



Wellbeing Insights



How to Have Transformative Conversations for *Personal Growth*

Conversations are more than just exchanges of words; they're opportunities to connect, reflect, and grow. Whether you're speaking with a colleague, manager, friend, or family member, the quality of your conversations shapes how you think, learn, and develop as a person.

But how often do we slow down enough to truly listen or speak with the intention of growth? Transformative conversations don't just happen. They require presence, courage, and curiosity.

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How to Have Transformative Conversations for Personal Growth

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Here are five ways to make your everyday interactions more meaningful and growth-oriented:

1. Lead with Curiosity, Not Assumptions

Growth begins with openness — the willingness to hear a new perspective and create space for respectful dialogue. Instead of planning your next response, ask yourself: What can I learn here?

Use phrases like:

- “Tell me more about that.”
- “How did that make you feel?”
- “What led you to that perspective?”

Curiosity invites depth, allowing both people to reflect more honestly on their thoughts and experiences.

2. Practice Active Listening

Active listening, where we give our full presence and reflect what we hear, has been shown to significantly increase trust and engagement (Weger, Castle, & Emmett, 2010).

That means:

- Maintaining eye contact
- Avoiding interruptions
- Reflecting back what you heard (“So what I’m hearing is...”)

When someone feels truly heard, they are more likely to share and engage on a deeper level.

3. Embrace Constructive Discomfort

Personal growth often happens just beyond our comfort zone. Challenging conversations, when approached with respect, can spark powerful insight.

Practice responses like:

- “I hadn’t considered it that way. Can you explain more?”
- “That’s different from how I see it, but I’d love to understand why.”

It’s okay to disagree. What matters is staying grounded in empathy and curiosity.

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4. Set Positive Intentions for Important Conversations

Before entering a meaningful discussion, take a moment to reflect on your intention. Is your goal to build connection, offer support, better understand another perspective — or to prove that you're right? The intention you bring shapes both your words and actions.

Pause and ask yourself:

- "What outcome am I truly hoping for?"
- "How can I approach this with honesty, curiosity, and openness?"

By setting a clear, positive intention, you create space for more authentic dialogue — turning even difficult conversations into opportunities for growth and connection.

5. Use Conversations as Mirrors

Discussions can be powerful mirrors, reflecting our assumptions, values, and blind spots. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning emphasizes that critical reflection can lead to shifts in perspective and deeper personal growth (Mezirow, 1997).

After a conversation, take time to reflect:

- "Did I really listen?"
- "What did I learn about myself?"
- "How can I show up differently next time?"

Self-reflection turns everyday dialogue into a tool for transformation.

The most impactful conversations are not always the longest or most polished; they're the ones where people feel seen, safe, and stretched to grow. With practice, you can turn everyday interactions into powerful moments of learning and connection. Over time, these kinds of conversations build stronger relationships, expand our perspectives, and help us evolve into more self-aware, compassionate versions of ourselves.





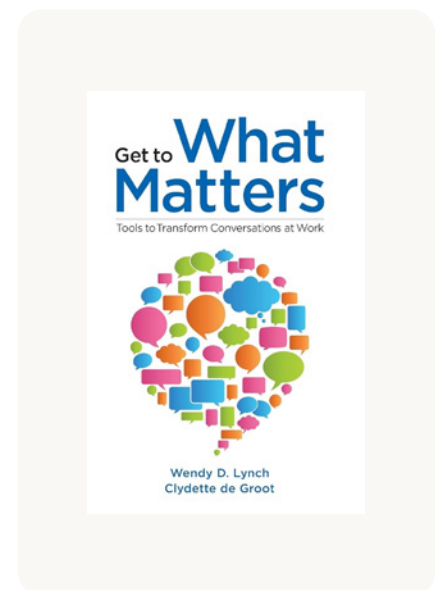
BOOK NOOK

Get to What Matters — Tools to Transform Conversations at Work

by Wendy D. Lynch and Clydette de Groot

"I recently read Get to What Matters as part of our team's book club, and it has completely shifted how I approach conversations, both at work and in my personal life. The book offers tools to dig deeper and uncover what people really mean and want. It emphasizes listening with intention, asking thoughtful questions, and creating space for authentic connection and a desired outcome. What I appreciated most is how the authors use real-life examples and provide clear, actionable steps, making them easy to apply in everyday conversations. Small changes in how we talk and respond can transform relationships, reduce misunderstandings, and increase collaboration."

One key takeaway I've been practicing is pausing before I respond. That extra moment gives the speaker more space to share while allowing me to reflect, understand their perspective more fully, and respond thoughtfully. Conversations now feel more productive, genuine, and solution-focused. It's a powerful reminder that meaningful communication is less about talking and more about truly listening."



Loaded Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a powerhouse of nutrition and a perfect base for quick, filling meals. With just a few simple ingredients, you can turn a baked sweet potato into a hearty, balanced dish that feels like comfort food but fuels your body well.

How to Bake a Sweet Potato

Start by giving your potatoes a good wash and then pierce them several times with a fork. You can then bake them on a baking sheet or wrap them in foil and throw in a 400-degree oven for about 45 minutes. Or, place them in the microwave on a plate for 5 to 7 minutes, turning halfway through.

Venture into Variations

Here are four flavor-packed ideas to get you started. Each one can be customized based on what you have on hand.

Harvest Sausage Apple



Ingredients

- Browned ground sausage
- Sautéed or baked apples (sliced or diced)
- Dried cranberries
- Chopped pecans
- Crumbled goat cheese

Spoon the warm sausage and apples into the potato first, and then top with cranberries, pecans, and goat cheese. Drizzle with balsamic glaze or a honey mustard vinaigrette.

