

10 Lines to Help when in Conflict

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Conversations can take nasty turns of misunderstanding if not handled with finesse. Too easily we can feel defensive and bam! we're steamed up to make the other person *wrong* and ourselves *right*. It may help if we have some lines practised for that next time. Take a breath, think positively, imagine the other has no harmful intention and follow Stephen Covey's fine advice to *seek first to understand*. Practise some new responses with discretion to the appropriateness of the situation. When the going gets tough here are some suggested *turn around* lines.

1. *I really want to understand what you are telling me. Let me clarify what I think you are saying.* (Then tell your companion what you heard.)
2. *Please help me understand where you are coming from. Please tell it to me in a different way.*
3. *I know you as one of the calmest and kindest (insert appropriate adjective) people I know. This doesn't sound like you. Is there something else going on for you?*
4. *What you are saying is very important. I would like to sit down to discuss this further. (or I would like to book a time when we can sit down and really focus on the issue.)* **Note:** it is actually calming to sit.
5. *You speak with a lot of passion. This is obviously important to you. Please tell me what brought you to this conclusion.*
6. *I think your intention is honourable. Are you interested in why I feel concerned?* **Note:** if you hear "no" the conversation is probably over.
7. *I'd like us to back up. I think we misunderstand each other. Please tell me again what it is you want. Then I will try to be clearer in telling you what I want.*
8. *I know we both want the best in this situation. Perhaps we need to take a break to clear the air and come back in an hour.*
9. *Our relationship is too important for me to continue arguing like this. What is it that I can say or do to help us come to an agreeable conclusion?*
10. *Perhaps its time we agreed to disagree.*

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