



PLANNING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION

By the end of the session, you should be able to:

- See the impact of difficult conversations on Mazda's culture
- Decide if you need to have a difficult conversation
- Prepare for a difficult conversations
- Have a difficult conversation focused on solutions
- Follow up appropriately

WHAT ARE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

They differ from normal conversations in that they may include one of the following:

- Diverse needs and/or opinions
- Highly emotional topics
- The need to correct someone's work or behavior
- High stakes involved in the outcome

If any of these things are present, then upfront planning and careful execution of the conversation will be necessary to diffuse the situation




- Recall a difficult or challenging conversation you have had in the past, one that you WERE NOT looking forward to
 - How did it go?
 - Do you feel good about the outcome?
 - Do you think the other person felt good about the outcome?
 - Do you think the conversation could have gone better?

WHY PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS IS IMPORTANT

- The decisions that come from these conversations will have an impact on your department
- If not handled well, people may walk away feeling frustrated
- Skillfully encouraging others to speak openly during a difficult conversation will
 - Produce happier team members
 - Help build team spirit
 - Help the overall moral in your department

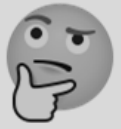
SEE THE IMPACT OF CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ON MAZDA’S CULTURE

 Be a transformational leader in how you approach difficult conversations

To encourage a culture of optimism, personal accountability, and the core values of Mazda, break through the old paradigm way of doing business

Old Assumptions	New outlook	Transformational leaders
Team members are order takers that carry out management’s decisions	Team members are consultants, they each bring skills and ideas to the table	Encourage creativity and innovation. Ensure a safe environment to discuss difficult issues
Only managers are responsible for creating the Mazda experience and driving the future	All employee’s share in building the Mazda experience. Everyone is accountable for their attitude, decisions, and work they produce.	Model accountability to team members by accepting their accountability in the situation
Team members are encouraged to have faith in the authority of their leaders	All employees should have faith that the core values of inspiration, innovation, collaboration, integrity, adaptability will help bring about the desired Mazda Experience	Inspire team members to see that together we can bring about the Mazda experience

DECIDING IF YOU NEED TO HAVE A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



Before spending time preparing for a difficult conversation, decide if one is needed

SHOULD YOU HAVE A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION?

- Your initial reaction might be to dismiss the issue and hope that it will resolve itself

HOWEVER

It's always best to assess the situation because

- Ongoing behavior or performance issues rarely resolve themselves
- Ignoring an issue is equivalent to approval of it
- If an issue is not addressed, it cannot be improved

DECIDING IF YOU NEED TO HAVE A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



A difficult conversation should always be held in a face-to-face meeting

If you are unsure, you can ask yourself questions such as:

1. Are there differing opinions about this issue?
 2. Is this an emotionally charged issue for anyone in the department?
 3. Will you need to correct someone's work or behavior?
 4. Is the outcome of the issue important to me, the other person, the department, or Mazda?
 5. Does the issue affect me, my manager, or any of my team members?
- If you have answered YES to many or all five of these questions, then most likely you will need to have a difficult conversation

If you are still unsure, call your HRBP to get their opinion



DECIDING IF YOU NEED TO HAVE A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



GROUP DISCUSSION

Read the following scenario and then answer the three questions.

Miguel is Lucy's manager.

Lucy has been with Mazda for almost 20 years and has been using the same finance software the entire time.

Recently, there has been change to an enterprise resource planning system. Everyone in the department received training. During the training, Lucy rarely engaged with the material. Lucy has complained in meetings and one-on-one conversations with coworkers that the software is difficult to learn and the old one is better.

Because of her longevity at the company, she is one of the more highly paid team members. Others on Miguel's team display frustration that they have worked hard to learn the software and are more efficient and yet are getting paid less.

- Consider if Miguel should have a conversation with Lucy. Ask yourself:
 - Will the situation resolve itself? By not having a conversation, is Miguel showing his approval of any actions that he doesn't really approve of?
 - Will Miguel need to correct any behaviors?
 - Is the situation emotionally charged? Are there differing opinions about the issue?

PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION



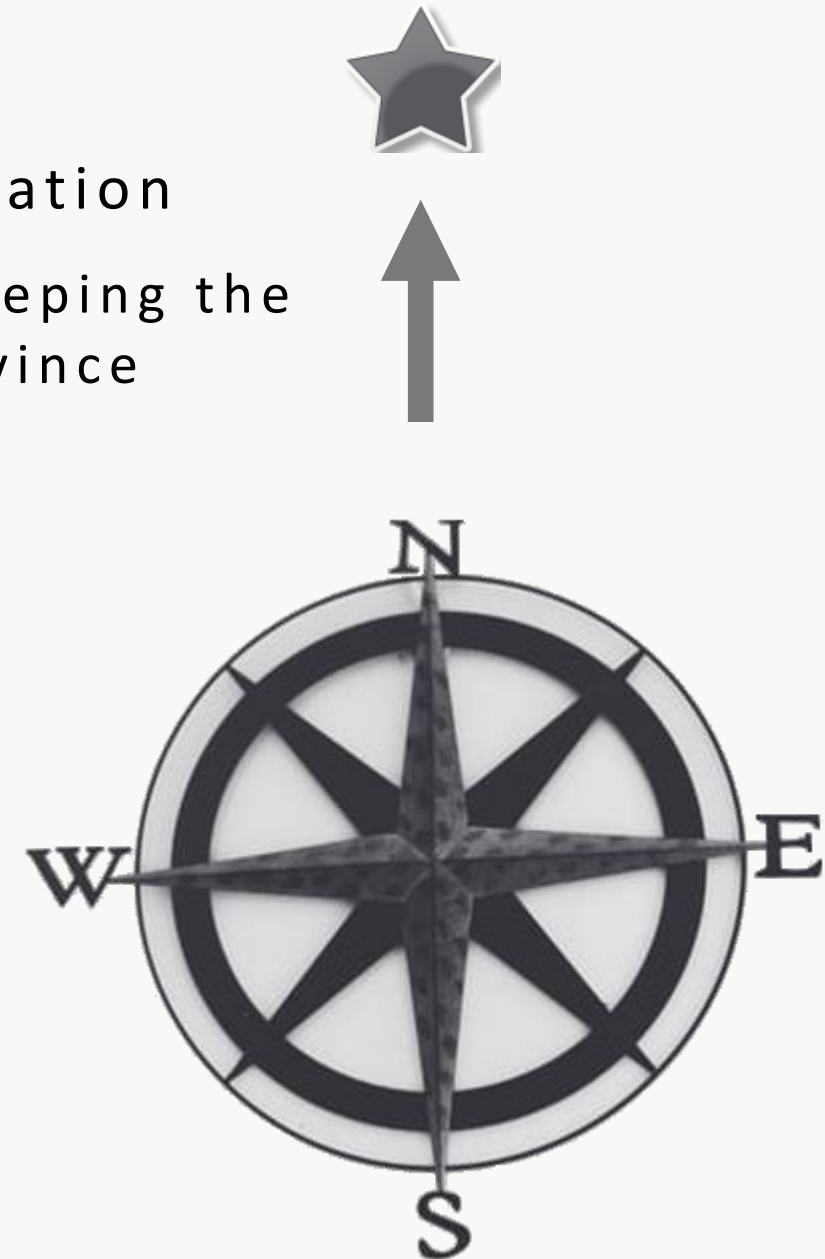
Sidetracked motivations will lead you away from success for your department

WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE

- Look honestly at what your motive is for calling the conversation
 - Is it based on preserving your self-image? Is it focused on keeping the status quo, or proving that you are correct? Or trying to convince someone that your way is the only way to proceed.
 - If your motivation is not lined up with your vision for your department

STOP

- Take time to re-affirm your commitment to your vision. Consider why it's important to you, to your department, to Mazda
- Figure out how this conversation realistically fits into that vision



PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION



positive change is always possible, no matter how many times you have been disappointed

BE INSPIRING

- Your optimism will create a safe environment where the other person can communicate their opinions

DON'T BE DEFENSIVE

- You will be focused on defending yourself or challenging the other person
- You will not be open to collaboration
- You will derail your conversation



PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION

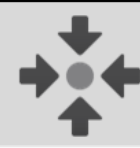
STOP

You can stop defensiveness anywhere during the process

THE DEFENSIVENESS PROCESS



PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION



Triggers will depend on culture, upbringing, and other factors that influence your values

Common Triggers	Examples	Why might this bother you?
The other person seems uninvested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing up to a meeting or joining a call late• Multi-tasking• Acting distracted	You may feel that your time and collaboration is not valued
Dismissive or passive aggressive statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Sure, whatever, that’s fine.”• “I already knew that. Have you got anything else to add?”• “Well, you seem to have it all figured out.”	You may feel that your input or ideas are not being heard
Micromanaging behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Did you finish the report? You know it’s due this afternoon...”• “Let me see how you did that calculation.”• “Where is that file I asked for 5 minutes ago?”	You may feel untrusted or that your autonomy is threatened
Grandstanding behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can you believe I got promoted in only a year after being hired?”• “Some of us are just naturally talented...”	You may feel less successful than the other person
Interruption or “talking over”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “--Okay, I get it. Anyway...”• “--Yeah yeah yeah, great.”	You may feel disrespected and unimportant

Other triggers to consider: actions that make you feel misunderstood, unsure, and unprepared

PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION



TAKE TIME TO THINK

We all have different ways we react to our triggers. Think about how you react.

- Do you become silent and clam up?
- Maybe you try to change the subject or end the meeting because of your discomfort.
- Do you become sarcastic?
- Do you exaggerate your argument, interrupt, or talk over people?



PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



Knowing how to structure the conversation will help you prepare for the meeting

Underlying foundation for meeting is your goals

What do you want for you?
What do you want for the other person?
What do you want for your department?

State the facts

Describe the irrefutable facts

What do the facts mean to you

Your interpretation of facts

Their clarification of the facts

Their turn to discuss their point of view

How to proceed from here

plans for future, brainstorming, next steps

PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION



GROUP DISCUSSION

Recall the example of Lucy and Miguel. Miguel has decided to have a difficult conversation with Lucy. Read Miguel's view about the issue and then answer the questions

Miguel has worked hard to convince upper management that it is worth investing in the new software and the training for his department. This issue with Lucy is just one more incident in a string of performance issues with her. Miguel believes that Lucy is just dragging her feet until retirement which is only a few years away for her.

- In Miguel's current state of mind, what do you think his goal is for the conversation?
- What do you think his goals for the conversation should be? What should he be focused on for himself, for Lucy, and for the department.

PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS



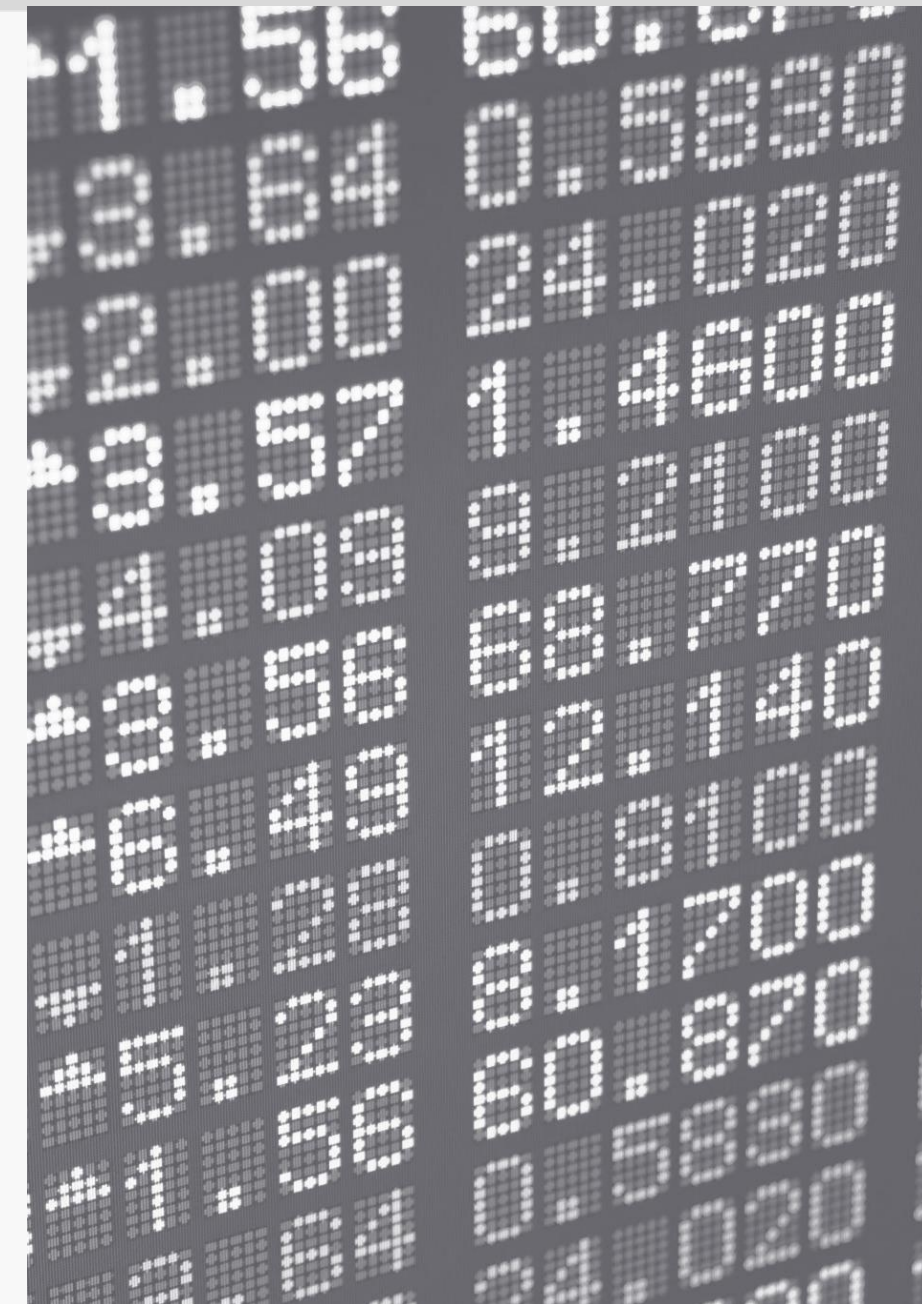
You can't solve anything without first knowing the facts about the situation

State the facts

- Assess the situation and have all the facts
- Make sure the facts are irrefutable facts and not opinions

What do the facts mean to you and your department

- Deliver this information without judgment
- State the risks as you see them
- Remember, you may need to be firm as you set the expectations for your department
- Acknowledge your part in the situation



PREPARING FOR A CRITICAL CONVERSATION



DISCUSSION

Look at the following statements. Are they fact or opinion?

