

# UAB LEARNDEV WHISPER

*A Weekly Publication of Learning*

## Difficult Conversation Causes/Solutions

Difficult conversations—what makes them difficult? Generally, one where the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong.

While difficult conversations may never be easy, they can be less difficult if you prepare in advance:

- What are my goals for this meeting?
- What do I hope to gain by having this conversation?
- Will the person be better off when our interaction has ended?
- How will I feel?
- Do I appreciate the value of this relationship?
- What are my underlying motives for this interaction? (What do I want to get out of this conversation?)

### CALL TO ACTION:

1. Timing is everything—so choose the right time and place. Select a private location for the conversation or call.
2. If emotions heat up, take a time out and reschedule within the next 8 to 24 hours.
3. If you are anxious, rehearse the conversation with a friend or family members. Do something to calm your emotions before discussing: deep breathing,
4. go for a short go for a walk, meditate, etc. Think through the facts and the emotions. It may be that when you talk again, you will need to agree to disagree and move on.

### KEEP ON LEARNING\*

- ▶ Don't forget to register for the following upcoming UAB Learning & Development sessions:
  - [Navigating Difficult Conversations Part I: Identifying and Planning The Conversation](#)
  - [Navigating Difficult Conversations Part II: Holding the Conversation](#)
- ▶ Online PM Courses cites eight things that can lead to a difficult conversation. Check them out at the section, [What is a Difficult Conversation](#).
- ▶ Read [Difficult Conversations—6 Minute Summary](#) by Alex Chen, a summary of the book, Difficult Conversations, written by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Shelia Heen.



LEARNING  
& DEVELOPMENT

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

[\*\*go.uab.edu/learndevwhispers\*\*](https://go.uab.edu/learndevwhispers)