

**FIVE
CONVERSATIONS**



**MANAGERS
AVOID**

And what to say instead

THE FIVE CONVERSATIONS



These are the five most common conversations that managers tend to avoid, or try to fluff their way through

1. Poor Performance
 2. Missed expectations
 3. Attitude/behavior issues
 4. Conflict between team members
 5. Lack of accountability
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THE FIVE CONVERSATIONS



WHAT NOT TO SAY

- 1. Poor Performance:** “Hey... just keep doing what you’re doing, but maybe try a bit harder?” OR “I don’t have specifics, but something just feels off.”
- 2. Missed Expectations:** “I thought it was obvious what needed to happen.” OR “Let’s just make sure it doesn’t happen again.”
- 3. Attitude / Behaviour Issues:** “Some people have mentioned your attitude... I can’t really say who.” OR “You just need to be a bit more positive, okay?”
- 4. Conflict between team members:** “Can you both just move on? We don’t have time for this.” OR “I’m sure it’s just a misunderstanding — let’s not make it a big deal.”
- 5. Lack of Accountability:** “We all need to take more ownership here.” OR “It would be great if you could step up a bit.”

You need a **BEAR** approach

Specific (**Behavior**) → removes defensiveness

Impact (**Emotion**) → creates awareness

Human (**Appreciation**) → keeps dignity intact

Forward-looking (**Request**) → drives action

THE FIVE CONVERSATIONS

WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD

- 1. Poor Performance:** “When the report was submitted with missing data (B), it meant we couldn’t present confidently to the client (E). I know you’ve been juggling a lot (A), can we walk through how to ensure it’s complete next time? (R)”
- 2. Missed Expectations:** “When the deadline passed without an update (B), it put pressure on the rest of the team to adjust last minute (E). I appreciate things can shift quickly (A), what’s the best way for us to flag risks earlier going forward? (R)”
- 3. Attitude / Behaviour Issues:** “In the meeting, when you interrupted twice while others were speaking (B), it shut down input from the group (E). I know you’re passionate about the topic (A), how can we make sure everyone gets space to contribute? (R)”
- 4. Conflict between team members:** “I’ve noticed tension in meetings, especially when ideas are challenged (B), and it’s starting to affect how the team collaborates (E). I know you both care about doing good work (A), can we talk through what’s going on and agree how to handle this moving forward? (R)”
- 5. Lack of Accountability:** “When the issue came up and it wasn’t picked up until later (B), it delayed the team’s progress (E). I know you care about the outcome (A), what ownership can you take to prevent this next time? (R)”

Managers aren’t avoiding conversations because they don’t care, they’re avoiding them because they don’t know what to say