



Practical Tips for Before, During and After Crucial Conversations

Here are a few simple practices for cultivating a sense of gracefulness in crucial conversations. You are invited to practice these on your own one at a time, then try putting them together in conversations despite any feelings of hesitation.

Solo practice can take the form of visualizing [*\(link on a guided visualization\)](#) before a conversation or reflecting after. Keep your mental rehearsals constructive by focusing on what you can learn and apply in the future. Instead of avoiding the conversation all together try to avoid slipping into ruminating on the wrongs you've encountered. Get these thoughts onto paper...there is something powerful about getting it down.

When you want to take your one on one moments into conversation start with people who trigger a lower emotional charge then move into conversation which may potential create more emotional reactivity.

In this transition remember this:

1) Fully Arrive

I often begin my workshops suggesting that we “all arrive” as we all carry certain emotional baggage throughout the day which impacts how we take-in information, accept situations and/or remain aware in the moment. So, arriving represents being present holistically. This is an example of a useful practice for taking yoga off the mat. So, consider asking yourself this question before starting a crucial conversation because often have a history with others that casts a light or shadow over the interaction before it even starts, affecting the way we show up and perform. Check-in before you check-out via planting the soles of your feet on the ground, scan your body to see if you are tense and see if you can send your breath to that location. Through your individual practice you probably became more aware of where your body holds stress...send breath there. Be mindful if you are clenching your jaw or piercing your lips. These small postural adjustments support you in your attempt to remain in your N.O.W moment awareness. It also communicates attentiveness and respect.

2) Breath Shadowing

There are several types of breathing patterns to explore. Breath shadowing is one you might want to try today:

- Simply pay attention to your breathing.
- As you breathe in, feel the effects of inhaling as if gathering inspiration from your surroundings.
- As you breathe out, feel grounded in this alert-yet-relaxed posture, giving attention to the stability of your feet and core body, and if seated, your connection with the chair. Imagine that while the currents of the conversations may shift, you can stay grounded and stable.

Now apply this into your conversations by noticing how in certain conversations your energy is dragging because you have already heard what is being said many times before. You are invited to:

- Gently shift into your alert-yet-relaxed posture and quietly breathe in more deeply
- Focus on your intention to be curious about the possibilities that are unfolding.
- Notice your urge to rush them, interrupt with a question or zone out. Replace that with full awareness of what they are sharing and you might be surprised how this can move the conversation into a new direction without you having to ask.

Then there are the times when your energy levels can rise during a conversation. In these moments you might notice you are breathing too fast or holding your breath. In this case, you may quietly begin to breathe out more slowly or deeply for a few rounds of breath. To accentuate this micro-shift, remind yourself to “feel your feet” by wiggling your toes. This may help you to get out of your head and back into your body, while feeling rooted. You may notice you are able to respond to the flow of the conversation more effectively.

Learning to detect and modify your own energetic level during conversation not only benefits you, but may subtly influence the person you are talking with. We often hear about “emotion-regulation in children and adolescents, however, as adults it remains an essential skill we need to practice. As you model the ability to self-regulate, you implicitly invite the other person to try the same. This process of being aware and adjusting can be especially strong if others already see you as a leader and are taking their cues from you.

3) Tapping - Did you try the above and it did not work the first few times? Keep at it, but after the conversation try “tapping” on any unwanted emotional residual from a conversation. Unsure of the physiological and psychological benefits of “tapping” keep your eye on the “Energy Psychology” section under Resources of this website as I will be providing various information regarding this self-care option.

Please keep me posted on how trying these strategies went for you. We all learn through listening to others experiences. Remember Self-Care is the Best Care and from that we can best help support others, through effective conversations, impactful connections and growing together.

In gratitude,

Angelique,

Your Emotional Health Specialist