

During a Difficult Conversation – Quick Cheat Sheet

STEP 1.	<p>Invite the other person to begin by asking them to speak just one small “chunk” at a time so you can make sure you hear everything.</p>	<p><i>So what’s on your mind? Where would you like to start?</i></p> <p><i>Or – I’m nervous because I know you have a lot on your mind. Can we take it point by point so I can digest as we go?</i></p>
STEP 2.	<p>When it’s clear one chunk is moving into another chunk, interrupt and reflect.</p> <p>(Tip: For more heated conversations, reflect using the Speaker’s exact words, minimizing paraphrasing.)</p>	<p><i>Can I stop you for a second and just see if I’m getting this before you go into that next piece?</i></p> <p><i>I think I’m getting that you were upset when you heard me refer to that office as “mine” last week during the site visit.</i></p>
STEP 3.	<p>Invite the Speaker to clarify anything you missed. If they repeat something you already said, hear/reflect it again.</p> <p>This continues until the Speaker feels heard.</p> <p>(Tip: Breathe. Hear everything they say, repetitions and all, knowing you’ll have a chance to talk, too. For now, keep listening, reflecting, and breathing.)</p>	<p><i>Did I miss anything?</i></p> <p><i>Okay, got it. You were really upset. And this isn’t the first time I’ve done something like this. Is there more?</i></p> <p><i>Okay, yes, all that and also that you feel like your feelings don’t matter to me.</i></p> <p><i>Whew, AND that your sense is I’m taking over everything. Okay, did I get it this time?</i></p>
STEP 4.	<p>Once they feel complete/done/heard, offer to recap the main points to make sure you got the gist.</p>	<p><i>Let me just make sure I’ve gotten everything from your perspective. I know this is a little repetitive, but I’m feeling tense as I’m listening and I’m just wanting to make sure I’m clear... Are those all the salient points?</i></p>
STEP 5.	<p>When they feel satisfied that you understand them, ask if they have room to hear your perspective.</p>	<p><i>So I have some responses to a few of the things I heard. Do you have space to listen?</i></p>
STEP 6.	<p>Start with just the first part of your response. Pause and ask them to reflect that one piece back before moving to the next.</p> <p>(Tip: Imagine feeding them one bite, and giving them time to chew, rather than trying to force the whole message down at once.)</p>	<p><i>Do you mind telling me what you heard me say? ...Yes, that’s pretty much it. Also, I just want to be known for the fact that I want to be a team player.</i></p>
STEP 7.	<p>Ask them what got sparked by what you said, and prepare to listen again.</p>	<p><i>What did this bring up for you? ...Okay, so as you’re hearing me respond, you’re a little pissed. You care about collaboration, too, and want that named.</i></p>