



# PREPARING FOR A MASTERFUL CONVERSATION

# Masterful Conversations Preparation Sheet

<b>FIRST STORY:</b> <b>My side of the situation</b>	<b>SECOND STORY:</b> <b>Their side of the situation</b>
<p><b>1. My Banner Headlines with key supporting data</b></p> <p><i>Our inner voice narrates the story of our lives in highly biased and partisan ways. This self-talk consistently supports our positive view of ourselves and confirms our perspective on situations. Use this box to capture your point of view and key evidence you have that affirms your story. Note main headlines.</i></p>	<p><b>2. Their Banner Headlines</b></p> <p><i>In an effort to cultivate curiosity and become open to a more nuanced view of the world, the next step asks you to now crossover and imagine the world from the absent party's point of view or perspective. If they were trying to capture the loud story we can anticipate might be in their head, what might <u>their</u> big headlines be? How do you imagine they see things?</i></p>
<p><b>3. Sorting for Disconfirming Data in My Story</b></p> <p><i>All of us have a tendency to discount data that challenges our strongly held beliefs about a person, a situation, or the world. Of course, situations are rarely as black-and-white as we see them. Select one or two of the conclusions you expressed in Box 1 and jot down a few disconfirming data points you have for each. This allows you to become more aware of the complexity of the situation.</i></p>	<p><b>4. Sorting for Confirming Data in Their Story</b></p> <p><i>Again, trying to negotiate yourself to a point of view that has more "grey" in it, reexamine the conclusions you placed in Box 2 as the driving elements of the absent party's perspective. Now capture a few confirming data points or pieces of evidence they could be using to arrive at their perspective, albeit different from yours. Data has to be externally verifiable, such as facts, behavior, actions, etc. If you don't know their data, jot down a question you could ask to learn more about their thinking.</i></p>

# Masterful Conversations Preparation Sheet

FIRST STORY: My side of the situation	SECOND STORY: Their side of the situation
<b>5. Honest Inventory of My Motivations</b>  <i>Each of us brings complex intentions to the significant actions we take in the world. See if you can reflect on your own motivations at play in this situation—both the noble and positive things you are trying to do as well as those motivations that might be underneath everyday awareness (in the “shadow”).</i>	<b>6. Offering them the Benefit of the Doubt</b>  <i>Beginning with the same premise that we all have complex motivations, we can notice that when we are upset with someone we tend to ascribe negative intention to what they are doing. They are trying to “win,” “embarrass me,” “manipulate me,” etc. If we were going to offer them the benefit of the doubt, and assume their actions are not arbitrary, what might be reasonably driving their choices and the actions they are taking?</i>
<b>7. Tracking my Action Footprint with the Problem</b>  <i>As neutrally stated as possible, what are the specific actions you have taken that have contributed to escalating this difficulty?</i>          <i>As neutrally stated as possible, what are the specific actions you have taken that have been positive resources or behaviors for this situation?</i>	<b>8. Tracking their Action Footprint with the Problem</b>  <i>As neutrally stated as possible, what are the specific actions the other party has taken that have contributed to escalating this difficulty?</i>          <i>As neutrally stated as possible, what are the specific actions the other person has taken that have been positive resources or behaviors for this situation?</i>



# Masterful Conversations Preparation Sheet

<b>FIRST STORY:</b> <b>My side of the situation</b>	<b>SECOND STORY:</b> <b>Their side of the situation</b>
<p><b>9. Diagnosing the Feelings Landscape</b></p> <p><i>Name the top five feelings you have about this issue and the other person. Allow for contradictory feelings and examine closely for hidden, possibly vulnerable emotions underneath your everyday awareness.</i></p>	<p><b>10. Imagining their Interior Reactions</b></p> <p><i>If you were allowing yourself to imagine how this other person might feel given everything that has happened between you, what would you guess their loudest feelings are? First reread Box 2. Now try to name at least three you could easily foresee being at play. Circle all those feelings that also appear in Box 9 to note parallel emotional reactions where they exist.</i></p>
<p><b>11. Trying Not to Take Things Personally</b></p> <p><i>Each of us has our own terrain of vulnerability in terms of how we see ourselves. There are certain cherished aspects of our self-image that we would vehemently defend. When someone shares information that does not match our self-perception, it causes internal confusion and discomfort. Other times when someone highlights an arena in which we perceive we have shortcomings we get defensive. What are 2–3 such hot buttons that might be at play for you in this conversation?</i></p>	<p><b>12. Trying Not to Attack or Insult Them</b></p> <p><i>All of us become immediately less open and less skillful when we are being attacked, so it's useful to stay away from the terrain of personal criticism in a conversation. At the same time, it's important to talk through hard issues. If you think some ahead of time about what sensitivities the other party might be bringing to the table you are less likely to offend them and throw everyone off balance. What are 2–3 such hot buttons that might be at play for them in this conversation?</i></p>