

# Seven Steps for Effective Difficult Conversations



## 1. Listen

Listen quietly, with no interruption, trying to see the world from the other's perspective.



## 2. Ask

Inquire openly, with curiosity, trying to understand why your counterpart thinks what he or she thinks.



## 3. Summarize

Let the other person know that you heard what he or she said. Summarize what you heard and ask them if you understand it correctly.



## 4. Validate

Acknowledge that what your counterpart said is reasonable even if you interpret things differently.



## 5. Express

Share your truth, your assessment of the situation, your examples, your reasoning, your goals and your suggestions. Speak in first person. Use "I". Avoid using "you", "we", and "it".



## 6. Negotiate

Engage creatively and try to find a solution that addresses everyone's concerns.



## 7. Commit

Formalize your agreement with a series of commitments and a time frame.

