

# Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations



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**Cabral Enterprises, LLC DBA DC Efficiency Consulting**  
was founded in 2010 by Deborah J Cabral, PCC.

Deborah is an award-winning entrepreneur, Professional Certified Coach with the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and a highly experienced Trainer/Facilitator and Consultant.



Cabral Enterprises LLC, with a staff of 17, is a NYS, NYC, Federal and National Certified WBE (Women Business Enterprise) who is proud of our distinguished list of clients from both the public and private sector.

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## What we'll cover

- Strategies for Dealing Effectively With Difficult Conversations
- Learn and Apply The Productive Conflict Model To Master Difficult Conversations and Resolve Conflict



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What word comes to mind when you think of having difficult conversations?

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Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

Dealing effectively with difficult conversations at work is **crucial for maintaining a positive and productive work environment.**

Here are some **comprehensive strategies** to help you **navigate these conversations with confidence and empathy.**



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #1 Preparation

#### Clarify Your Objectives:

Before the conversation, **define what you want to achieve.**

**Be clear about your goals**, whether it's resolving a conflict, providing feedback, or discussing a performance issue.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #1 Preparation



#### Gather Relevant Information:

**Collect facts, data**, and specific **examples** that **support your points.**

This helps build a strong foundation for your discussion.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #1 Preparation

**Practice What You'll Say:**

Rehearse key points and anticipate potential reactions.

This practice can help you express your thoughts clearly and confidently.



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What do you do currently to prepare for a difficult conversation?

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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #2 Create the Right Environment



**Choose an Appropriate Setting:**

Select a *private, neutral space* for the conversation where *both parties can speak openly without distractions.*



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #2 Create the Right Environment

**Timing is Key:**

Choose a *suitable time* for the conversation, avoiding busy periods or moments of heightened emotions.

Ensure both parties are in a *mindset conducive to discussion*.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #3 Use Effective Communication Techniques



**Employ "I" Statements:**

Use "I" statements to *express your feelings and observations*, which can *reduce defensiveness*.

For example, say,

*"I feel concerned when deadlines are missed," instead of "You always miss deadlines."*



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #3 Use Effective Communication Techniques

**Be Direct, but Respectful:**

*Clearly state your concerns* or issues *without being confrontational*.

Maintain a *respectful tone* to *foster a constructive dialogue*.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations



### #3 Use Effective Communication Techniques

#### Listen Actively:

Show *genuine interest* in the *other person's perspective*.

Use *active listening techniques*, such as nodding and summarizing their points, to demonstrate understanding.



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How would you rate yourself as a active listener?

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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #4 Manage Emotions

#### Stay Calm:

Keep your emotions in check.

If you feel yourself *becoming upset* or defensive, take a moment to breathe deeply and *regain composure*.

Never show anger or resentment.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #4 Manage Emotions



**Acknowledge Emotions:**  
*Recognize and validate the other person's feelings.*  
Acknowledging their emotions can create a more empathetic environment.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #5 Focus on Solutions

**Collaborate on Outcomes:**  
*Shift the focus from problems to solutions.*  
*Encourage brainstorming of potential solutions together, fostering a sense of collaboration.*



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #5 Focus on Solutions



**Set Actionable Steps:**  
*Agree on specific, actionable steps moving forward.*  
Ensure both parties are *clear on their responsibilities and timelines.*



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Would you consider yourself someone who focuses on solutions, rather than problems?



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### Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

#### #6 Follow Up

**Summarize the Discussion:**

At the end of the conversation, **summarize the key points and agreements made.**

This helps **ensure everyone is on the same page.**



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### Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

#### #6 Follow Up



**Check In:**

**Follow up** after some time **to see how things are progressing.**

This demonstrates your **commitment to maintaining open communication and accountability.**



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #7 Build a Supportive Culture

**Encourage Open Communication:**

Foster an environment where difficult conversations are normalized and encouraged.

This can **reduce the stigma** around addressing challenging topics.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #7 Build a Supportive Culture



**Provide Training:**

Consider implementing training sessions on **effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence** for employees and managers.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### #8 Know When to Involve Others

**Seek Mediation, if Necessary:**

If the conversation becomes too **challenging or unproductive, consider involving a neutral third party**, such as a manager or HR representative, to facilitate the discussion.



