



Module 5
BONUS CONTENT
TIPS & FAQs



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OUTCOMES & OVERVIEW

This bonus module covers some of the most frequently asked questions about hard conversations, and practical answers for how we can navigate the obstacles and challenges to having them. It also offers a printable packet of all the tips included in the course, so that you'll have handy reminders to guide you through difficult moments.

OUTCOMES

By the time you are finished with this module, you'll have compiled a number of skills and tools for walking into your own hard conversations and handling them with grace and empowerment, no matter what may appear to stand in your way. You'll have the assurance that you are not alone, and that continually practicing the nine steps of having a hard conversation will reap rewards in every area of your life.



HARD CONVERSATION **TIPS**

Below are our powerful tips for those “can we talk?” moments!
For easy reference, print them all out—or just your faves!



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Practice before the conversation.

Stand in front of a mirror and imagine that you are talking to the person you need to have a hard conversation with. Without censoring yourself, say what you really wish you could say to them. For example, you might want to tell your roommate, “I wish you would ask me before inviting other people over to our apartment on a weeknight.” Notice how that feels. Now, do it again, but this time, focus on speaking from your heart, which means taking responsibility for your feelings, and being transparent without blaming the other person. For example, “I get up early in the mornings during the week, so good sleep is super important to me. I’d love to talk about how we can both get our needs met while we’re living together.” Notice the difference in how that feels.

Get out any pent-up anger before the conversation.


Dissipate any tension that might be there by working out, screaming into a pillow, venting to a trusted friend, or writing your resentments down on a piece of paper and then tearing it up.

Get real about your relationship with the other person.

Before you talk to them, write down any past shit you have with them that might make it hard for you to really hear them out. Commit to staying open to this person, no matter what.

Get clear about your agendas.

Write down any agendas you might have about the conversation (“I want her to be nicer to me and to admit it when she’s wrong.” “I want him to see things my way.”) Set your intent to release those agendas and commit to staying present.



Before the conversation, set some ground rules that will help you both feel safe.

Most people aren't going to walk into a conversation thinking about their safety, so be sure you bring it up first. For example, "It's important to me that we both feel we can say what we need to, and know that it's going to be heard and respected." Let them know that you aren't coming into this conversation—hard as it is—with guns blazing.



Take a power pause and check in with your body.

Sometimes, hard conversations can feel really heated or scary. In the middle of a tense moment, place your hand over your heart and admit to the other person how you feel. For example, "Is it OK if we slow down? I'm feeling kind of scattered." Check in with them and ask them how they feel. Notice how this eases any tension that might be present.



Slow down.

Approach the conversation with a sense of calm, as well as the assurance that both of you feel safe. When it feels like you are rushing or that you are trying too hard to make your point, breathe deeply and slow down.



Stay in the conversation, even when it's hard.

Think about at least one thing that makes you feel connected to this other person. For example, maybe you know that their family situation is tough, and you can relate to that. Or perhaps they have the same taste in music (yes, sometimes it can be as simple as that!). Be sure to carry that sense of connection into your conversation. Remember that connection, especially in moments when feelings are running hot and high.



Listen actively.

This means reflecting back to the other person what you heard, as well as asking them whether that's accurate or not. Ask them questions about what they heard you say, and how they are feeling.



Create an affirmation for yourself.

Remember, the more you practice the hard conversations, the easier they become. You can create a positive affirmation to help calm and center you every time you dive into a hard conversation. Make it simple but clear (e.g., "I'm brave, honest, and clear—and I've got this!"). You can also carry a grounding object, like a pretty rock, that reminds you of this affirmation.



Remember to breathe.

Shallow breathing can lead to anxiety and can take us out of our experience. Deep breathing, on the other hand, can lead us into a relaxed, aware state. Try gently and slowly breathing in through your nose, mouth closed, for six counts. Then, exhale for six seconds through your mouth, letting your breath leave your body slowly and gently.



Be compassionate with yourself.

Hard conversations are all about trial and error. Learn to trust yourself. Give yourself props for being courageous enough to go there!



Meet other people where they are.

In the words of Wf1 Truth teller Gabby Bernstein, “The most loving thing we can do for someone is to accept them. The most unloving thing we can do is try to change them. When you try to change someone, you’re effectively saying that you know what is best for them. Your unsolicited ‘help’ is a way of controlling and judging them. People may not show up the way you want them to, but when you accept them where they are, you can let go, forgive, and release.”

