"Please Change"
Sample Conversation Script

You may use this conversation when you want to see a change of behaviour. You are not sure why the person did what they did and expect that they do not understand the impact of their behaviour.

1. Introduce the conversation. Always make sure it is a good time to talk.

Example: "Do you have a minute? I want to follow up on something."

2. Name the action. Stick to the facts.

Example: "You interrupted me several times during the council meeting."

3. Invite the person to respond. Get information.

Allow the person to respond and give you information about the context. This does not mean you are accepting their response (action); you are simply gathering information in terms of their intention, whether they realize what they did was inappropriate, etc. If you already know that you also behaved inappropriately, this would be a good time to add your apology.

Example: "Before you respond, please let me apologize for reacting the way that I did. I was getting really frustrated, but it was not appropriate for me to yell at you like that. I'm sorry."

4. Share impact (optional)

This is where things can take some unexpected turns. You will just about always discover something new when they share their intent.

Possibility 1:

The person does not apologize for how they handled the situation, and does not seem to understand the problem. It is important to let them know because if they do not understand why their behaviour is a problem, they will continue doing it or will assume their actions were justified. It is important to understand that people often do not know how their behaviour lands, and if they did, they would likely not do it. Try agreeing with the part of the message that you can affirm and then identify why the action was problematic.

Possibility 2:

Sometimes, you will discover that you also behaved inappropriately and their response was rooted in frustration of what you did earlier. If that is the case, then you need to put this conversation on hold and take responsibility for what you did. If you want them to take responsibility, you need to take responsibility for what you did.

After you have done so, you will need to do all or some of the following steps:

a) Summarize their perspective.
b) Take responsibility as the source of inappropriate behaviour.
c) Share the impact on you.

Examples for Steps A and B:

- "You were hurt by what I posted on social media. That is understandable. I was upset and I felt the need to share, but you are right, it was not appropriate for me to post about that online. Thanks for letting me know; I'll take the post down right away."
- "Yes, I agree, I was wrong to talk about you in that way with a citizen. I was angry about how our council meeting went, but I know it was unprofessional of me to talk about the decision of council so negatively, and to blame you. I called the citizen this morning, and apologized for my actions."

Examples for Step C:

- "I would like to talk further about our disagreement, and how we may resolve it at some point. [Pause] What I want to share with you at this point is that I was really taken aback and embarrassed by how you talked to me at the council meeting, in front of all the other council members, our administration and the public."
- "That joke is not okay to tell on council or as a council member in general. It implies that everyone from that group is lazy. I suspect you do not believe that, but I am from that group and it makes me wonder if that is what you think of me."

Remember, when you inform or educate people, you want to provide information and also let them save face (keep their dignity intact).

5. **Clarify the expectation.** Let them know what would have worked better for you.

Sometimes, people will immediately apologize and admit they handled the situation poorly and acknowledge that, next time, they will talk to you in private. If that is the case and it is the first time, accept the apology and move on. If they do not react this way, make a clear request.

Examples:

- "If something like this happens again what would work better for me is if you came and talked to me privately right away, or gave me a call. If you are upset, I will absolutely make time to talk to you."
- "I appreciate a good laugh as much as everyone else, but jokes that make fun of other groups are generally seen as offensive, and this is not okay".

6. End conversation (tactfully/gracefully).

The best way to end the conversation depends on how the conversation went.

Here are some possible closing statements:

- "Thank you for hearing me out."
- "This is between you and me and I will not mention this conversation to anyone else."
- "I thought you would want to know this."
- "If I do something that is not working for you, I would hope you would tell me."