

How to Have a Civil Conversation in 7 Steps

by Eric Galton



1. Goal of a civil conversation:
 - i. To **understand**... **Not** to win, **not** to persuade.
 - ii. To walk away with a better understanding and mutual respect.

2. State of mind for a civil conversation:

Be curious, not judgmental.

3. Three favorite words of the curious-minded:

Help
Me
Understand

4. There are two things all humans crave:

- i. To be heard
- i. To be understood

Agreement is **not** necessary.

5. When you say "help me understand", **actively listen**.

Do not interrupt.

6. When the speaker finishes and asks "how do you feel?", do **two** important things:

- i. Summarize what you just heard the speaker say (demonstrate active listening)
- ii. Replace the word "**but**" with the word "**and**".

*Example: "I know that you are convinced by what you have read on social media that there has been widespread voter fraud **and** I have a different perspective."*

"**But**" is an eraser to most people and serves to erase all of your active listening.
"**And**" is a bridge to understanding.

7. Remember, the goal of a civil conversation is to respectfully understand each other's points of view and the basis of each other's perspectives, establish trust, and create a bridge to future conversations and understanding.