGAGE THE CONVERSATION

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.

### PHASE THREE: FOLLOW UP & EVALUATE THE CONVERSATION

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

- The course is self-directed and on-demand, so you can manage and pace your learning as you go through it, to suit your own needs and your own timing.
- The course is organized into an Introduction module on the **Collaborative mindset**, then 8 video modules linking to the 8 steps. This makes it easy to follow and to go back to, to access one or two of the steps at a time for depth of learning and understanding.
- The course is comprised of a series of short videos of approximately five minutes each for a total of 1 hour plus a companion **Workbook**.
- The **Workbook** includes **Worksheets** and **Tips** for each step of the model to help you prepare for each conversation in a good way.
- You receive private, individual access to the course for one full year. This means you can return to the course repeatedly over that time for reinforcement, refreshers and support.

## YOUR FACILITATORS

**Julia Menard** and **Gordon White** have been teaching and helping individuals, leaders, teams, organizations and communities with difficult conversations for over 50 years combined. They bring their expertise as mediators, coaches and teachers to all they do. They have mediated workplace disputes in a variety of settings including higher education, government, the corporate and non-profit sectors, health care, as well as in Indigenous communities and other cross-cultural settings. For over two decades, they have both taught at the Justice Institute of BC's Centres for Conflict Resolution and Leadership as well as at the Masters level. In addition to being the co-creators of the **How to Have Difficult Conversations Course**, they are also the founders of the **On Conflict Institute** and the producers and hosts of the **On Conflict Podcast**. Through their podcast, they introduce listeners to some of the top conflict resolvers in their field, as well as to leaders who have tackled important organizational conflict issues. The On Conflict Leadership Institute's mission is to mentor leaders to create conflict competent cultures. Gordon and Julia are both dedicated to creating more respectful dialogue spaces and to unleash more creativity and innovation.

Check out the On Conflict Podcast at: [www.onconflictpodcast.com](http://www.onconflictpodcast.com)

Check out the On Conflict Leadership Institute at: [www.onconflict.com](http://www.onconflict.com)

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

*"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*

*"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*