

Setting intentions ahead of difficult conversations

Setting clear intentions can help us to focus our thoughts and actions ahead of difficult conversations making it more likely we steer the talk in a positive direction.

Some tips for setting effective intentions are:

- **Writing them down:** Jot down your intentions and what the purpose of the conversation is. This helps you articulate your intentions clearly.
- **Ask "Why?":** For each intention, ask yourself why it matters. This will help you connect it back to your core values.
- **Evaluate:** After the conversation, reflect on whether your intentions were achieved and how they aligned with your values.
- **Learn and adapt:** Use this reflection to inform future conversations, ensuring continual alignment.

Here are some examples of setting intentions effectively for different types of difficult conversations:

Personal relationship:

- Intention: "I want to express my feelings honestly and create a safe space for us to discuss our concerns."
- Why it works: This intention focuses on openness and emotional safety, encouraging vulnerability and understanding.

Workplace discussion:

- Intention: "I aim to address the project's challenges constructively and collaborate on solutions."
- Why it works: This intention emphasises teamwork and problem-solving, steering the conversation away from blame.

Feedback sessions:

- Intention: "I want to provide constructive feedback that helps my colleague grow without making them feel criticised."
- Why it works: This intention highlights support and growth, promoting a positive atmosphere for receiving feedback.

Conflict resolution:

- Intention: "I want to understand the other person's perspective and find common ground."
- Why it works: This intention promotes empathy and collaboration, making it easier to resolve differences.

Therapeutic Setting:

- Intention: "I aim to explore my feelings and gain insight into my behaviour during this session."
- Why it works: This intention focuses on self-discovery and reflection, which are key components of effective therapy.

Negotiation:

- Intention: "I want to reach an agreement that satisfies both parties while maintaining a positive relationship."
- Why it works: This intention balances assertiveness with collaboration, fostering a win-win mindset.