

conversation agreements

The secret to better conversation across differences is really pretty simple, we have six conversation agreements that create the environment needed for a different kind of conversation.

Be curious and listen to understand.

Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. You might enjoy exploring how others' experiences have shaped their values and perspectives.

Show respect and suspend judgment.

People tend to judge one another. Setting judgment aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated. Try to truly listen, without interruption or crosstalk.

Note any common ground as well as any differences.

Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.

Be authentic and welcome that from others.

Share what's important to you. Speak from your experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.

Be purposeful and to the point.

Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the question you are answering. Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.

Own and guide the conversation.

Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the conversation as a whole. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed. Use an agreed upon signal like the "time out" sign if you feel the agreements are not being honored.