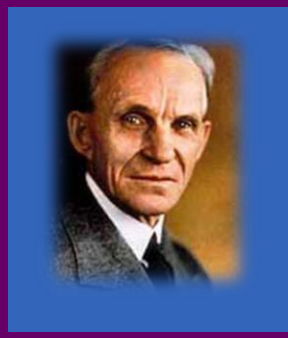


# Challenging Conversations Helper

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

Henry Ford  
Entrepreneur



## Planned flexibility

### Who

Who am I going to speak to?	
Length of service and performance generally?	
First instance or a pattern?	

### What

What's my goal?

What precisely do I need to speak with the person about?

What are the facts, instances, evidence that I have? Including is it first time or a pattern?

## Why

What makes it so important that I need to speak with them?

## Where

What's the ideal location for our conversation?

## When

When is the best time? For example, not at the end of the working day?

## Having the conversation

How formal do I want this conversation to be?

And so how significant a contracting phase does it need?

What do I need to include so that we get off to an effective start?

What will I do to build rapport?

## Disclose the issue

What exactly will I say to set out the issue?

What will be a great open question that will get them talking?

What questions do I need to ask?

How are they likely to react

Likely reaction	My response

Listen and reflect

What will I do/say to myself so that I can stay resourceful, actively listen and respond?

Actions

How will I make sure that the person summarises the final actions?

Feedback

What might I feedback that will help create a positive close?

What might be a constructive end note?

# Example

## Planned flexibility

### Who

Who am I going to speak to?	Cameron
Length of service and performance generally?	Six months. Satisfactory performance. He's a sharp mind and very analytical
First instance or a pattern?	His behaviour at meetings is a pattern

### What

What's my goal?

To support him making his meeting contributions constructive instead of him coming across as negative.

What precisely do I need to speak with the person about?

I want meetings to be constructive where we solve problems together by focusing on what we can do not what we can't.

What are the facts, instances, evidence that I have? Including is it first time or a pattern?

Taking last meeting as an example he made six main contributions five of which were raising problems without offering a solution.

### Why

What makes it so important that I need to speak with them?

He has a lot to offer but his current approach affects the dynamic of our meetings.

It doesn't show him in the best light as a valued team member.

### Where

What's the ideal location for our conversation?

In a meeting area where we can talk privately.

### When

When is the best time? For example, not at the end of the working day?

Mid-morning after he has done his core morning activities.

## Having the conversation

How formal do I want this conversation to be?

It's an important conversation but not formal. I want it to be a discussion.

And so how significant a contracting phase does it need?

As it's informal I will simply say I want to speak with him about meeting behaviour I've noticed.

What do I need to include so that we get off to an effective start?

Say it's about meeting behaviour

Confirm he is progressing well with his work

Let him know I'm driven to help him because I can see he has potential.

What will I do to build rapport?

Thank him for his efforts

## Disclose the issue

What exactly will I say to set out the issue?

"I want our meetings to be constructive at all times, focusing on solutions and what can be done.

I've noticed when you raise a problem or issue you don't then offer ways forward.

Taking our last meeting as an example you made six main contributions five of which were raising problems without offering a solution.

It's right to raise concerns and issues. I want you to keep doing that. I also want each to include a solution or options.

I'm talking with you now to make sure you know what's needed and to help you do it. And that's because I see potential in you."

What will be a great open question that will get them talking?

Tell me your thoughts about your contribution to our meetings?

What questions do I need to ask?

Depending on what he says:

1. How might you follow up a concern with a solution or some options?
2. What support do you need from me to help you? (Could offer a handout of the SORTED approach)

## How are they likely to react

Likely reaction	My response
May take offence claiming that's his thinking style.	Acknowledge that raising problems and concerns is valuable. It's that in our meetings I need them to be followed up with options or ways forward.
Worst case scenario he may shut down with a childlike "whatever" response.	We need to get beyond "whatever". I'm talking with you to improve what you do for your benefits and the teams. It's important that we keep talking till I can be reassured that you 'get it' and that I get

Likely reaction	My response
	<p>your commitment to keep spotting concerns but follow them up with options.</p> <p>What do you need from me right now?</p>

## Listen and reflect

What will I do/say to myself so that I can stay resourceful, actively listen and respond?

Stay thinking

Whatever happens I'll handle it

Keep to your core message of problems need to be followed by solutions.

## Actions

How will I make sure that the person summarises the final actions?

By making sures to ask, "So, talk me though your actions from this conversation."

Ask, "What support do you need?"

## Feedback

What might I feedback that will help create a positive close?

Confirm that he is performing satisfactorily overall. He has a lot to offer and this one action will improve his standing and performance.

What might be a constructive end note?

Thank him for his openness and constructive way he's handled himself in this conversation

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