

Principles for Civil Discourse: Conversation Planning Tool

Before the Conversation:

- Consider the time and place for dialog.
 - How much time feels ample without being burdensome?
 - Where will participants feel most at ease?
- Be clear on your purpose and personal intention(s) in the conversation.
 - Consider what you and the other person(s) may have at stake.
 - Differentiate between facts and opinions.
- Affirm relationship and common purpose as you invite and enter the dialog.
- Remind yourself and others that it's okay to hit the pause button and come back to the conversation at a later time.
- Aim to emerge with everyone's dignity intact.

During the Conversation:

- Be as fully present as possible.
 - Minimize distractions.
 - Listen to understand the point of view of others instead of planning your response.
- Be more curious than certain.
 - Respond to others with honest, open questions.
- Share your truth in ways that honors other perspectives
 - Pay attention to your own emotions, reactions and responses (and take a break if needed).
 - Recognize the impact of your word choices and body language.

Following the Conversation:

- Resolution may not happen, but make a plan for next steps.
 - Are follow up actions or further meetings required? If so, who is responsible for arranging them?
 - Who needs to be informed of agreements or outcomes?
- Remember that understanding each other better is a sign of success.
- Be kind, fair, and thoughtful if you tell the story of your conversation.