Some of your hard conversations will go very easily, and others will be really hard. But even if the other person ends up attacking you or walking away, accept the reality of the situation. Be proud of yourself for “adulting” and just know that no matter what happens, the way other people choose to react is not about you, so long as you are doing your part to make it a win-win conversation.



HARD CONVERSATION **FAQs**

Having hard conversations can bring up a lot of emotion, including anxiety.
Don't let that be an excuse to avoid them!

We created these FAQs to help you through your burning questions
and worst-case scenarios.



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FAQs

IT'S JUST NOT WORTH IT

The past is in the past. Why not let bygones be bygones?

Sometimes that is the way it should be. But if you still have some resentment and unresolved feelings, you might want to do a simple check-in with yourself. Are you wanting to put the past in the past because it would be easier than trying to get resolution or closure? Or do you have unfinished business that could benefit from a hard conversation?

YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW THEY WILL REACT

What's the point? I just know they're going to take it the wrong way and get offended!

You're right; they might. The point is, you can't control other people's reactions. Remember, the only person you have control over is yourself. You're not having the hard conversation in order to receive a specific reaction from the other person—which, by the way, is not something you can ever predict. You're doing it for yourself—to get resolution, clarity, and healing, while offering an opportunity for the other person to get the same.

IT DIDN'T GO WELL LAST TIME

The last time I had a hard conversation with someone, it really did a number on our relationship. Now they won't talk to me!

Here's the thing about hard conversations: You can have them, but you can't control where they will end up. And even when it looks hopeless on the surface, a hard conversation often takes us to a place where we didn't even realize we needed to go. Although you can't ensure what your conversation will look like or how it will end, with practice, you will improve each of the nine steps covered in the toolkit.

FAQs

YOU ARE TOO EMOTIONAL TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION

How do I have a hard conversation with an open heart when I feel so wronged and angry?

This is a great time to come back to yourself and practice some relaxation techniques. Breathe deeply; ground yourself and release any tension you are feeling. Become aware of your emotions—whether you are pissed or sad, don't try to change what you're feeling. Just be with it. You might not be getting what you want from the other person, but at the very least, you can give yourself some compassion. Taking a moment to offer yourself loving attention will also help you to feel more present and capable of having the conversation. And don't be afraid to slow down when you're in the middle of the conversation!

YOU JUST CAN'T SEEM TO SAY EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY

I'm frustrated, because I always walk away feeling like I didn't make the points I wanted to.

If you feel this way, spend some extra time prepping during the “Before the Conversation” phase (Module 2) of the hard conversation. But keep in mind, the hard conversation is not about saying everything you've ever felt about this other person and their crappy attitude, or bringing up a laundry list about everything they've ever done to annoy you. Having a hard conversation is about connection, awareness, and understanding. You might even discover that the conversation you needed to have isn't the one you were expecting. Leave room for breakthroughs and surprises.

YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO HEAR THEIR PERSPECTIVE

What if I just know I'm in the right and they're in the wrong?

This may absolutely be the case. But just remember, everyone comes from their own perspective, and every story has at least two sides. Regardless of how you feel about them and the decisions they have made, getting resolution isn't about making them wrong. The goal is to be able to hear where they are coming from, and to understand that we actually have more in common than we think—although we might have different ideas of how to go about doing the same thing.

FAQs

YOU'RE AFRAID OF TELLING THEM THE TRUTH

If I tell them all the details of how I really feel, they'll hate me.

Here's the great thing: Truth-telling is not about giving someone every single piece of information about how you feel and what's going on for you. It's about using your discernment about what you want to say vs. what you don't. Consider where the other person is, have respect for them, and allow yourself to say what is truly important in moving the conversation forward. Think about what you want to share with them. Are you willing to accept the consequences? If so, have at it.

THE OTHER PERSON DOESN'T LISTEN AND TRIES TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

They always dominate the conversation. How am I supposed to talk to someone like that?

We've all had those conversations where we went in thinking we were going to talk about a specific issue, but the other person made it about something else altogether. Remember, the value of doing the "Before the Conversation" (Module 2) work is all about preparing yourself for the hard conversation: staying on topic, getting clear within yourself, and knowing you can't control the other person. The process of self-inquiry, intention-setting, and inviting the other person to talk to you is necessary and will help you stay present in your conversation. If it feels like you are getting off topic, just name what is happening: "It seems like we're getting off topic. We agreed to talk about [fill in the blank]. Can we put this other thing to the side for now and come back to it later?"

