

Courageous Conversations Worksheet

This handout is designed to help you reflect and practice the 7 Principles of Courageous Conversations. Use it to prepare for real-world situations and carry these ideas into your week.

Principle	Starter Phrases	Reflection
1.Name the Conversation	• I'd like to talk about... • This conversation is about...	
2.State your good intentions	• I'm raising this because I care about... • My goal here is to support...	
3.Check in & get permission	• Is now a good time? • Can we set aside a moment to talk?	
4.Share the thing	• I've noticed that... • What I need to share is...	
5.What matters most	• This is important because... • What matters most here is...	
6.Commit & agree	• Let's agree that... • Here's what we'll commit to...	
7.Check for understanding	• What's your takeaway from this? • Can you reflect back what you heard?	

Reflection: How might you use these principles in a conversation this week?

Real-World Language for Everyday Situations

Scenario	Better Phrases
Asking for time off (without oversharing)	• I have a personal appointment and will be out from 2–3. I've ensured coverage during that time. • I'll be stepping away briefly for something personal tomorrow. Is there anything time-sensitive you need from me beforehand?
Needing mental health time	• I'm noticing I'm running on empty—would it be okay if I took an hour to recharge so I can come back focused? • I'm going to use a personal hour this afternoon to regroup. I'll make sure anything urgent is covered.
Advocating for yourself in a team/meeting	• I'd like to offer another perspective, if I may. • Something's coming up for me as I hear this—can I share it?
Setting a boundary/ pushing back	• I want to be thoughtful about my current bandwidth—can we look at the priorities together? • I'm at capacity right now, so I'll need to decline or defer that request. • Can I finish my thought before we move on? I want to make sure I'm clear.

Monday Morning - Quick Strategies

1. Script a 2-sentence opener for a conversation you've been avoiding.
2. Write down your 'why' before you speak up.
3. Choose one person this week to practice a courageous conversation with.
4. Think about how and when you will use the backpack bricks language to help build awareness of the invisible worries, concerns, problems that are part of the people all around you every day.

Quotes to Remember

“When people believe they can speak up at work, organizations learn faster and perform better.” – Amy Edmondson

“The way we respond to each other can make the difference between building trust or breaking it.” – Shelly Gable

“Dream big, start small. But most of all, start.” – Simon Sinek

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” – Plato (attributed)