

HARD CONVERSATIONS

13 Phrases Great CEOs Don't Say (and What They Say Instead)

By Eric Partaker

Don't Say This

1. "You always miss deadlines."
2. "That's not how we do things here."
3. "I'm disappointed in you."
4. "You need to step it up."
5. "This is unacceptable."
6. "You should have known better."
7. "I don't have time for this."
8. "That's your problem to figure out."
9. "Everyone else gets it. Why don't you?"
10. "We've talked about this before."
11. "You're not meeting expectations."
12. "I expected more from you."
13. "Figure it out and get back to me."

Instead, Say This

1. "I noticed the last three projects came in late. What's getting in your way?"
2. "Help me understand your approach. Here's what usually works for us..."
3. "This isn't the result we needed. Let's figure out what went wrong."
4. "What do you need to hit these goals? Let's make a plan."
5. "This didn't work out. What can we learn from it?"
6. "Let's go over this together so it's clear next time."
7. "This is important. When can we dig into it properly?"
8. "You seem stuck. How can I help you move forward?"
9. "I see you're having trouble with this. What part is tricky?"
10. "It seems like we're still having issues here. What's different now?"
11. "Here's where we need to be. What's keeping us from getting there?"
12. "I know you can do better than this. What support do you need?"
13. "Take some time to think through options. Let's reconnect tomorrow."

