

Tips to Be More Open and Engaging

1. Listen for the values behind their words – what do they have passion and emotion around?
2. Appear and sound open and relaxed.
3. Keep consistent eye contact.
4. Nod.
5. Work to eliminate disruptive habits (fidgeting, looking at your watch or computer or phone, put down your phone).
6. Work on not giving your impatient “I’m busy” look.
7. Ask questions
8. Summarize what you are hearing.
9. Restate what you’ve heard to confirm understanding.

Tips for Tense Conversations

- Let them talk
- Keep your cool
- Ask clarifying open-ended questions
 - Why is this particularly bothersome to you?
 - What could I do to help?
- Summarize what you are hearing to show you have understood their perspective
- Recognize when you are feeling defensive and let it go.
- Don't reject their rigid position. Ask why – what's behind the position.
- Separate the people from the problem.
- When they attack you, rephrase it as an attack on a problem.
- Take a deep breath.
- Calm yourself down before responding.
- Refrain from justifying yourself or your behavior.
- If all else fails, defuse the situation by asking for a break and schedule some time at a later date.

Tips for Working with People You Don't Like

- Push yourself to interact with a wide variety of styles.
- Get to know them – first step. (rarely a person who is fully unlikeable)
- Don't let your previous feelings about them get in the way of building a fresh relationship with them. – Draw a line in the sand.
- Start to see them as someone you are just getting to know.
- Put your judgements on hold, open up your thinking, and take some time to understand who this individual is.
- Show that you care by dedicating some time to them.

Tips When You Are Viewed As “All Business”

- Manage the first three minutes. (set the tone, work on being open and approachable, take in information, initiate rapport, listening, sharing, understanding, comforting).
- Personalize – know three things about each of your co-workers.
- Adjust your style.
- Work doubly-hard at observing others.

SITUATION

Tips When You Are Quiet, Reserved, Overly Private, or Have Trouble Connecting

- Ask the first question.
- Have consistent eye contact.
- Let go of the outcome.
- Set a goal of meeting new people at every event you go to; find out what you have in common with them.
- Talk to strangers, for low-risk practice.