

Talking It Out in Ten

10 Questions to Help You Talk Out What Really Matters
by Dr. Tammy Lenski

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR USING THIS WORKSHEET

If your conversation is with your partner or spouse, consider some candlelight and soft music to set a loving mood in which to talk.

If your conversation is with a co-worker, try getting out of the office for your talk. Take a walk or go have a cup of coffee somewhere private.

For more resources, tips and support for talking things out in the work and home relationships that really matter, visit Tammy Lenski at Lenski.com or call 603.565.2279

How to Use The Worksheet

The following worksheet is intended to help you keep a difficult conversation focused, constructive and effective.

By mapping out your most important thinking in advance, you'll be better able to keep your balance during the conversation and help prevent unproductive sidetracks.

You can use this worksheet on your own to sort out your thinking before talking out a problem with your loved one or co-worker. Or give a blank copy of this worksheet to the other person so that you can both use it to prepare for an important conversation at home or work.

The worksheet takes about 30 minutes to complete. Be sure to write out your answers. The act of writing will help you develop and clarify your thinking far more than if you try to mentally respond. And, by writing them out, you'll have a record of your best thinking to bring with you into the conversation.

Try to limit your responses to the space provided. Keeping your thoughts simple will help you during your talk.

FOR SOLO USE

Find a quiet spot where you won't be disturbed for about an hour. Even if you normally think well with loud music playing, consider silence or soft background instrumental music to best support your thinking.

FOR JOINT USE

Give a blank copy of the worksheet and this instruction page to the other person and ask them to complete it prior to your conversation together. Be sure not to order, urge or strong-arm them into using it. Simply make your request by letting them know you'll be using it to guide your thinking and hope they'll find it helpful too.

DURING THE CONVERSATION

Keep your worksheet handy for reference, if you wish. If you've both filled it out, consider taking about 10 minutes to each share your responses to the questions as a way to begin.

If we don't change the direction we are going, we are likely to end up where we are heading.
- Chinese proverb

1. What's at the heart of the matter for you?

2. What do you most need them to understand?

The only difference between stumbling blocks and stepping stones is the way in which we use them.
- Adriana Doyle

We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are.
- Anais Nin

3. What do you most need to understand from them?

Transformation comes more from pursuing profound questions than seeking practical answers.
- Peter Block

4. What's been puzzling you and what would you like to ask about it?

Don't let yesterday use up too much of today.

- Cherokee proverb

5. What, in your heart, do you hope for the relationship between you?

6. What can you do that might make that possible?

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

- Albert Einstein

*When patterns
are broken, new
worlds emerge.*
- Tuli Kupferberg

7. What have you learned about yourself as a result of this matter?

*Don't look where you
fall, but where you
slipped.*
- African proverb

8. What would you have done differently if you could relive recent events?

*Whenever you see
darkness, there is
extraordinary op-
portunity for the
light to burn
brighter.
- Bono*

9. What would minimize the emotional debris left behind for both of you?

10. What will help you bring your better self to the conversation?

*To truly listen is to risk
being changed forever.
- Sakej Henderson*

Dr. Tammy Lenski is a dialogue jump-starter. An expert at helping people talk out their differences and build stronger work and home relationships in the process, Tammy has helped individuals, work teams and entire organizations make their peace with conflict for almost two decades.



Known for approaching sticky situations with an educator's heart, professional mediator's skill, and a creative's instinct, she taps her background as an organizational leader, college professor, executive coach and mediator to serve clients who don't just want to settle conflict but use it to transform their organization or themselves.

Phone: 603.565.2279 (U.S.)

Email: Tammy@Lenski.com

Skype: tammylenski

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