

#ConnectedConversations

A Connected Conversation is a meaningful exchange between parties that results in increased understanding and a deeper relationship. Consider adopting the following practices to successfully navigate change, address conflict, enhance communication, and increase collaborative efforts.

1. **Value the relationship** enough to be concerned about the other person's state of being. Learning from each other is more important than winning over one another.
2. Question and **test assumptions** to prevent projecting your labels or issues on others.
3. **Suspend judgement** of the other person - criticizing and condemning will not lead to growth and connections.
4. Strive to ensure there is consistency between the **intent and impact** of your message. Good intentions delivered the wrong way, can have a disastrous impact.
5. **Understanding takes priority over agreement.** Enter the conversation seeking understanding – there are some things you will never agree with, but you can still connect.
6. **Listen** to understand not to respond. This demonstrates that you value the other person's contribution to the conversation. It also creates greater clarity.
7. Seek and provide **feedback** to ensure clarity of the message. When someone is done talking, restate what they said to make sure you properly received what they intended to send.
8. Getting it right is more important than being right. If being right is most important then we lose sight of the bigger picture. **Remove your ego** and strive to get it right.
9. Acknowledge and **respect the value of varying perspectives.** This reduces 'blind spots'. If everyone in the room is thinking the same thing, then someone is not thinking.
10. **Be willing to change your mind** based on the introduction of new, relevant information. Humility is a strength and helps you connect with others.
11. Share all accurate and relevant information – even if that information is counter to your point of view or interests. **Speak the truth** or you'll waste your time.

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12. **Use “I” language.** Avoid blaming others and causing them to become defensive. Simply take responsibility for your feelings, your actions, and your needs.
13. **Define important terms.** Although we may be familiar with certain phrases, others may not assign the same meaning to them. Remove the ambiguity and define important terms.
14. Clearly **share your goals and objectives.** What do you want for yourself? For the other person? For the relationship or organization? Provide space for others to share as well.
15. **Clarify the mutual purpose.** You should both be working toward a common goal or outcome. Establish and agree on this at the beginning and find the commonalities to build upon.
16. **Use key words and questions** that open the mind and conversation up to possibilities: “Imagine” “What If” “Is it possible” “What could we do” “If _____ wasn’t an obstacle, what could we do?”
17. Remove or reduce the “all or nothing” choices. Move from “either/or” to “both/and”.
Compromise is not a bad word.
18. Establish an **atmosphere of mutual respect.** From your body language to the tone of your voice, to the words from your mouth – exhibit the upmost respect for the other person.
19. **Ask for clarity** and reasoning. When you don’t understand something, don’t dispute it or condemn it – ask for further explanation or clarity.
20. **Offer solutions.** Anyone can list the problems, but few can offer viable solutions. Your goal is to arrive at a mutually beneficial solution. Remember, there’s always a solution - even if it’s not the one you want.
21. **Before you speak remember the 3 critical questions:**
 - a. Does this need to be said?
 - b. Does this need to be said by me?
 - c. Does this need to be said by me now?