Southwest



Ingredients

- Black beans and corn sautéed with taco seasoning
- Diced avocado
- Cilantro
- Diced green onion
- Tomatillo salsa and/or sour cream
- Shredded pepper jack cheese

Fill your potato with the bean-and-corn mix, top with cheese, then add avocado, salsa, sour cream, cilantro and onion.

BBQ Chicken



Ingredients

- Shredded or ground chicken tossed with BBQ sauce
- Homemade slaw (mix pre-shredded cabbage with mayo or Greek yogurt, a splash of red wine vinegar, a sprinkle of sugar, salt, and pepper)
- Diced green onion
- Shredded cheddar cheese
- Sliced jalapeños or pickles

Load the sweet potato with BBQ chicken, top with cheese, pile on the slaw, and finish with green onions. Add jalapeños or pickles if you want more crunch or heat.

Mushroom Swiss



Ingredients

- Cooked quinoa
- Sautéed mushrooms, spinach, and onion
- Shredded Swiss cheese
- Honey dijon mustard

Mix the cooked quinoa with the sautéed mushroom-spinach mix and fill up your sweet potato with this mixture. Top with Swiss cheese and add a light drizzle of mustard for tang.

From Transition to Transformation: *Thriving Beyond Menopause*

As estrogen levels decline, it's common to notice changes in sleep, mood, energy, and body composition. Some women experience weight gain (especially around the abdomen), hot flashes, or sleep disruptions. Others may notice bone loss, muscle decline, vaginal dryness, decreased libido, or shifts in mood and memory. These changes are natural, but they don't define you. With awareness and proactive care, post-menopause can be a time of strength, clarity, and vibrant health.

1. **Nourish** Your Body

Bone and muscle health deserve extra attention. Focus on calcium- and vitamin D-rich foods such as leafy greens, dairy, or fortified plant milks, and get safe sun exposure when possible. Prioritize protein to preserve muscle mass and include omega-3s (from fish or flaxseed) to support both heart and brain health. Whole grains and fiber-rich foods protect digestion and cardiovascular wellness, while limiting alcohol and added sugars reduces inflammation and supports weight balance.

2. **Move** with Intention

Exercise is powerful medicine. Strength training two to three times per week slows bone and muscle loss. Cardio activities like walking, biking, or swimming protect the heart and help regulate weight. Practices like yoga or pilates improve flexibility, balance, and stress management — all key to long-term vitality.



3. **Care** for Your Mind and Emotions

Cognitive shifts, such as brain fog or mood changes, are common, but staying mentally engaged makes a difference. Reading, puzzles, or learning new skills stimulate the brain, while staying socially connected reduces the risk of cognitive decline and supports emotional health. Sleep also plays a crucial role: keep a consistent bedtime, avoid late caffeine, and create a calming routine with light stretching, warm baths, or meditation.

4. **Support** Intimate Wellbeing

Vaginal dryness or changes in libido are normal after menopause, but you don't have to live with discomfort. Over-the-counter moisturizers, lubricants, or prescription options like estrogen therapies can help. Just as important: Don't hesitate to talk openly with your doctor or partner about sexual health; it's a vital part of overall wellbeing.

Menopause is a natural transition, not a decline. With the right tools and mindset, you can move into this stage stronger, wiser, and more in tune with yourself than ever before. If you're struggling with symptoms like poor sleep, mood changes, or sexual discomfort, talk with your doctor. Hormone therapy or other treatments might help. You deserve support.

Understanding Roth IRA Accounts

Saving for retirement is important, and understanding your options can help you make the most of your savings. Roth IRA contributions offer a way to build a nest egg with tax-free withdrawals, giving you more control over your financial future.

How Roth Contributions Work

A Roth contribution is money put into a retirement account using after-tax dollars. Unlike traditional pre-tax contributions, you've already paid taxes on the money at your current tax rate before it goes in.

The big advantage comes later: once you're at least age 59½ and the account has been open for five years, both contributions and investment growth can be withdrawn tax-free. **There are two main ways to save in a Roth account, and each type has its own rules and benefits.**

1. Employer-sponsored Retirement Accounts

Roth 401(k) or 403(b) accounts make saving easy through automatic payroll deductions and have higher annual contribution limits than Roth IRAs. Your employer may also offer a matching contribution, which helps boost your retirement savings (a match is typically deposited on a pre-tax basis). These accounts are particularly useful for high-income earners since there are no income limits to contribute, and employees who want to maximize savings due to the higher contribution limits.

2. Roth IRAs

A Roth IRA is opened individually through a bank or brokerage firm, often giving you more investment choices. Roth IRAs provide additional withdrawal flexibility, since contributions (but not earnings) can generally be withdrawn at any time without taxes or penalties. Roth IRAs may be especially helpful for individuals seeking flexible investment options and withdrawals.

Benefits Shared by Both Roth Options

Roth accounts offer several advantages that apply across both IRAs and employer-sponsored plans. They provide tax-free growth on contributions and earnings, which can be especially valuable for younger workers who have many years to save and currently in a lower tax bracket.

Having both pre-tax and Roth accounts also creates flexibility in managing taxable income during retirement and can help reduce future taxes on Social Security, Medicare, and other retirement income. From an estate planning perspective, there's greater control over the accounts since they're not subject to required minimum distributions during the original owner's lifetime, and heirs can generally inherit Roth money tax-free.

Choosing What's Best for You

Both Roth IRAs and employer-sponsored Roth accounts offer powerful tax advantages. Since contribution limits are separate, some people choose to use a combination of both. Visit the IRS website to review current income and contribution limits for retirement accounts at www.irs.gov. Be sure to review your own financial circumstances and consult a qualified tax professional to help you determine the right mix of traditional pre-tax and/or Roth contributions for your situation.

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