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations



### #8 Know When to Involve Others

#### Utilize Resources:

If you *feel overwhelmed*, seek support from *mentors, colleagues, or professional resources such as a coach* to help you navigate difficult conversations.



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Who are your resources if you need support?

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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations

### Conclusion

Handling difficult conversations at work requires a *combination of preparation, empathy, and effective communication skills.*

By following these strategies, you can *approach sensitive topics with confidence* and *create a more positive and productive work environment.*



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## Strategies for Dealing Effectively with Difficult Conversations



### Conclusion

Remember that *these conversations, while challenging*, are *essential* for *fostering understanding, resolving conflicts*, and *promoting collaboration* among team members.



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*Productive Conflict* is a Wiley DiSC Assessment Product. Deborah Cabral, is a Wiley DiSC Certified Partner, Trainer and Coach.

We will cover the concepts of *Productive Conflict* as part of this presentation.



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LEARN AND APPLY THE PRODUCTIVE CONFLICT MODEL TO MASTER DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS & RESOLVE CONFLICT



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## What is Conflict?

A difference of opinions involving **strong emotions**.

Can involve **productive** and **destructive behaviors**.

From **brief, explosive disputes** to **subtle, long-lasting issues**.



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## Productive Conflict Model

Goal: To handle conflict more productively

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### Part One

How do you react to conflict?

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### Part Two

How can you better recognize your destructive behaviors and potential triggers?

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### Part Three

How can you choose a more productive response?



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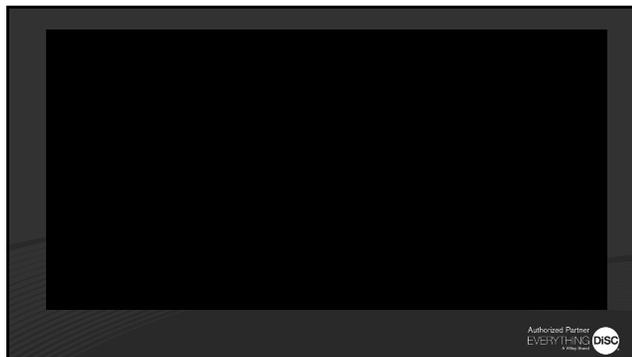
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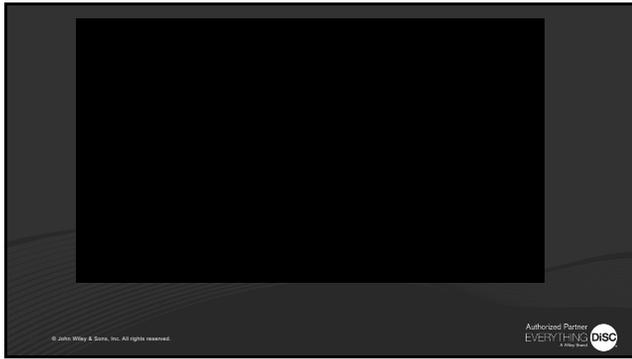
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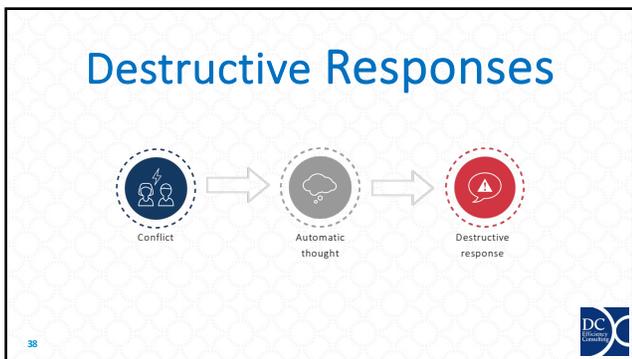
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- ### Common Destructive Responses Used During Difficult Conversations and Conflict
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Arguing</li><li>&gt; Gossiping/complaining about someone</li><li>&gt; Belittling</li><li>&gt; Becoming hypercritical</li><li>&gt; Overpowering</li><li>&gt; Caving in</li><li>&gt; Defensiveness</li><li>&gt; Passive Aggression</li><li>&gt; Dismissing other opinions</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Revenge/looking to even the score</li><li>&gt; Becoming overly dramatic</li><li>&gt; Exaggerating the problem</li><li>&gt; Sabotage/introducing obstacles</li><li>&gt; Sarcasm</li><li>&gt; Stonewalling/becoming non-receptive</li><li>&gt; Withdrawing</li><li>&gt; Exclusion/leaving people out</li><li>&gt; Finger-pointing/blaming</li></ul> |
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**Which destructive behaviors are the most difficult for you to deal with at work?**



