

# Turning Performance Reviews into Growth Conversations

## A Practical Guide for Leaders



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Use this checklist during the conversation.  
You don't need to follow it perfectly. It's here to keep the conversation  
focused, **human**, and **growth**-oriented.

# RULES

(KEEP IN MIND AT ALL TIMES)

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## This is a dialogue, not a review

- Listen more than you speak
- Talk about behaviors, not personalities
- Stay curious, not defensive
- Focus on the future, not proving the past
- Small experiments beat big promises
- Consistency builds trust over time



## INTENTION

Create a safe, honest space where growth can happen.

- Your role is not to evaluate or fix.
- Your role is to **facilitate clarity, reflection, and next steps.**



## BEFORE THE CONVERSATION

### Preparation

- ☐ I clarified the purpose of the conversation (growth, alignment, feedback)
- ☐ I reviewed recent goals, priorities, and outcomes
- ☐ I looked beyond results and considered behaviors
- ☐ I asked the team member for a self-reflection in advance
- ☐ I prepared concrete examples of strengths
- ☐ I noted development areas using observations, not assumptions
- ☐ I scheduled a focused, interruption-free time and space
- ☐ I am entering the conversation with curiosity, not judgment

# DURING THE CONVERSATION

## Dialogue Flow

### 1. OPEN THE CONVERSATION

**Intention:**

Set safety, focus, and shared ownership.

☐ I stated the purpose clearly

Suggested sentence:

“This conversation is about your growth and alignment, not evaluation.”

☐ I confirmed time and focus

☐ I signaled psychological safety  
(open, honest, future-focused)

### 2. START WITH THEIR PERSPECTIVE

**Intention:**

Understand before being understood.

☐ I invited them to speak first

☐ I asked open questions:

☐ How did this period feel for you?

☐ What went well?

☐ What felt challenging or unclear?

☐ I listened without interrupting

☐ I took short notes, not conclusions

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### 3. REFLECT BEFORE RESPONDING

**Intention:**

Build clarity and trust before adding perspective.

- ☐ I mirrored what I heard  
Suggested sentence:  
"What I'm hearing is..."
- ☐ I checked understanding  
Suggested sentence:  
"Did I get that right?"
- ☐ I allowed clarification before adding my view

### 4. SHARE FEEDBACK (BEHAVIOR TO IMPACT)

**Intention:**

Offer perspective without judgment.

- ☐ I avoided labels and judgments
- ☐ I used concrete examples:
  - ☐ When / where it happened
  - ☐ What I observed
  - ☐ What impact it had
- ☐ I paused and let them respond

### 5. WORK WITH STRENGTHS

**Intention:**

Turn strengths into tools, not compliments.

- ☐ I named strengths through observable behavior
- ☐ I asked:
  - ☐ When does this work best?
  - ☐ Where else could this strength create impact?
- ☐ I reinforced intentional use of strengths



## 6. EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

### Intention:

Co-create focus, don't prescribe solutions.

- ☐ We identified challenges together
- ☐ I asked:
  - ☐ Where do you feel stuck?
  - ☐ What feels harder than it should?
  - ☐ What would you like to handle differently?
- ☐ We kept the focus narrow and realistic

## 7. AGREE ON ONE CLEAR EXPERIMENT

### Intention:

Turn insight into action.

- ☐ We selected 1–3 focus areas max
- ☐ We defined one clear experiment:
  - ☐ What will change?
  - ☐ In which situations?
  - ☐ What support is needed?
- ☐ Ownership was clear

## 8. CLOSE WITH ALIGNMENT

### Intention:

Leave with clarity and support.

- ☐ I asked:
  - ☐ What are you taking away from this conversation?
  - ☐ What do you need from me next?
- ☐ We agreed on follow-up timing
- ☐ The conversation ended with clarity and support

# AFTER THE CONVERSATION

## Action & Follow-Up

- ☐ I summarized the key insights from the conversation
- ☐ We agreed on 1–3 clear development focus areas
- ☐ We defined concrete actions for each focus area
- ☐ Ownership and responsibilities were clear
- ☐ Support and resources were discussed
- ☐ We agreed on a follow-up date
- ☐ Notes were shared and documented
- ☐ I will actively observe and support these areas in daily work



### Recommended Reading / Viewing

#### Radical Candor

by Kim Scott

#### TEDx - Why the secret to success is setting the right goals

by John Doerr

## Get Connected



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