

# Let's Chat! 5 Quick Tips for More Open Communication

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1. Work on UNDERSTANDING the topic/issue that is being discussed.
  - Practice PERSPECTIVE-TAKING or “put yourself in the other person’s shoes.”
  - Emotions can take hold of us during conversations and cloud our thinking. Try to focus on the FACTS of the conversation. What are the facts that are being discussed?
2. Consider CONTEXT. Every conversation happens within a certain context. Picture your conversation being a yolk inside of an egg. Outside of the conversation (yolk), there are a lot of things that can influence it (e.g., temperature, shaking the egg, a hole getting poked through the shell). For your conversation, contexts may include your relationship with that person, your location (work, home)... Try considering the context of the conversation – how might it change the way you approach a subject? How might you alter your communication to fit the context?
3. Consider WORDS, TONE, AND BODY LANGUAGE. The tone of our voices and our body language (e.g., our posture, how our arms are positioned) are just as important – or even more important than – the words we use. While communicating with people, ask yourself: What is my tone saying? What is my body saying?
4. LISTEN to what the other person is saying. Show them that you are listening by:
  - Paraphrasing, or summarizing, then repeating, what they said.
  - Ask them questions.
  - “Pause” your thoughts. Sometimes we can get lost in thinking about what to say next – stay present at the moment and choose to actively listen to your conversation partner.
5. ENCOURAGE SHARING DIFFERENT VIEWS. Your conversation partner may have a different idea or perspective on the topic, which may help you learn more about it. Examples of phrases that help encourage people to share their different views in a conversation:
  - In my opinion... [provides opinion]. I would love to hear your opinion.
  - I know there are different sides to every story. Can I hear yours, too?
  - I know this is a tough topic, and people have been reluctant to talk about it. I would like to hear from you/everyone.

## References:

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