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**Which destructive behaviors have you done?**



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### Common Productive Responses To Use to AVOID Difficult Conversations and Conflict

- Apologizing
- Determining the root cause of the problem
- Stepping back to reflect
- Taking ownership of your part in the situation
- Giving people time and space
- Acknowledging people's feelings
- Seeking active resolution
- Giving reassurance
- Finding compromises
- Communicating openly and honestly
- Separating emotions from facts
- Showing flexibility
- Revisiting unresolved issues
- Communicating respectfully
- Introspecting/being aware of your feelings
- Listening



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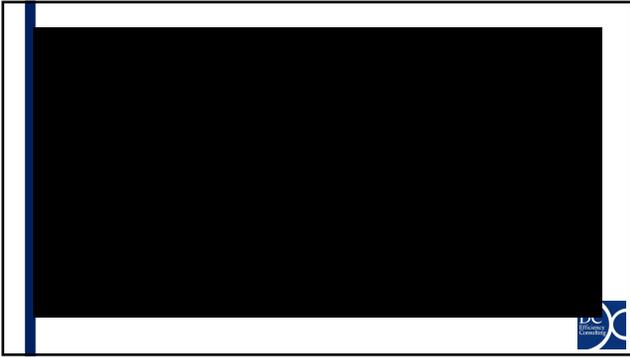
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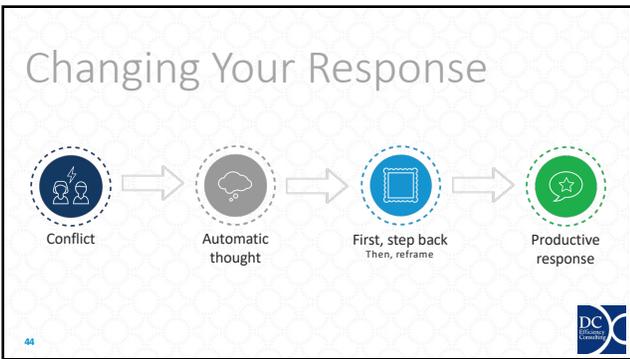
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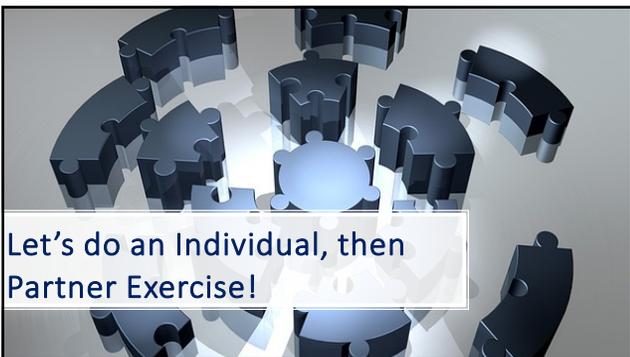
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**Consider a difficult conversation you had recently at work where you did not react as you would have liked. Please answer the questions below.**

What is your automatic thought?

How can you step back, then reframe to provide a productive response?

What productive response would you use?

**Share the answers with your partner and then practice changing your response using the Productive Conflict Model.**



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**What we covered Today!**

- ✓ Strategies for Dealing Effectively With Difficult Conversations
- ✓ Learn and Apply The Productive Conflict Model To Master Difficult Conversations and Resolve Conflict



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**Now What?**

Three Key Points



What 3 points are you committed to implementing **RIGHT AWAY?**



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WOOHOOO WE DID IT  
**THANK YOU EVERYONE!**



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**Deborah J. Cabral, PCC**  
Founder/President & CEO, ICF  
Certified Executive, Leaders...

Please connect with me!



**LinkedIn**



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