

GUIDESHEET FOR A RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION

For faculty who choose not to use a mediator, Brecher & Greenwald (2008)* have suggested guidelines for organizing a respectful conversation. The following outline constitutes a condensed version of their guidelines.

Open the Conversation

- Thanks for taking the time to meet with me.
- I would like to have an open discussion about our situation and try to reach a solution that will meet both of our needs.
- I would like to lead the discussion.
- This is the issue statement we agreed to discuss and seek a resolution.

Present Options

- Here are some ways I think we can work out this situation to meet both of our needs.
- Let me explain to you my reasons for these suggestions.
- Have I been clear?
- Do you have any questions?
- I am interested in hearing ways you think we can work out this situation, including any of the ones I have suggested.
- Why are you suggesting that?
- I would like to list the options we each suggested and if I am missing any, please add them. After this, we can discuss them.

Discuss Options Respectfully (Keep an open mind, don't interrupt or judge)

- I would like to keep exploring ways we can improve our working relationship.
- Let's keep discussing this.
- What do you think?
- Do you see another way?
- If agreement cannot be reached during the conversation:
 - Do you or I need to think about what you suggested? Let's schedule another time to meet.
 - It seems to me that we cannot reach an understanding that will meet both of our needs at this time.
 - I would be interested in having another person try to facilitate a resolution, would you?
 - I think it is best to end this conversation now and we can each consider how we will handle this in another manner.
- If agreement is reached:
 - Let's write down our understanding and make sure we each have a copy.
 - My understanding is that we agree to proceed as follows. Is that correct?

When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.

- Wayne Dyer

Close the Conversation

- When a collaborative solution is reached:
 - I am glad we could work this out and hopefully we can avoid some of these issues in the future.
 - I will certainly try to bring any future concerns to you and discuss them with you as we have today.
 - I really do think you know this area well and that I can learn a lot from you.
 - I am glad we were able to discuss this openly in a non-confrontational manner and I hope we can continue to discuss our concerns this way in the future.
- When a solution is not achieved:
 - I am glad we had the opportunity to discuss this today.
 - Even though we have not reached a resolution today, I have a better understanding of the reasons for your concerns.
 - Even though we have not reached a resolution today, I am glad we could discuss this openly and in such a calm and non-confrontational manner.
 - While we have not reached a resolution today, I want you to know that I respect your opinions and I hope you respect mine.
 - I hope we can continue to discuss our concerns this way in the future.
 - I appreciate that you were willing to take the time to talk with me about this.

*Brecher & Greenwald (2008). Cornell University ILR School (Industrial and Labor Relations). Conflict Resolution Coaching.