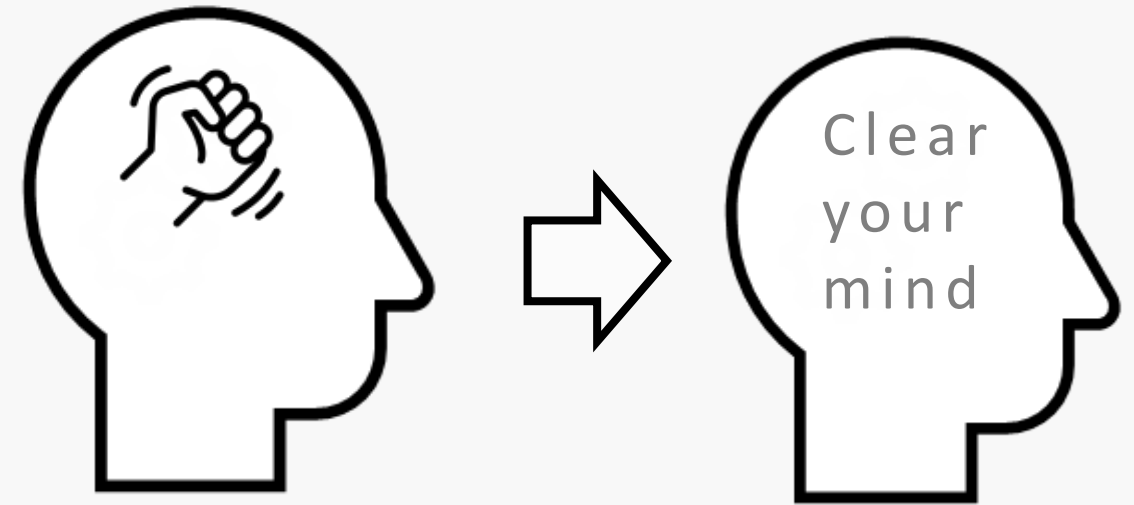
1. Amy showed up one hour after business start time two days last week.
2. Bruce is always late to meetings and has no sense of time.
3. His report was riddled with errors making it impossible to understand the content.
4. Chen, the best proposal writer we have, finished his proposal three days ahead of schedule
5. Others can learn from Chen how to write a perfect proposal

PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

 It's important to clearly understand the other person's perception of the situation

Other person's clarification of the issue

- The portion of the meeting for them clarify their position on the stated facts
- Consider ahead of time worst-case scenarios
- Decide how you will handle the worst-case situation
- At times, your response may need to be firm as you are setting the expectations for the department
- During the meeting clear your head of your expectations
- Listen carefully to what they actually have to say



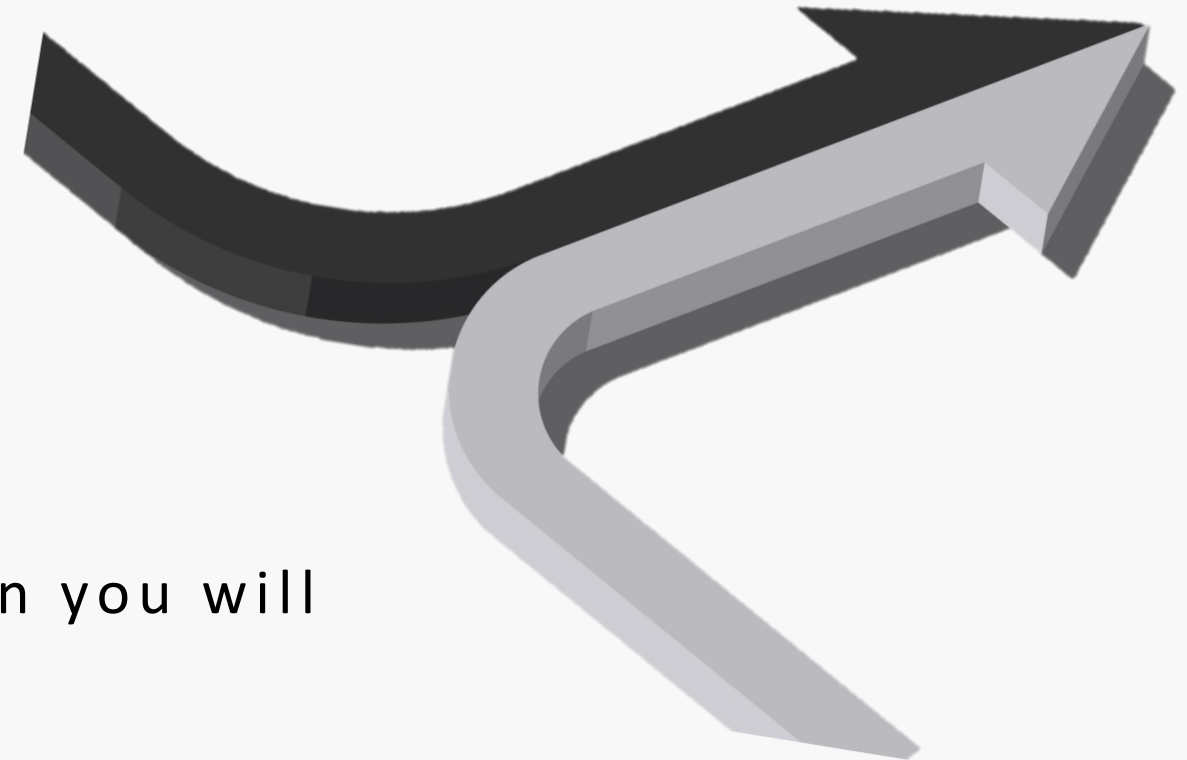
PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



