


# Communicating with Candor + Compassion


We've been socialized to believe that we can communicate with candor **or** compassion, **but not both**. From our perspective, it's time to unlearn this belief and begin the practice of **Compassionate Candor**. Whether you are struggling to effectively communicate your needs to a boss, employee, or colleague, we encourage you to experiment with the steps below and observe how these practices generate new, positive outcomes.

## 1) EXPLORE YOUR OBSERVATIONS




You noticed something during your workday that you would like to see changed. Whether this change-based desire is related to a task, process, or person, take a moment to explore the possible root causes of the issue, as well as the possible solutions to the observed issue.

## 2) IDENTIFY THE GOAL



Once you have explored root causes and possible solutions, it's time to identify the goal of your compassionate, yet candid, conversation. Are you looking for your conversation partner to change their behavior? Tweak a process? Overhaul a project? Whatever the goal, clarity of your own understanding is key before sharing your perspective with your boss, employee, or colleague.

## 3) INVITE A DIALOGUE



Now that you have identified the goal of your conversation, it's time to invite the other person into a true dialogue. True dialogue seeks to understand another person's perspective instead of forcing them to accept your perspective. Issuing an invitation to your colleague might look like, "Can we connect about last week's client meeting? I would love to know what you thought went well and where we can improve." Starting from a strengths-based place, while letting your conversation partner source the observations not only demonstrates your interest in them, but also builds rapport and trust.

## 4) AFFIRM THEIR OBSERVATIONS

Whether or not you agree with the observations shared with you, ensuring that your conversation partner feel seen and heard is essential to getting to your goal. Research shows that when folks feel we are invested in their perspective, they are much more willing open the door to our perspective. This provides an opportunity to then share your observation and nudge closer to your identified goal. For example, "Wow. It is clear you care deeply about our client and their experience. Thank you for sharing your experiences from that meeting with me. I'm wondering if I can offer an observation?" By giving your conversation partner the agency to say "yes" or "no" can eliminate the power differential in the space by giving agency back to them.

## 5) COLLABORATIVELY PROBLEM SOLVE

While you know where you want to conversation to go, it's important that your conversation partner becomes part of the solution. Whether you are looking for a behavior, process, and system change, learning what folks need to make that change happen is central to the equation. If you would like to see someone to organize their presentations differently, simply asking, "What do you need from me to feel confident in enacting these changes?" Or "I know these changes will be tough at first, what support can I offer to make the transition easier?" Ultimately, the more you can demonstrate curiosity (instead of judgement) the better.

