

How to Have a Civil Conversation in 7 Steps

GUEST BLOG BY ERIC GALTON

1. GOAL OF A CIVIL CONVERSATION:

To **understand**... not to win or persuade.

To walk away with a better understanding and mutual respect.

2. STATE OF MIND FOR A CIVIL CONVERSATION:

Be **curious**, not judgemental.

3. THREE FAVORITE WORDS OF THE CURIOUS-MINDED:



“Help me understand”

4. THERE ARE TWO THINGS ALL HUMANS CRAVE:



To be **heard**.



To be **understood**.

Agreement is **not** necessary.

5. WHEN YOU SAY, “HELP ME UNDERSTAND,” **ACTIVELY LISTEN**.

Do not interrupt.

6. WHEN THE SPEAKER FINISHES AND ASKS HOW YOU FEEL, DO TWO THINGS:

1. Summarize what you heard the speaker say (demonstrate active listening).
2. Replace the word **“but”** with the word **“and.”**

Example: “I know that you are convinced by what you have read on social media that there has been widespread voter fraud, **and** I have a different perspective.”



BUT



AND

“But” is an eraser to most people and serves to erase all of your active listening. **“And”** is a bridge to understanding.

7. REMEMBER:

The goal of a civil conversation is to respectfully understand each other’s points of view and the basis of each other’s perspectives, establish trust, and create a bridge to future conversations and understanding.



More bridges, fewer barriers.