Focus on getting the other person involved in the most crucial part of the meeting

How to proceed from here

- Get agreement on how to proceed
- Write down some preliminary ideas
- Write down ways to encourage the other person's participation in this process
- Consider any special circumstances of the person you will be conversing with
- Lean on your HRBP if there are circumstances that you have questions about or are uncomfortable with



PREPARE FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION

My Goals		Attendee Name		Meeting Date	
What I really want for	Me:	The other person:		The department:	
What are the facts					
What happened:					
When did it happen:					
Who did it happen to:					
What do the facts mean					
To me:		To my department:		Acknowledge my part:	
Get Clarification					
Remember to actively listen. How can I engage the other person?			Write down any clarification during the meeting		
How to go forward					
Your preliminary ideas:			Their ideas:		

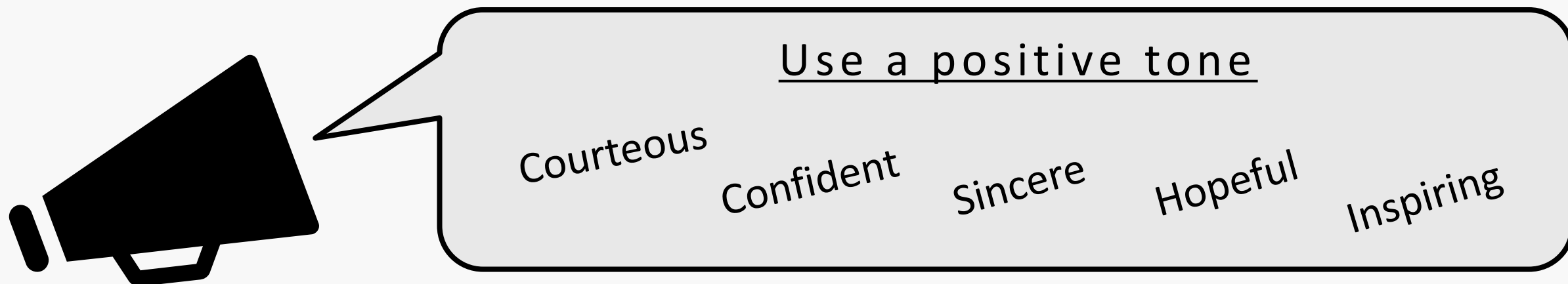
PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



Make sure the tone of the e-mail is positive and yet descriptive

Sending out the meeting invite

- Consider how much time the other person may need to prepare
- Give enough information in the invite for the other person to be able to prepare
- If time permits, review your outline before the meeting and practice the points you want to make



HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



Your preparation has made you ready for the meeting, so be confident

DELIVERING YOUR CONTEXT

- Stay calm as you deliver the facts
- Keep your notes in front of you
- State what the facts mean to you and your department
- Be clear, direct, and honest
- Remember to address how you might have added to the problem



HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



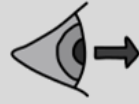
Your respectful, positive attitude is key in making the other person feel comfortable

CREATE A SAFE CONVERSATION

- Mutual goals
 - If any of your goals align, start with that information
 - Example: from Miguel and Lucy situation
 - ‘I know you have been frustrated lately, I’m sure we can both agree that things need to change so that work is a more pleasant place for you’
 - Find and stress things you have in common
 - Focus on working together toward a common goal rather than as adversaries
- Respect
 - Don’t let cynicism, defensiveness or anything cause you to become disrespectful



HAVE A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



As you present the information take notice of how the other person is reacting to it

DON'T JUST TALK, TAKE NOTICE

- Do they look like they are becoming defensive? Are they:
 - Leaning away from you
 - Tensing up in any way
 - Putting up a physical barrier of some kind
 - Rolling their eyes
 - Crossing their arms
 - Fidgeting, or nail biting



HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



If you notice any defensiveness behaviors, STOP, and make the conversation safe again

MAKE IT SAFE AGAIN

- Apologize if you need to. For example, if you raised your voice
- Backtrack by using an 'I don't' statement to let them know what you don't want
 - Examples:
 - I certainly don't want to blame you for this situation, I have contributed to the problem as well
 - I don't want you to feel frustrated at work
- Use an 'I do' statement in contrast to the 'I don't' one
 - Examples:
 - What I do want is for us to work together to fix this problem
 - What I do want is for you to feel comfortable with the new software



HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



Be fully present and focused on the other person as they speak

LISTEN TO ENGAGE

- Ask questions to get clarification
- **Don't** assume you know what they are going to say
- **Don't** start preparing your response
- If they have trouble expressing themselves, allow them time to gather their thoughts
- Keep them on track. Don't let them gossip or complain about other people
 - For example:
 - I appreciate your frustration with the other person, but let's stay focused on how this is affecting you and what we can do about it
 - I don't want to focus on the details of who said what; instead, let's turn to looking for solutions
- Most importantly: be engaged and stay focused



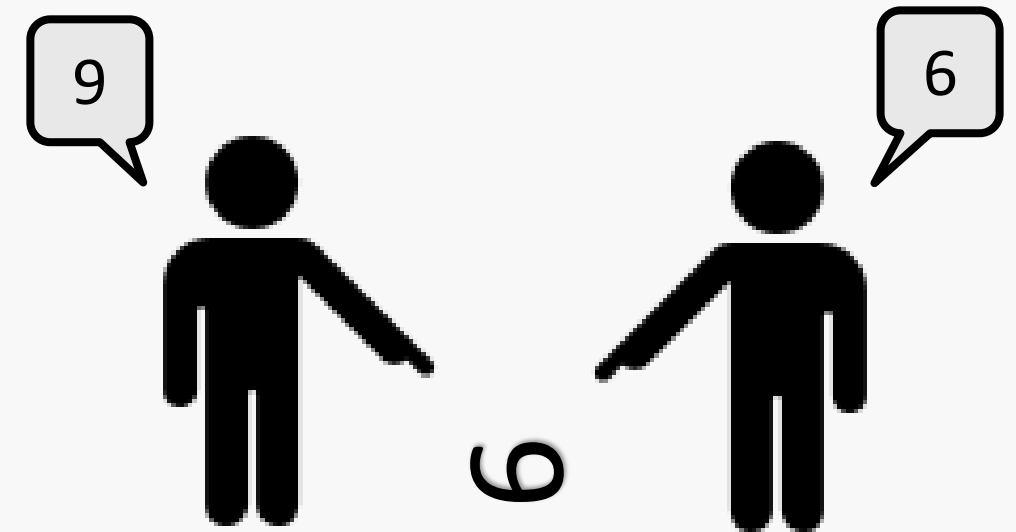
HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



Let the other's words sink in and take them into consideration

TAKE THEIR POINT OF VIEW INTO CONSIDERATION

- Have your expectations been fair
- How does their perception change your initial thoughts about the situation
- If new, reframing information came up, you can stop and re-convene another time
 - Say something like: That's information I was not aware of and it's important, let's stop here so I can take some time to consider it. When would be a good time for to meet again?



