THE LANGUAGE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

HOW WE SAY THINGS CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

Across cultures, tone, phrasing, intonation and word choice can either calm a tense discussion or inflame it. These phrases help replace confrontation with collaboration, fostering understanding in multicultural teams.



EXPRESSING DISAGREEMENT CONSTRUCTIVELY

"You're wrong." ------ "I see it differently."

"That's not true." ----- "I'm not sure I see it that way."

"We already discussed that." **"Can we revisit this briefly to make sure we're aligned?"**

"That won't work." ——— "That might be challenging."

"That's a bad idea." ——— "I have some concerns."

Cultural Note:

In some cultures, direct disagreement is seen as assertive and efficient; in others, it can be considered disrespectful. Framing disagreement as curiosity helps maintain respect.



MANAGING FEEDBACK AND CRITICISM

"You didn't do this right." \longrightarrow "I think there's another approach that might work better."

"This is wrong." ——— "This could be improved by..."

"That's not good enough." "Let's see how we can make this stronger together."

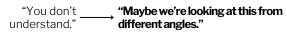
"You should have "I realise this wasn't clear. Let's review it together."

"That was a mistake." ——— "This didn't go as planned . What can we learn from it?"

Cultural Note:

Feedback that sounds too soft to some cultures may sound harsh to others. Aim for *clarity with kindness*.

BUILDING COMMON GROUND



"We'll do it my way." ———— "Let's find an approach that works for everyone."

"That's not my problem." "Let's see how we can tackle this together."

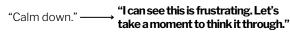
"That's your fault." ——— "There seems to have been a misunderstanding."

"You're making this _____ **"This seems complex. Let's take a step back and look at options."**

Cultural Note:

Many cultures value "saving face", so avoiding blame helps preserve relationships and trust.

SOFTENERS & PHRASES THAT SHOW EMPATHY



"That's not my responsibility." "Let me check how we can handle this."

"You're overreacting." ——— "I can tell this issue matters to you."

"That's impossible." ——— "That might be difficult, but let's see what's possible."

"You have to..." ———— "Could I suggest..."/"It might help if we..."

Cultural Note:

Empathy is expressed differently around the world. In some places, acknowledging emotion openly is appreciated; in others, a calm, solution-oriented tone shows respect.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION TIPS

Ask, don't assume. Phrasing questions gently ("Could you clarify...?") avoids implying blame.

Acknowledge differences. Try "From your perspective..." or "In your context..." to show openness.

Watch tone and pace. What sounds confident in one language may sound aggressive in another.

Pause before replying. Silence can signal thoughtfulness, not resistance.

Summarise to confirm understanding. "So, just to check I've understood you correctly..."



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