

***“Hard conversations are not bad conversations they are just hard conversations.”***

Here’s a “baker’s dozen” list of best practices when you need to have a hard conversation with a team member.

**One other tip:** these conversations can be as hard for you as they are for them. Give yourself time to compose beforehand and recover afterwards.

# ***Holding Hard Conversations***

## **13 Best Practices**

1. Get your ducks in a row ahead of time.
  - Be prepared
2. Go toward the pressure.
  - Don’t avoid hard things
3. Think about context: “Praise in public, correct in confidence.”
  - Guard their dignity
4. Use your emotions, just make sure they don’t use you.
  - Be passionate, but still under control
5. Just because they’re hurt, doesn’t mean they’re right.
  - Don’t be manipulated by their emotions
6. Show no favorites.
  - Style is different than performance
7. Celebrate the eagle’s soaring and the duck’s paddling, but don’t expect them to change their feathers.
  - Acknowledge strengths as well as areas that need to improve
8. Don’t die on any small hills.
  - Choose your battles wisely; some things are just not that big a deal
9. Loose lips sink ships.
  - Confidentiality is key
10. Everybody needs a win.
  - Help them save face
11. Don’t apologize.
  - Being “nice” is not always being kind
12. Can I get a witness, please?
  - At times you need a 3<sup>rd</sup> party
13. If it isn’t documented, it didn’t happen.
  - Do the follow-up paperwork.