



# HOW TO START A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



## Is Now a Good Time?

Observe the situation- is there external stress right now? Are either of you tired or hungry? Did you just finish a fight or are distant? Picking a good time for hard conversations is important for success. Be patient- most hard conversations aren't solved immediately so things can wait for a good time.



## Start with Listening

When you know the conversation is going to be a difficult one, start by asking your partner their thoughts and feelings about it. Really listen and summarize what you hear to let them know you heard them.



## Speak the Truth in Love

It's important to directly and clearly state your needs or concerns, always couched in love. Be soft in your words but clear. For example you might softly say "I have missed time with you and it bothers me when you spend so much time with your friends. I would really enjoy some one-on-one time"



## You Have Different Needs

When making requests, it's important to remember that neither of you is Santa Claus, the eternal giver who never needs anything. You both have needs and they will be different. Recognize the different needs and help each other understand them before you work towards solutions.



## Solutions can be Revised

Once you understand each other's needs and listen then you might suggest a potential solution. Remember that all solutions are experiments. You will try it, and then most likely revise it to work. And life circumstances may change and need more revisions. Flexibility is key to a successful relationship.