

QUICK TIPS – *Conversations*

A **Conversation** is defined as “an interchange of thoughts and words”.

A conversation is not the same as making a speech, winning an argument, debating, or monopolizing a discussion. The fundamental difference lies in the depth and quality of the “**interchange**”.

It would appear that we have been taught how to ‘speak’, but less so how to ‘listen’. Listening requires a keen desire to actually understand what the other person is saying. If, while one person is talking, the other person’s mind is racing to construct a rebuttal, then who is doing the listening?

A quality conversation has the following attributes:

- ◆ Both parties share relatively equal air-time.
- ◆ The interchange is measured, not rushed.
- ◆ There are silent pauses, while information is being processed.
- ◆ Questions are used to seek clarification and confirmation.
- ◆ Listening is as important as talking.
- ◆ Differing positions are respected.
- ◆ The volume is controlled.
- ◆ Emotions are muted.

In order to develop quality conversations, one needs to approach the interchange not as a conflict or skirmish, but rather as an opportunity to learn something new.

Focus on “*active listening*” – a deliberate and precise attention to the words and nuances of the other person. Slow down, so that you control your mind and mouth. Acknowledge the other person and their position.

By practising these approaches, you can participate in meaningful interchanges and experience quality *Conversations*.

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