



## Hard Conversations

Having hard conversations is the whole point in being in relationship with someone. When we are able to be direct, transparent, and straightforward with what we think and feel with our loved ones, we are operating out of a place of self-worth, self-love, and self-esteem. We understand that sharing our thoughts and feelings honestly means having integrity with our thoughts and feelings. It means giving our own thoughts and feelings equal importance with your loved one's (not putting their thoughts/feelings above your own). We understand that saying the hard things we are afraid to say is really the depth of intimacy and connection that we are built for.

Take some time to write down all your thoughts, fears, hopes, and emotions. Try to write for 15 minutes—research has shown that writing (not typing) for 15 minutes about one's thoughts has helped people find more clarity and has led to more resolved feelings.

Often we only share part of what we are thinking and feeling to our loved ones. What are you really thinking and feeling that you're not saying? Follow the steps below to brainstorm, then on page 3 you will use that brainstorming to write out your conversation. To be most clear and transparent, have this conversation face-to-face. If that is impossible, use this information to draft an email/letter.

1) What is your intention in having this conversation?

- to be known
  - to find a solution or compromise together
  - other: \_\_\_\_\_
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2) What is your hope for the outcome of this conversation?

- to learn that by sharing the things I'm afraid to say, you'll still love and accept me
  - to become closer to you
  - to gain a new level of trust in our relationship
  - to set an example for you, so that you will also share deeply and honestly with me
  - other: \_\_\_\_\_
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3) What do you need from the listener as you share this information?

- to not interrupt me
- to be gentle in their response
- to listen fully while I talk, understanding that they don't have to be formulating their response while I'm talking because they know they can pause and think before they respond to me.
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

4) What I'm not saying to \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_

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5) What I'm afraid might happen if I say it is \_\_\_\_\_

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6) Take a moment and put yourself in your partner's shoes — what do you imagine he/she must be feeling as you are this information? How can you express that empathy to your partner?

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**Now, use those answers to construct a conversation.**

Hey \_\_\_\_\_, is now a good time to talk about something that's been on my mind?

- No - ask, when would be a good time to talk?
- Yes - take a deep breath and continue

While I am sharing, can you please: (take answers from step 3 above):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

There are some things I have wanted to share with you that I haven't shared. I haven't shared them with you because I'm afraid the following might happen: (step 5 above)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My intention of telling you this is: (step 1 above)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My hope for this conversation is: (step 2 above)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What I'm not telling you is: (step 4 above)

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I understand you might be feeling: (step 6 above): \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for listening. What, if anything, do you want to share in response?