

THREE STEP PROCESS FOR DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



I. PREPARATION

PREPARE THE FACTS

- Check all the facts
- Have all the reasons/data behind the information you give
- Anticipate questions and objections and prepare answers

PREPARE YOUR EMOTIONS

- Analyze which of your feelings you are most anxious about
- Admit fears to yourself
- Think through how to remain as neutral as possible

WRITE THE FIRST PARAGRAPH

- Prepare with a brief lead in
- Write down how you are going to say the news
- Present the information clearly
- Get to the point quickly (don't waffle!)

II. LISTENING TO THE RESPONSE

IF THEY GET EMOTIONAL, RIDE THE STORM

- Listen ("I see" "Right" "Yes")
- Give them time to work through their emotional state
- Ask questions to get to the heart of their emotional upset

IF THEY CLAM UP, PROBE

- Give people time to respond
- Show you have the time to listen and understand
- Use open ended questions to find out the reasons for their distress
- Encourage them to talk
- Don't interrupt or put words in their mouth

IF THEY ARGUE, STAND YOUR GROUND

- Give the information firmly and remain neutral
- Re-state the information if necessary
- If you need to exert authority, do it subtly
- Respond to their anger with calm gestures (e.g. lower your volume)
- Don't take their anger personal

III. LIMITING THE DAMAGE

PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE

- Stress the positive side of their achievements
- Let them know they have your support
- Offer constructive advice for the future

TALK ABOUT FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

- Reassure them about their future
- If there are no real options, don't fabricate any

“Maintain positive reinforcement for the effort people are giving. Always let them know you are aware of it and how much you appreciate it.”

~ Coach Rick Pitino, University of Louisville men's basketball

“Kind words are short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”

~ Mother Teresa

The Motivating **POWER** of Authentic Positive Feedback

P - Point out the positive things that normally get no verbal notice

O - Offer no-strings attached positive feedback and the results are immediately clear

W - WOW...a person!

E - Enlighten one person each day with some positive feedback

R - Remember it is simple. It does not cost anything and a waste not to use it



Think of the people that you give feedback to as your “clients”

- Are they happy with your gift (feedback)?
- Is there a better way or time to give your gift?