

CONFLICT & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Having a Learning Conversation

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). Learning. In *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* (2nd ed., pp. 163–184). New York: Viking Penguin.
- *Optional*: Listening. (2017, March 3). [Radio series episode]. In D. Navanayagam (Host), *The Why Factor*. United Kingdom: BBC World Service. Retrieved March 9, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04tv665>.

Questions

1. What is meant by a “learning conversation”? What two benefits is a learning conversation supposed to have for you?
2. What is your internal voice? How can it be a barrier to adopting a stance of curiosity? What can be done to manage that voice?
3. What are the wrong and right ways to practice inquiry during a difficult conversation?
4. Why is it important to paraphrase what it is you are learning from inquiry during a difficult conversation?
5. When paraphrasing, it is often important to also acknowledge their feelings. Why is that? How can this effectively be done?

(In thinking about all this, you might also listen to the optional radio program about the theory and practice of listening when it comes to negotiation, conflict resolution, and improving relationships. This is not too long, and it has some great interviews.)