

# Conflict Journal

*A guided reflection to prepare for difficult conversations.*

## Keys to Courageous Speech

In the moment when a conflict arises, we don't always have the courage and clarity to say what we need to say. Sometimes we say too much or in a way that's hard to hear. Sometimes we don't say anything at all, letting the conflict escalate. Either way, taking a Pause to prepare yourself before engaging in a stressful situation can bring you the courage and clarity you need to say what you need to say. The three keys are:



- **Pause to Reset:** Notice stress rising, relax your mind, body, and spirit, and if needed, push Pause
- **Prepare your Message:** Reflect with RAIN, Draft I-Statements
- **Conclude with Conviction:** Prepare for three possible endings

*Between stimulus and response there is a space.  
In that space is our power to choose our response.  
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.  
- Victor Frankl*

## Using this Journal

This journal will walk you through preparing for courageous conversation. If you're able, we encourage you to print these pages out, find a quiet space, and hand write your reflections to the prompts. First, you'll recall the conflict or situation you are hoping to address. Next, you'll take a Pause to notice what's happening in your body and release any tension you're holding.

Once you've relaxed your body and brain, you'll reflect on your reaction to the conflict through a RAIN meditation. This will give you an idea of what you need to communicate and to whom so you can craft an I-statement (or two or three) that effectively share your message. Finally, take a moment to prepare I-statements for the three possible outcomes of the conversation.

Visit our website to learn more about [The Pause](#), [view resources](#) about these skills and ideas, and sign up for an [upcoming workshop](#).



# Recall your Conflict

Using the prompts below, take a few minutes to remember some of the key details of the conflict or situation that has brought you to this journal.

*Who is involved?*

*What happened?*

*How did you respond when the conflict occurred?*

*How did the other person respond?*

*How did you leave things? What's the current status of this conflict?*



# Pause to Reset

Before we enter a conflict, we should first pause to check in with ourselves. The prompts below will guide you through a three-part preparation to feel and think BEFORE you speak.

## Notice Stress Rising

*Invite yourself to be present to just this moment. What feelings and sensations are you experiencing?*

*How does your stress reveal itself to you? To others?*

## Relax Mind, Body, Spirit

*Take a moment to relax your mind, body and spirit.*

*MIND:* Remind yourself of your new mantra: Conflict is an opportunity for positive change!

*BODY:* Do a few rounds of 4-7-8 breath exercise and shake out the tension you're holding in your body.

*SPIRIT:* Send yourself a message of safety and set an intention for how you want to show up in this moment.

## Push PAUSE.

*Maybe you missed the chance to pause last time, but practice for next time. Draft a message and ask for a Pause.*

EX: "I need a minute to gather myself and my thoughts. I'd like to take a 15-minute break. Would that be OK with you?"



# Prepare your Message

## Reflect on RAIN

To better understand your reaction to this conflict or situation, use the RAIN method of reflection. You can listen to this [Tara Brach RAIN meditation](#) for a deeper experience.

Recognize	Allow	Investigate	Nurture
<i>What emotions are you feeling?</i>	<i>Let it be!</i>	<i>Why might you be feeling this way? What are you believing about this? What are your unmet needs?</i>	<i>What can be done about this unmet need? Who can help?</i>
	This is allowed!		
	Let it be!		
	It is what it is!		
	This is natural!		
	This too!		

**When you've finished, star the emotion(s) and need(s) that are most important to communicate to someone else.**



# Prepare your Message

## Draft your I-Statement(s)

Using your RAIN reflection above, create an I-Statement (or multiple statements) that communicates how you feel, why, and what you'd like moving forward. Remember to focus on the present and avoid blaming, shaming, and naming.

- I feel / I am / I get... *(Communicate your emotion using one word)*
- When... *(Describe specific objective behavior)*
- Because... *(Describe impact of that behavior on you)*
- What I'd like/need is... *(Make a specific ask)*

I-Statement #1:

I-Statement #2:

I-Statement #3:



# Conclude with Conviction

You can't control how a conversation will go, but you can control how you end leave it.  
Draft three I-Statements that prepares you for three possible endings to the conversation.

*If the conversation goes well and the problem is solved:*

*If the conversation is received well but problem isn't solved:*

*If the conversation ends in a stalemate or opposition:*

