



GUIDESHEET FOR A RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION

For faculty who choose not to use a mediator, Brecher & Greenwald (2008)* have suggested guidelines for organizing a respectful conversation. The following outline constitutes a condensed version of their guidelines.

Open the Conversation

- *Thanks for taking the time to meet with me.*
- *I would like to have an open discussion about our situation and try to reach a solution that will meet both of our needs.*
- *I would like to lead the discussion.*
- *This is the issue statement we agreed to discuss and seek a resolution.*

Present Options

- *Here are some ways I think we can work out this situation to meet both of our needs.*
- *Let me explain to you my reasons for these suggestions.*
- *Have I been clear?*
- *Do you have any questions?*
- *I am interested in hearing ways you think we can work out this situation, including any of the ones I have suggested.*
- *Why are you suggesting that?*
- *I would like to list the options we each suggested and if I am missing any, please add them. After this, we can discuss them.*

Discuss Options Respectfully (Keep an open mind, don't interrupt or judge)

- *I would like to keep exploring ways we can improve our working relationship.*
- *Let's keep discussing this.*
- *What do you think?*
- *Do you see another way?*
- *If agreement cannot be reached during the conversation:*
 - *Do you or I need to think about what you suggested? Let's schedule another time to meet.*
 - *It seems to me that we cannot reach an understanding that will meet both of our needs at this time.*
 - *I would be interested in having another person try to facilitate a resolution, would you?*
 - *I think it is best to end this conversation now and we can each consider how we will handle this in another manner.*
- *If agreement is reached:*
 - *Let's write down our understanding and make sure we each have a copy.*
 - *My understanding is that we agree to proceed as follows. Is that correct?*

When we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.

— Wayne Dyer

Close the Conversation

- *When a collaborative solution is reached:*
 - *I am glad we could work this out and hopefully we can avoid some of these issues in the future.*
 - *I will certainly try to bring any future concerns to you and discuss them with you as we have today.*
 - *I really do think you know this area well and that I can learn a lot from you.*
 - *I am glad we were able to discuss this openly in a non-confrontational manner and I hope we can continue to discuss our concerns this way in the future.*
- *When a solution is not achieved:*
 - *I am glad we had the opportunity to discuss this today.*
 - *Even though we have not reached a resolution today, I have a better understanding of the reasons for your concerns.*
 - *Even though we have not reached a resolution today, I am glad we could discuss this openly and in such a calm and non-confrontational manner.*
 - *While we have not reached a resolution today, I want you to know that I respect your opinions and I hope you respect mine.*
 - *I hope we can continue to discuss our concerns this way in the future.*
 - *I appreciate that you were willing to take the time to talk with me about this.*

*Brecher & Greenwald (2008), Cornell University ILR School (Industrial and Labor Relations), Conflict Resolution Coaching.