

# Difficult Conversation

## PLANNER

Use this before any conversation that feels hard. It takes 10 minutes. It changes the outcome.

Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### BEFORE YOU GO IN

#### 1. What is the real issue?

*Tip: Not the surface behaviour. The root cause. What is actually going on?*

#### 2. What outcome do you want from this conversation?

*Tip: Be specific. Vague intent produces vague results.*

#### 3. What does the other person likely think is happening?

*Tip: Their perspective is real to them. Understand it before you challenge it.*

#### 4. What emotion is this bringing up for you?

*Tip: Name it. Unacknowledged emotion leaks into conversations.*

#### 5. What is the one thing you want them to walk away knowing?

*Tip: One thing only. If you could land one message, what is it?*

### DURING THE CONVERSATION

#### Open with curiosity, not conclusions.

*Start with "I want to understand what is going on" not "You have been doing X and it needs to stop."*

#### Separate observation from interpretation.

*"You missed three deadlines" is observation. "You do not care" is interpretation. Stay in observation.*

#### Ask before you tell.

*Before sharing your view, hear theirs. You may learn something that changes everything.*

**Silence is not failure.**

*Pause after you ask something hard. Do not fill the silence.*

**AFTER THE CONVERSATION**

**1. What did you agree on?**

*Tip: Write it down within the hour.*

**2. What is each person doing next, and by when?**

*Tip: No clarity here means nothing changes.*

**3. When will you follow up?**

*Tip: Set a date before you leave the room.*

*A difficult conversation handled well builds more trust than a dozen easy ones.*