



Release Tension in Conflict

"Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."
 – Albert Einstein

What is this?

Diverse opinions are a wonderful opportunity to learn and to gain wider perspectives. Sometimes having different opinions can get us stuck in conflict, which will keep us from mutual exploration and learning. In these cases we can release the tension in the conflict, and intentionally speak to share and listen to learn.

How to...

1. Articulate and celebrate the conflict

First step is to articulate the conflict, and to celebrate that we actually do have different opinions here! Celebrate the opportunity to learn and to gain new perspectives - together.

E.g.: "I note that we have conflicting interests/opinions here. That is by nature a really good thing. Let's use that to make us all grow."

2. Pause

Release the fight- or flight mode that prevents us from using our full cognitive and emotional ability. Take a few long, slow breaths and try to relax your face.

E.g. "Before we rush on in the discussion, let's pause. Taking five deep breaths, with an exhale on the count to 8, is medically proven to lower our stress hormones, helping us to reconnect to the creative and compassionate parts of our brains again."

3. Embrace our inner Expert

When arguing for your own opinion, your inner Expert is most likely very engaged in the dialogue. This will bring knowledge and clarity to the dialogue, but it can also make it difficult to create connection with others and open up to actually listen to the other. Connection is needed to create mutual understanding and learning.

So... embrace your inner Expert and the knowledge it brings. Make an invitation to open up for exploration, listening to learn and to co-create. Together always wins!

4. Listen to learn - Speak to share

Engage in the dialogue again, with the pure intention to:

- Listen to learn - open up to the other's perspective. What can you learn from the other?
- Speak to share - open up to share your knowledge and your perspective, with generosity and kindness.