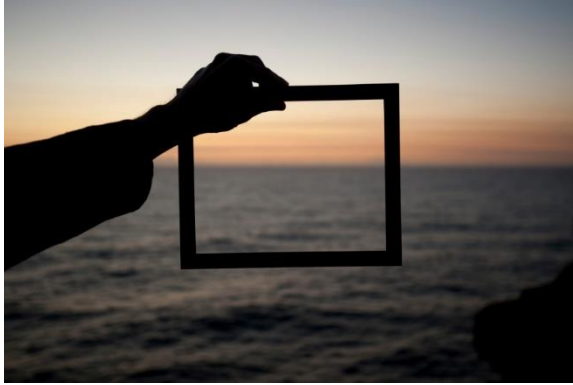


Step 1: Purpose



What are you trying to achieve in the conversation?

‘If you don’t know where you are going you will probably end up somewhere else’

The first rule of any journey or task you undertake is to be clear at the outset what our destination is.

When it comes to conversations like these, a common trap is to focus on only your end of the stick. You’re thinking about the changes you want the other person to make. You’re clear about what should they stop doing. If needs be, you can even supply them with a long list of justifications and arguments that show you are right.

Right?

No. The hard truth is that having a half-thought through and one-sided purpose for these kinds of conversations just won’t work

Why not?

You’ll end up saying either too much and they get defensive and dig their heels in. Or you’ll fudge it and the message will go completely over their heads.

Neither bodes well for a helpful dialogue.

Start by getting crystal clear about your purpose in this conversation. If you answer ‘yes’ to any of these, you might need to think again before you get into the conversation

- Are you looking to ‘fix’ them or ‘make them’ change their behaviour or attitudes?
- Do you want to ‘hit and run’ – a quick dig to vent frustration or irritation?

- Are you too annoyed and fed up to care about them and hear their side of the story?
- Are you trying to win or prove that you are right?

Conversations tend to be more effective when we focus on purposes such as solving problems and making things better for both you and them.

Conversations also work better if we have positive intentions towards the other person, if we care about or at least respect their goals or needs.

What if you don't really care about them?

But what if you don't care much (anymore) about the other person.
They drive you mad.

You're at the end of your tether with them. They've burnt all their bridges.

Where can you start when your blood boils at the thought of having to 'be nice' them?

The first step is to have a conversation with yourself.
Get into a calm, quiet frame of mind.

Take a few deep breaths. Then consider these 3 questions:

- What do you really want for yourself in this situation?
- What do you want for this other person?
- What do you want for this working relationship?

Ask yourself also:

- What do I *not* want for this working relationship/situation?

You can't like or be friends with everyone you work with.
That's not living in the real world.

But you should push yourself to find in your heart and mind a place that respects them – as a person, another human being.

Can you find a way to think about them in a respectful way and speak to them from this

place?

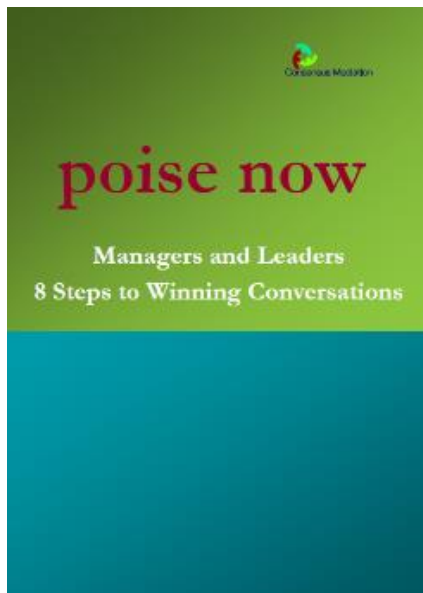
Can you stop dwelling on the negative for a minute and see if there is some common ground between you both?

The truth is that they will be more likely to listen to you and take your views on board if you can show an openness to hearing about them and what's important to them.

How can you rethink your purpose so it makes room for some of their side?

Action

- Reflect on your purpose for this conversation and make some notes using the questions above



Download the complete guide here: 'POISE NOW – 8 Steps to Winning Conversations' [here](#)

Download the Infographic [here](#)

[Consensus Mediation](#), offers a range of services and interventions to help support people to prevent, engage and manage conflict and build positive relationships in the workplace



Profile: Mary Rafferty, BEd MSocSc MMII

MARY is the founder of Consensus Mediation, a Consultancy offering a range of services and interventions to support people to prevent, engage and manage conflict and difficult relationships at work.

Mary is an accredited Practitioner Mediator with the Mediators Institute Ireland (M.I.I.), Ireland's only non-profit professional association for certification and registration of mediators. She

also holds certification with the International Mediation Institute. Mary also lectures on the Workplace Module on the M.A. in Dispute Resolution at Independent College, Dublin

Mary is certified in the internationally renowned and innovative CINERGY™ Conflict Management Coaching Model. She is also a licensed member of the international team of Approved CINERGY™ trainers and has delivered the signature 4-day Conflict Management Coaching Programme both in Ireland and abroad. She also runs an M.I.I. Approved Mediation Training Programme to Certified Level. Consensus Mediation is a registered Open College Network training centre.

Mary is certified to administer the Conflict Dynamics Profile (Eckerd College, Florida), an assessment instrument dealing with conflict behaviors in the workplace which provides a powerful way to improve self-awareness of what triggers conflict in individuals as well as how they respond to conflict.

Mary is a Director of the Mediators' Institute of Ireland and Chairperson of the M.I.I. Accreditation Policy Committee.

Mary holds an Honours Degree in Education, a Master's Degree with Distinction in Social Science and has attended a wide variety of specialised trainings in the field of conflict resolution.