



Difficult Conversations

Pierce the Bubble Before It Pops

Based on the Biz Bite with Ray Hoppins: *A Leader's Guide to Having Difficult Conversations*



Watch video

Core principle: Be soft on people and clear on the issue. Protect dignity while moving toward resolution.

6-Step Conversation Flow

- 1 Notice the issue**
Name the concern before the bubble grows.
- 2 Decide if it matters**
Use frequency, intensity, and time.
- 3 Plan the opening**
Choose privacy, timing, tone, and first sentence.
- 4 Create safety**
Start calmly and make the purpose clear.
- 5 Ask perspective**
Describe briefly, then listen.
- 6 Close the loop**
Agree on action, confidentiality, and follow-up.

Avoid These Traps

- Group scolding
- Broad email or text
- Changing all policies
- Blame shifting
- Sandwich feedback

Use These Moves

- Ask: What problem are we solving?
- Separate facts from stories
- Plan the first 30 seconds
- Ask for perspective
- Schedule a follow-up

Simple opening script

"I wanted to check in about [issue]. I noticed [facts]. I am here to understand and work this out. What is your perspective?"

If the conversation becomes unsafe:

Pause it, park it, leave if needed, and get support before restarting.