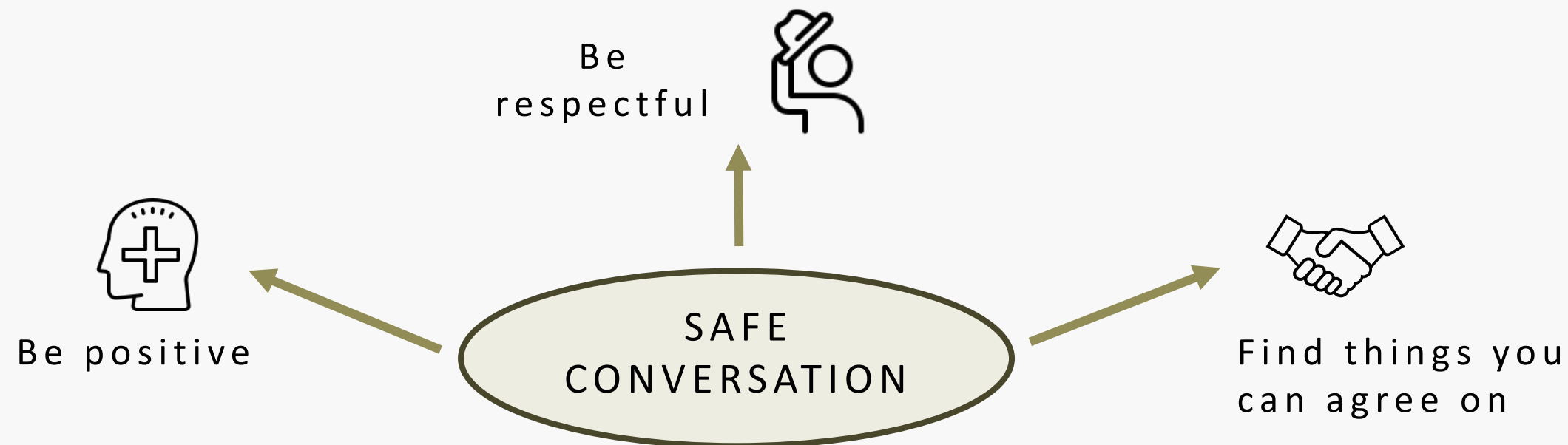
HAVING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS



Encourage the other person to seek solutions

PROCEEDING FORWARD

- Make them feel empowered by asking them to share their ideas
- Don't discount their ideas, instead discuss and modify them
- If they don't have anything to share, offer your initial ideas
- Sharing your initial thoughts might get the conversation moving



FOLLOWING UP APPROPRIATELY



Document important information right after the meeting while it is still fresh in your mind

FOLLOW UP

- Document important information about the meeting in your notes
- Make sure you have the date of the meeting, how you will proceed, and any action items
- If appropriate, follow up the meeting with an e-mail
 - Start by appreciating their time and effort to resolve the situation
 - Reiterate important points made during the meeting
 - Add anything that is important that you forgot to say during meeting
 - Summarize how you are going to proceed
 - If you are unsure about the contents of the e-mail, you can have your HRBP review it

FINAL DISCUSSION

Miguel has decided to have a difficult conversation with Lucy

- Discuss what his meeting invite should include or not include. Consider word choices and tone of voice.
- Recall some of the facts about the situation
 - Lucy is having trouble learning the new software
 - Lucy is complaining because she doesn't think it was a good idea to change software
 - Others in the department are frustrated that she gets paid more and they are becoming more proficient than her.
- Discuss how Miguel should clarify what the facts mean for him and his department
- Given that Lucy states that she is not the only one who believes that the software is a poor choice, that there are several others in the department who think this change is a mistake, discuss how Miguel should proceed with the conversation.



THANK YOU