



Finish The Prompt

Instructions: The scenarios below provide background and a challenge regarding a difficult conversation. Your goal is to review each scenario and then answer the same prompts for each one.


You are welcome to capture your answers using anything you choose (e.g. notepad or word processor) or use them as mental prompts. This exercise will allow you to get into the mindset of the different elements you have to consider when conducting a difficult conversation.

By completing this exercise, you will be developing your critical thinking skills and begin to build your approach to delivering a difficult conversation!

Scenario 1: Workplace Setting - Performance Evaluation

Background: In a marketing firm, deadlines are crucial, and the team's success relies on timely execution of campaigns. Alex, a talented marketer with excellent creative skills, has been a valued member of the team for years.

However, over the past few months, there has been a noticeable decline in Alex's performance. They have missed several critical deadlines, resulting in delays and added pressure on the rest of the team.



Moreover, client feedback has indicated a lack of attention to detail in some recent projects. The team's productivity has taken a hit, and colleagues have started to feel demotivated due to the added workload and uncertainty caused by Alex's performance issues.

Challenge: The challenge lies in delivering a difficult conversation to Alex that addresses their performance concerns without diminishing their self-esteem and motivation. As a team leader, your goal is to foster a growth-oriented mindset and help Alex identify areas for improvement. The conversation should focus on constructive feedback, providing support, and collaboratively devising a performance improvement plan to get Alex back on track.

Questions:

- How would you prepare?
 - Loosely describe your conversation, or approach?
 - What would you do after?
 - What are some things you want to avoid doing in the process?
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Scenario 2: Life Setting - Parenting Difficulties

Background: Sarah, your teenage daughter, has always been independent and strong-willed. However, in recent months, you've noticed a significant change in her behavior. She has become increasingly distant, spends less time with family, and seems irritable and defensive when approached about her activities.

Her grades have been declining, and teachers have raised concerns about her participation in class. You suspect that Sarah may be facing social challenges at school or going through emotional turmoil, but she hasn't shared much about what's happening in her life.

Challenge: The challenge is to initiate a difficult conversation with Sarah about her behavioral issues while creating an environment of trust and open communication.

As a parent, your primary concern is Sarah's well-being, and you want to support her through any challenges she may be facing. The conversation should aim to understand her perspective, validate her emotions, and guide her towards making positive choices and seeking help if needed.



Questions:

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 - Loosely describe your conversation, or approach?
 - What would you do after?
 - What are some things you want to avoid doing in the process?
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Debrief: What are some of your biggest takeaways from this exercise? How will this help you to have better work through challenging conversations in the future?

Remember that every conversation and person is different. You will continue to develop your skills the more you have them.