

Difficult Conversations Framework



Before { **E** } Check Your **EMOTIONS**.
{ **M** } **MAKE** a plan.

During { **P** } Be fully **PRESENT** for the conversation.
{ **A** } **ACKNOWLEDGE** that the news (or feedback) may be difficult to hear.
{ **T** } Take your **TIME**.
{ **H** } **HOLD** your tongue.
{ **E** } Be **EXPLICIT** in your expectations from this conversation.
{ **T** } Create **TACTICAL** plans.

After { **I** } **ISSUE** documentation.
{ **C** } Let them know you **CARE** about them.

Difficult Conversations Framework

M- MAKE a plan. Be intentional about what needs to be said. What you would like the outcome to be?
How you would like to feel/do after the conversation?

- a) What is the issue?
- b) What impact is it having now and future?
- c) How have you contributed to the issue? (putting blame on others makes you the victim -- this is a slippery slope) - Ask yourself what did you miss?
- d) What is the ideal outcome of the conversation?
- e) How is this person likely to react to the conversation? This is so you can plan for likely scenarios.
- f) What is the best way to make sure you are going to get a commitment to action from this conversation?
- g) What do you really want to say but have some fear or blockage around? (This is likely the most important thing you will need to say) This may be your “line in the sand” that must be said when you want to be crystal clear.
- h) TIPS: be direct, don’t ramble...the planning process should help you get your thoughts together to minimize that tendency.
- i) Find a time and place that the difficult conversation will get the best results.

BEFORE

Difficult Conversations Framework

E-Check Your EMOTIONS

Before the conversation--check your emotions. It would be best if you disentangled this conversation from your own emotions. Recognize your own emotions where you are avoiding or don't want to have this conversation. Consider the long-term impact of you not having his conversation on yourself and other people. Also, it is best not to bring a "reactive" emotion of anger or contempt to a difficult discussion because this emotional state will derail.

M- MAKE a plan.

Prepare for your conversation. What you would like the outcome to be..how you would like to feel/do after the discussion.

P -- Be fully PRESENT for the conversation.

Don't be on your phone or checking your email. Look them directly in their eyes.

A -- ACKNOWLEDGE that the news (or feedback) may be difficult to hear, but that you want to listen and create a win-win (Direct, to the point, without judgment. Present facts/data

T -- Take your TIME and be patient.

Please don't rush the conversation to get it over with. But also, give them the time and patience to process what you have said.

H -- HOLD your tongue.

If they start to lash out, don't retaliate. Listen to them with empathy. This is a chance to let them feel heard.

E -- Be EXPLICIT in your expectations from this conversation.

Leave nothing to interpretation or assumption.

T -- Create TACTICAL plans.

You want a plan both of you can agree to that addresses the issue. Create a plan moving forward. It may not be HOW to do it, but it could include the next time you will discuss progress.

AFTER

I -- ISSUE documentation

It is always wise to document the conversation if the conversation could lead to a dismissal. Include a timeline, and tactical steps agreed to for their HR file. If the issue is less severe, it is still essential to keep notes or even send an email to the other person documenting the conversation and the tactical plans moving forward.

C -- Let them know you CARE about them.

24-48 hours after the conversation, check-in and see if any additional questions come up or if there is a way you can support them. Ultimately, you want them to know that you care for and keep them.

About Me (Gene Hammett)

Gene is a leading expert on high-growth company culture and leadership. Gene has interviewed more than 530 CEOs of high-growth companies to understand the core principles of fast growth. He consults companies to activate new growth and reduce the high cost of ineffective leadership.

After 20 years of being a serial entrepreneur, Gene has built teams and taken many companies to two times and three times growth as their executive coach. He has worked with more than three dozen companies on the Inc 5000 list. He has decades of experience with more than \$40 million in revenue for the companies he has led and owned.

Gene is the best-selling author of [The Trap of Success](#), a book about breaking through to new levels of growth. He has leadership insights have appeared in large publications like [Inc](#), [Entrepreneur](#) and [Success](#) Magazines.

Since 2014, his show, [Growth Think Tank](#) (formerly known as Leaders in the Trenches), has been recognized by [Inc.](#), [Business Insider](#), and [Entrepreneur](#) for its insight on growth and sales leadership.

Contact Gene via email directly at gene@genehammett.com.

