

The Feelings Conversation

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

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?

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 position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). Have your feelings. In *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most* (2nd ed., pp. 85–108). Penguin Books.

Optional: Sutherland, A. (2006, June 25). What Shamu taught me about a happy marriage. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/25/fashion/what-shamu-taught-me-about-a-happy-marriage.html>

Optional: Mlodinow, L. (2022, January 4). What we get wrong about emotions. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/01/emotion-isnt-the-enemy-of-reason/621148/>

Questions

1. Why do people tend to suppress or ignore their feelings during negotiation and conflict resolution? What risks does doing so carry, and what problems may it cause?
2. Why is it important to understand your own emotions and emotional state during conflict resolution? What three ways for better understanding your own feelings do Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen suggest?
3. What does it mean to “negotiate with your feelings” (p. 90)? How is this done and why is it important for effectively expressing your emotions during conflict resolution?
4. What three guidelines do Stone et al. give for expressing your feelings in an effective and productive manner?

The optional reading by Amy Sutherland provides an informative (and humorous) discussion about cultivating a stronger relationship and managing strong emotions in others, all while influencing their behavior. Meanwhile, the optional reading by Leonard Mlodinow argues how emotions may play a valuable role in guiding our judgments.

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

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.