

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION: 17 Principles of Conflict Resolution

Facilitate Listening & Speaking

1. Don't hear attack. Listen to what is behind the words.
2. Resist the urge to attack. Change the conversation from the inside.
3. Talk to the other person's best self.
4. Differentiate needs, interests, and strategies.
5. Acknowledge emotions. See them as signals.
6. Differentiate between acknowledgement and agreement.
7. When listening, avoid making suggestions.
8. Differentiate between evaluation and observation.
9. Test your assumptions. Relinquish them if they prove to be false.

Change the Conversation

10. Develop curiosity in difficult situations.
11. Assume useful dialogue is possible, even when it seems unlikely.
12. If you are making things worse, stop.
13. Figure out what's happening, not whose fault it is.

Look for Ways Forward

14. Acknowledge conflict. Talk to the right people about the real problem.
15. Assume undiscovered options exist. Seek solutions people willingly support.
16. Be explicit about agreements. Be explicit when they change.
17. Expect and plan for future conflict.