



# The ABC of conversations



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It can be hard to raise difficult issues without causing upset, and we know how many managers would love a framework that makes these conversations easier.

Try doing it in this order:

## A. Something that works

Wherever possible start by talking about something that has gone well. This raises serotonin levels, making both parties feel better. A positive mood improves rapport, raises intelligence and improves communication, and increases the chance of getting an agreement over what to do next.

## B. What could be better?

Now to the issues at hand. When going over things that didn't work you may reveal a soup of emotions: embarrassment, resentment at having been left exposed, feelings of guilt or stupidity and so on. So remember two things: use no-blame language (see Improving Understanding 2) and practice reframing (Improving Understanding 3) – this is the process of turning disappointments into opportunities.

## C. Build the future

People are most likely to co-operate fully and change for the better if they feel that you really know what's getting in the way of success and care about sorting that out. So knowledge – careful consideration of comprehensive data – is vital here. If you can home straight in on the places where improvement is most needed and will bring the best results, your team member will sense that you know how to help – that you are acting as a leader, in other words, and will want to join in. Use the results from WeThrive as the core of the conversation - these are the things that really matter to your team, so you'll automatically get buy-in for them.



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