THERE ARE FUNKY POWER DYNAMICS

I don't know how I can realistically do this. The person I need to talk to is my boss. I fear that being "real" with them will end badly because they can then just go ahead and fire me!

Again, it all comes back to discernment! Is the most important thing in this situation standing up for yourself? If so, maybe having the conversation is more important than your job security (especially if self-respect is the thing you're most in need of). Or is it possible that you can explore other options for getting your needs met? Also, is it possible for the dynamic to shift without having a hard conversation at all? For example, you might want to consider incorporating truth-telling and listening into your daily conversations with your boss; if you do this, you will very likely experience a shift in your relationship without explicitly having the true hard conversation.

FAQs

YOU FEAR THE OUTCOME AND PERSON YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO TALK TO

They're so mean and angry, and I'm scared of what they might do if I try to talk to them.

Whatever you do, always consider your physical and emotional safety when deciding if you want to have a hard conversation or not. Remember, you can always write down what you want to say, or send it to them in a letter—or you don't even have to give it to them at all. Getting your thoughts down in some way will offer you a level of healing that will make a difference.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SCREWED UP

I'm the one who screwed up, and I'm really afraid of what they're going to say when I admit to it.

We're all afraid of this. It's human nature to be afraid of being judged, but the worst part of judgment is self-judgment. Have compassion for yourself while also taking responsibility for what you did if you feel you screwed up. While we might believe we are totally to blame, every relationship is a two-way street. Many of us tend to be especially hard on ourselves. Remorse is one thing, but beating ourselves up with guilt is another. Screwing up is the nature of being human, so move into self-acceptance. It makes the hard conversation so much easier.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TALKING TO

Maybe I need to get real with ME, because no matter what I do, I just keep sabotaging myself!

Then you're in the right place! You can absolutely use this toolkit to have that conversation with yourself. Of course, this can be challenging, because the part of you that you need to talk to (your inner saboteur) is just one part of you. When we consider that these parts can sometimes act independently and conflict with our deepest desires, we can learn to treat them almost as if they are individual people. This can be a powerful way to make the “unconscious” parts of yourself (which may be operating against your wishes) conscious.

FAQs

OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT BE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

If I have this conversation, I'm afraid it will hurt other family members, not just the person I'm talking to.

It's all about making a choice and stepping back to take a big-picture view of the ripple effects. Ask yourself if you are truly ready to have this conversation. Can you live with the aftermath? Sometimes, in order to do this, we have to make the difficult decision of "rocking the boat." It's definitely more challenging if you're the only one around who's doing it, but seeking resolution for yourself will definitely create a ripple effect for the best, even if it feels scary at first.

I FEEL FROZEN BECAUSE OF TRAUMA; WHAT DO I DO?

Every time I think of talking to this person, I can't act because it reminds me of something horrible that happened to me in the past.

You're not alone. A huge chunk of our community has dealt with trauma ranging from emotional/physical/sexual violence to abandonment and betrayal. Sometimes, when we get triggered by something in the present, it can take us back to a really unpleasant experience from our past. Feeling psychologically equipped is super important, because having a hard conversation is about "adulting"—that is, compassionately reminding yourself that the past is the past, and you have the tools to deal with whatever is happening in the present. If you feel the effects of trauma are getting in the way of having a hard conversation, it's advisable to work through this with a professional before you go there.

YOU'RE JUST NOT READY TO GO THERE

I know I need to have a hard conversation with someone, but I just don't feel ready yet. Help!

Ultimately, only you can decide when you're ready to do it. Go back to Module 2 and keep asking yourself important questions and coming up with powerful intentions, until you are ready to invite someone to have that "dreaded" talk with you. Keep working on this section until you think you are ready. That said, on some level, if you picked up this toolkit, your gut is telling you that you're ready! The best thing you can do is try to relax as much as possible. And remember, you don't have to be "perfect." The courage to get in there and do it is all that ultimately counts.



YOU KILLED IT!

Now get out there and put your **awesome skills** to use!

We want to hear from you!

Email your experience
and feedback to info@womenforone.com.



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