**Transcript**

**Mel Robbins: How to have difficult conversations**

**Mel:** Stressful conversations are unavoidable in life and in business. They can run the gamut from having to fire somebody which is like the most gut-wrenching thing you will ever have to do, or admitting failure that you really blew it, or another thing that you might have to do is deal with the customer who's really upset

**Video Clip:** I having a smoothie, what’s in that? Smoothie’s a juice drink, we want coffee

**Mel:** and I think it's very natural to want to avoid those conversations like the plague but especially in business there's an epidemic right now of people that are unwilling to have uncomfortable conversations. Harvard Business School just did a study and they found that 67% of managers are uncomfortable talking to the people they manage and this gets me to what I want to talk to you today. It is the secret to how to have a difficult conversation, because what's critical is learning the skill of untangling your emotions from the subject matter and being able to go face-to-face with anybody and have that difficult conversation.

There are four techniques that I use whenever I'm gonna have a difficult conversation that help me stay focused on what I need to talk about instead of getting hijacked by my emotion.

Number one I always start the conversation by acknowledging my responsibility in the mess that we have to talk about whether it's the fact that I've avoided dealing with this sooner or whether there's something that I've done that's contributed to the situation. I acknowledge it right up front and one of the reasons why that's so important is because by accepting some responsibility you're defusing the other person's emotion you're also honoring them a little bit and it sets a much more level playing field for when you get into the difficult things that you need to talk about. It's also going to put the person that you're speaking to a little at ease so they're gonna be able to listen.

Number two, you want to have a goal. Never go into a difficult conversation without an outcome defined before you go into it. The reason why the outcome is so important is because this conversation is going to be a roller coaster the person that you're talking to might get upset you yourself might feel emotional at some point whether you're angry or you're triggered or you get sad and so when you ride the rollercoaster of emotion, the thing that is going to stabilize your thoughts is the outcome. You're causing you're having this conversation because you're committed to making the relationship better you're having this conversation because this isn't working and so we need to end it powerfully. You're having this conversation because you want to give somebody some feedback that's not so fun to tell them but you're giving it to them because you're committed to their success okay. So that goal you feel yourself getting emotional you come back to it you come back to it you come back to it.

Third thing you're gonna do a lot in this conversation you're gonna listen and you're gonna validate. So you're gonna say what you need to say and then the other person's gonna react and instead of arguing or debating I want you to listen and I want you to validate what the person is saying. May sound counterintuitive but honestly one of the most powerful things you can do in any conversation, whether you're fighting with your kids over curfew or you're arguing with somebody at work over workloads whatever it may be is here where the person's at.

**Video Clip:** Listen to me listen to me

**Mel:** The moment you say wow that must be really tough what you're dealing with or oh I totally get why you now were avoiding me if I felt the way that you felt I'd probably do the same thing. The second you validate somebody they immediately stop defending themselves its unbelievable actually. Unbelievable you've got to try it. Validate validate validate. It is the most powerful thing and then once of course they feel validated that you've heard them now they can listen and that's when you come back to the final thing which is you're gonna restate always the outcome

Keep coming back to it, keep coming back to it and yeah it's not gonna be fun it's not gonna be easy you're gonna have all kinds of emotions come up because you've been avoiding this conversation but I'm telling you right now if you find the confidence and the courage to go and to start this thing - acknowledge your responsibility, have an outcome in mind validate the other person validate validate validate and keep talking until you hit that outcome you're gonna be really really amazed at how much easier these things become and if you want to make it even easier on yourself rehearse it with another friend first, somebody that's not involved in the situation because again difficult conversations comes down to one important thing - The ability for you to separate your emotion about doing it from the things you actually need to talk about and the outcome that you want to cause

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