

Free sample workbook

Difficult Conversations at Work

Prepare your words. Make a clear request.

Free sample: two complete guides, day one, and planner. The full product includes 12 guides and seven days.

12 complete workplace guides: preparation, dialogue, three scripts, mistakes, and an exercise

A seven-day practice program, about 10-15 minutes a day

English · Հայերեն · Русский

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How to use this workbook

Start with a conversation you are actually facing. Answer the guide's preparation questions and adapt a script to your role. Gentle opens discussion; direct makes a specific request; firm states a boundary without a threat. These are choices, not a ladder. Rehearse aloud, listen, and agree on a next step. The seven-day program takes about 10-15 minutes a day; repeat or pause any day. Examples use fictional workplaces. This is self-guided education, not individual coaching, legal advice, or a promise of a raise or a resolved conflict. For harassment, discrimination, threats, or unsafe work, consider your workplace reporting process and qualified support rather than relying on a script alone.

Three ways to say it

Gentle / Direct / Firm

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My conversation planner

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Day 1 · try the program

My conversation planner

Free sample: two complete guides, day one, and planner. The full product includes 12 guides and seven days.

Ask for a raise

Situation

You now own monthly reporting and have reduced correction work, but your pay has not changed. Your manager says budgets are tight.

Your goal

Discuss compensation with evidence and leave with decision criteria and a review date.

Prepare before you speak

1. Which two contributions can you describe with dates and results, without overstating your role?
2. What amount or range are you requesting, and what credible information supports it?
3. Who decides, when is the budget reviewed, and what will you ask if the answer is no?

Example conversation

You: Could we book 20 minutes to discuss my compensation and the reporting work I added in April?

Manager: We probably cannot increase salaries this quarter.

You: I understand the timing. I now own the report, and corrections fell from six to two per cycle. I would like to discuss a 7% adjustment.

Manager: I need approval from finance.

You: What evidence would help? Can we revisit this on November 20?

Manager: Send the responsibilities and results by Friday; I will check the process.

Ask for a raise

Three ways to say it

Gentle

Could we review how my compensation fits the responsibilities I have taken on? I can bring a short summary.

Direct

Based on [contribution] and [expanded responsibility], I am requesting [amount or range]. What is the approval process?

Firm

If an adjustment is not possible now, I need clear criteria and a review date. Can we agree on those?

Common mistakes

- Using personal expenses or an unverified colleague's salary as the only argument.
- Filling the silence with a smaller request before the manager answers.

Practice exercise

Write a 45-second request with two facts, one pay request, and one process question. Rehearse without apologizing for raising the topic.

My notes

Decline extra work

Situation

A colleague asks you to finish a presentation by Thursday. Your client delivery already fills your available time.

Your goal

Make capacity visible and agree on a tradeoff instead of accepting work you cannot finish.

Prepare before you speak

1. What is already due, and how many hours would the new task need?
2. Can you decline, or does your manager need to choose the priority?
3. What limited help can you offer without a hidden second commitment?

Example conversation

Colleague: Can you finish the slides for Thursday?

You: I have two hours free; a full deck needs six. I am committed to the client delivery on Friday.

Colleague: It is urgent. Everyone is busy.

You: I can review an outline for 20 minutes today. To take the deck, I need our manager to move the client deadline.

Colleague: Let us ask which comes first.

You: Until that decision, I will continue the client work.

Decline extra work

Three ways to say it

Gentle

I would like to help. Could we look at what would need to move to make room?

Direct

I cannot take the full task by [date] alongside [commitment]. I can offer [limited help].

Firm

I am not committing to both deadlines. If this becomes the priority, I need confirmation of which task moves.

Common mistakes

- Saying 'I will try' when both deadlines are already impossible.
- Offering more help than you can sustain to soften the refusal.

Practice exercise

List your commitments. Write two sentences with a capacity limit and one realistic option. Check that the option does not indirectly promise the whole task.

My notes

Choose one conversation

Take 10 minutes to select a manageable workplace conversation and read its guide. Separate facts from interpretations: 'the file arrived Wednesday' is a fact; 'they do not respect me' is an interpretation. Name one request you can make. For safety or harassment concerns, choose an appropriate support route instead of practicing confrontation alone.

Reflect

What is within your control, and what depends on the other person?

My notes

My conversation planner

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Situation: observable facts and work impact

Goal: specific request or decision

Preparation: evidence, constraints, unknowns

Opening: the words I will use

My conversation planner

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Listening: questions and likely concerns

Alternative and boundary: what I can offer or do

Agreement and follow-up: action, owner, date
