

Reflecting on difficult conversations - TalkWise worksheet



One thing *not* in short supply in our working lives is the potentially difficult conversation. We are all faced with a multitude of occasions when we need to make our voices work in a particular way and where it can be difficult to ensure the outcome we would wish.

What makes these conversations difficult is not just the uncertainty of the outcome, but the more immediate uncertainty of how the other person is going to react to what you say. Unfortunately, we often fill this uncertainty with negative anticipations and self-limiting beliefs.

There is no single, archetypal difficult conversation. Any conversation can be difficult, and it becomes a difficult conversation as soon as it feels like that to any of the people involved. Which might be before, during or after the conversation itself, or indeed before, during *and* after.

The purpose of this worksheet is to support you to reflect on a difficult conversation that has already happened, in order to learn from that experience and identify what you might do in future to avoid some of the same difficulties. You can use it on its own, or in conjunction with the Preparing for difficult conversations and Tips for steering a difficult conversation TalkWise worksheets.

Thinking specifically about a difficult conversation you have recently had, reflect on and answer the following questions:

- What sort of conversation was this (Exploring, Positioning, Controlling)?
- What made the conversation difficult for you on this occasion?
- What were you trying to achieve? Which voices would have supported that?
- What were the primary voices used in the conversation? What was the impact of that on you, and on the other person(s)?
- Can you pinpoint any moments where a change in voice would have been useful?
- What would you have said, if you had noticed that at the time?
- If you say it aloud, how does it sound? Is there anything you might usefully change to make it land positively?
- How did your own sensitivities to certain voices impact your role in the conversation?
- How can you better manage those sensitivities in future?