



## How to Have a Successful Conversation

When we share something important with another person, rarely do we stop to think about how we want to share it — let alone consider what we actually want from the other person as our listener. Usually we start talking, they start fixing, and suddenly everyone is frustrated and wondering how this went off the rails so quickly.

We typically focus only on **what** we want to say. Whether it's:

- a promotion at work
- an idea you've been developing
- a misunderstanding
- a new realization about yourself
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...we focus on getting the information out, and sometimes worry about how the other person will receive it. With that approach, we often end up feeling dismissed, minimized, talked over, or like the attention somehow shifted back to them instead of feeling genuinely heard.

Now imagine setting up your share **knowing your ask**.

Do you want:

- someone to bounce ideas around with?
- collaboration on problem-solving?
- simply to be heard and held while you share vulnerably?
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Clarity at the beginning changes the entire conversation.

## First Check in with yourself

Before you speak, take a brief pause and ask:

- Am I regulated enough to talk about this?
- Do I want connection or do I want to be “right”?
- What am I hoping will happen by sharing this?

A good indicator you are being genuinely vulnerable?

You will feel **slightly uncomfortable** saying it.

If what you’re sharing feels easy, rehearsed, and very safe, you may still be guarding. See if there is a layer deeper — without overwhelming yourself or the other person.

This is not about trauma-dumping.

It is about sharing what is real for you, in the present moment, with care for your own nervous system and the other person’s.

## As the Speaker (the sharer)

Follow the prompts below by considering what you want:

### 1. Feedback / collaboration

“I have something I would like to share with you, and I’d love your input. Is now a good time?”

### 2. Bounce ideas around

“I have something I’d like to share, but I’m still working it through. It would be amazing if we could just throw ideas around together. Is now a good time?”

### 3. Validation / being heard

“I have something I’d like to share. I’m not looking for advice or feedback — I would really appreciate you just listening and holding space. Is now a good time?”

Notice the theme: **ask for consent and clarity first**.

This prevents the other person from guessing the job description.

You are also allowed to say:

- “Please don’t try to fix this.”
- “I just need to say this out loud.”
- “I’m sharing feelings, not asking for solutions right now.”

That’s not bossy — that’s emotionally responsible communication.

## As the listener

Your job is to honour the “ask.”

Not the ask you want it to be. The actual one.

### If the speaker asked for feedback / collaboration, you might say:

- “I hear you.”
- “Have you thought of...”
- “In the past you’ve said... I’m curious if that connects?”
- “What are you hoping for?”
- “Is there anything you’re afraid might happen?”
- “Does this feel familiar?”
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### If the speaker asked to bounce ideas:

- “I hear you.”
- Reflect back key pieces: “What I’m hearing is...”
- Offer ideas without attachment to them being used
- Stay curious instead of trying to be the hero

This is not about you solving their problem —

it’s about helping them think more **widely and creatively**.

### If the speaker asked for validation:

- “I hear you.”
- “Say more.”
- “That makes sense to me.”
- “I can see how you’d feel that way.”
- “I’m here for you.”
- “I can relate.”
- “Thank you for trusting me with that.”
- “I imagine you might be feeling...”
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Important reminder:

Validation is **not** agreeing with everything they say.

It is acknowledging their internal experience as real and understandable.

## Nervous system awareness during conversation

Pay attention to signals like:

- shutting down or going blank
- getting louder, faster, sharper
- needing to withdraw
- feeling panicky, hot, or flooded
- urge to walk away mid-sentence

If this happens, it's okay to say:

"I'm getting a bit overwhelmed. I care about this conversation and I want to continue it, but I need a short break to regulate."

Regulation first. Then communication.

## When things go sideways (because sometimes they will)

Successful communication is not "never rupture."

It is:

- noticing rupture
- owning your part
- and returning for repair

Examples of repair:

- "I got defensive there — I'm sorry."
- "Can we try that again?"
- "I care about you and this matters to me."
- "I wasn't really listening — I'd like to now."

Practice with these scripts until they become comfortable

They foster:

- authenticity
- vulnerability
- validation
- emotional ownership
- staying present in the mess
- deeper connection rather than performance
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This is not about perfect communication — it's about **real** communication.