

THE 7 A's -- STEPS OF A COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION

1) Anchor – initiating a daring dialogue is hard. This is especially the case if *you* feel the other person is wrong OR that you will lose something (i.e., person will see you as “weak,” “wrong,” or “giving in”). Therefore, it’s important to fill up your emotional tank (see separate handout) before the conversation so that you have energy to draw on for what can be a long and uncomfortable journey.

2) Appreciate – share with the person at least one thing you genuinely appreciate about them. It can be something they’ve said or done. Or it can be some special quality, talent, gift or other characteristic they have. *First let me say how much I appreciate*
_____.

3) Acknowledge – share with the person ways that you may have contributed to the problem or tension.

*I want to acknowledge that, at times, I can be (or I may have done)
_____. And this may have contributed to
the problem or tension we have.*

4) Acknowledge -- share with the person ways that something they may have said or done impacted you. Share the feeling of the experience NOT your evaluation of the experience or the person.

*I've felt _____ (i.e., hurt/disappointed/angry/etc.)
when you've said or done _____. This may not
have been your intent. But this was the impact.*

Pause for response

5) Ask – person initiating the conversation/dialogue asks probing questions as a way of approaching the other party from a place of understanding, curiosity and wonder.

I would like to better understand _____.

Will you, please, say more about _____.

6) Affirm - after the person shares, paraphrase or summarize what they shared by stating:

“What I think I hear you saying is ...”

Affirming doesn't mean you agree with the person, it just means you are listening with the intent to understand; you're engaging from a place of wonder.

7) Agree – both people agree on a new way to be in relationship with one another (i.e., “let's agree that we're going to talk or meet up once a month to better understand each other beyond the stereotypes that people put us in”) OR ask the person for their ideas and support on how to move the relationship forward.

Can we agree to _____? Or, I need _____ in order to be in a good place with our relationship. Is this something you can help me with?