

## **“Try Saying it This Way...”**

Facing a difficult conversation with someone? Some of these phrases might help you get started (or get unstuck).

“Do you have a few minutes?” [continue with one of the following:]

- I’ve got some thoughts I’d like to share with you.”
- “Something has been bothering me and it would help if we could talk about it.”
- “I’d like to get your perspective on something.”

“Let me share my impression of the situation, first, and then I’d really like to hear your perspective.”

“The most important thing, from my perspective, is ....”

“Do you have any questions for me about how I’m seeing this?”

“How are you feeling about all of this/ What are your thoughts/what is your perspective on this situation?”

“What’s the most important thing for you regarding this issue?”

“Here’s what I’m hearing, and perceiving: [insert your concerns]. But is that the message you’re trying to send?”

**“Help me understand”**<sup>1</sup> [continue with one of the following:]

- “if I’m missing something/what I’m missing.”
- “what actions of mine had an impact on you/the situation.”
- “what I did that led to your reaction.”
- “why you believe this is my fault/problem.”
- “if you think there are things I need to do to help improve this situation.”
- “what information you might have that I’m not aware of.”
- “where our viewpoints on this issue have gone in different directions.”
- “how we can get back on the same page.”

**“Tell me more”** about why this is important to you.<sup>2</sup>

“Do you see a way forward that would meet both of our needs: both [X] and [Y]?”

“What do you think about this idea?”

“Do you think it might help if we found someone who could help facilitate our efforts to resolve this?”

“Would it help if we both took a little time to reconsider the situation, and then meet again to discuss it?”

“I would like to keep exploring this situation ... [continue with one of the following:]

- “but it feels like maybe we should take a break so we can each process all this information”
- “do you have time now, or would it be better if we continued this at another time?”

“Thanks for meeting with me about this. I’m glad we were able to work this out together. Let’s follow-up with each other in [two weeks/30 days/six months] to make sure we’re still on track with this issue.”

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<sup>1</sup> “Help me understand” is a wonderful phrase to use in conflict: it’s non-threatening, and it gently requests people to *help* improve the situation.

<sup>2</sup> “Tell me more” is another great phrase/inquiry that conveys respect for the other person’s viewpoint and is non-threatening.