

## Essential Elements of an Effective “Difficult” Conversation

- Present a “For” stance:  
“I want you to win.” Be authentic.
- State the problem (keep it to one) and its impact.
  - ♦ Categories can be: Behavior/  
Performance, Attitude or  
Relationships.
  - ♦ Have three specific examples ready  
in case you need them.
- Own your part: “I wasn’t clear” or  
“I waited too long to bring it up,” etc.
- Hear their side, but also deal  
with diversion.
  - ♦ They may have information that  
might change your direction.
  - ♦ If diversion happens:
    - ♦ Be empathetic with them for a bit.
    - ♦ Then redirect: “Let me get back to...”
- Request one specific change.
- If needed, set consequences.
- Reiterate the “For” stance.
- Check back in 1-24 hours: “How are you  
doing after our conversation?”  
Reiterate the “For” stance.

## Skills to Manage the Conversation

- Prepare
  - ♦ Decide which Elements are  
necessary.
  - ♦ Write down examples and  
your request.
  - ♦ Connect with support.
  - ♦ Role play the conversation.
- Begin the conversation with warmth  
and directness.
- If their emotions escalate:
  - ♦ Put the issue aside for now.
  - ♦ Focus on the process.
    - ♦ “What’s happening between us  
right now?”
    - ♦ Listen well and convey true  
understanding.
    - ♦ Make any necessary adaptations.
    - ♦ Once resolved, return to the issue.
- Finally, always be ready to accept  
confrontation in good grace -  
no defensiveness.

