

SPEAK LIKE A BOSS LIBRARY DISAGREEING WITHOUT BEING DISAGREEABLE



Some leaders have a knack for disagreeing without triggering conflict. So what do these influential leaders do differently to the rest of us? There are three habits which help them frame disagreement positively. By taking on these habits too, you can master the art of constructive criticism and avoid being one of those difficult people who seem to complain about everything.

Habit 1: apply the seven to one rule

Research has shown that feedback is best absorbed when positive messages outnumber criticisms in a proportion of seven to one. You can apply this rule in situations other than one-to-one feedback too. For example, in meetings, aim to make seven positive contributions to every one objection or correction you deliver. And when dealing with customers, aim to create seven positive experiences to balance out any one 'moment of truth'.

Habit 2: connect rather than reject

Before raising a concern or counter argument, find a way to affirm the other person's point of view. For example, say:

- I agree with the first part of your proposal
- Yes, I agree that we need to solve this problem
- I'd like to add to what you just suggested

Next, use the word 'and' to lead into making a suggestion for change. Aim to build on the other person's idea, rather than rebutting it. This is a key technique for collaborative problem-solving. It helps to avoid using the word 'but' at this stage. Many people are mentally programmed to hear statements starting with 'but' as threats. So it's a smart move to eliminate this troublesome word from your feedback vocabulary. Instead, start by saying:

- And I have some suggestions to make about the second point you raised
- And I'd like to suggest another way to address this issue
- And here's the thinking behind my proposal...

Habit 3: challenge with questions, not exclamation marks

If you directly attack someone's idea, they will argue with you. In doing so, they will find reasons to reinforce their own beliefs. So you should NEVER make emphatic,

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argumentative statements such as 'You're wrong!' or 'I disagree!' Instead, use scenario-based questions to influence and persuade. Useful questions include:

- What if we did what you suggest, and ... happened as a result?
- What risks might that course of action create?
- How would we respond if ... happened?

10 starter phrases for disagreeing constructively

1. Now I understand your thoughts about this, I'd like to share my own thoughts/feelings.
2. I agree with your first point. I have a different view on the second point, though.
3. My take on this is...
4. I agree with you that...is important. And I have a slightly different perspective from you about...
5. I see things a bit differently. For example, I think/feel...
6. This impacts on me because...
7. This is obviously important to you. It's also important to me, because...
8. I agree with you up to a point.
9. I don't share your view on that. Here's how I see it.
10. Although I do like parts of that suggestion, your idea might be even better with a few additions.

Disagreement statement planner

Thanks for explaining your thoughts on this. I agree that summarise something they've said that you agree with. OR say 'this is important'.

I have a different view on summarise what you DON'T agree with.

That's because give a brief rationale.. How can we sort this out?