



6 Steps To Healthy Conversation

Day 5: Disarm

Mark Oelze

Transcript:

Hi I am Mark Oelze. Welcome back to the PLEDGETalk online FREE mini-course where you are learning a “how to” for when communication *really* matters!

So far we have talked about the first three steps in the PLEDGETalk process.

Pause
Listen
Echo

Now the next time you experience a moment when communication matters, you will know exactly what to do to stay connected and move the conversation in a good direction: Pause, Listen, and Echo in that order.

This next step naturally follows in line with the process.

It is represented by the letter D in PLEDGE and stands for the word: DISARM.

Again, thinking first in the context of a conflict, this is the step that leads the relationship back to peace.

Here's how:

Tension shows up in a relationship or you find yourself in the midst of a conflict. The problem for most of us is - **we don't know what to do!**

Jim, my politician friend says he finds himself in this position a lot! Go figure. We all tend to get mad at politicians! Prior to knowing PLEDGETalk he didn't know what to do either when someone came into his office mad. Now? Now he knows exactly what to do. He follows the process I teach to a T - and says it works EVERY time!

Here's what he told me he does when someone comes in mad at him:

Jim puts the conversation briefly on hold while he goes to his desk and pulls out a pad of paper - in effect he is **Pausing** momentarily. No doubt while doing so he is getting his own emotions under control, so he can think straight and show that he values the person coming in to speak with him.

Jim then tells the person that he is going to take notes while they tell him what they are angry about. He explains that he wants to be sure he does his best to **Listen** and understand them and taking notes helps him do so. THEN - when the person is done sharing their frustration, Jim starts at the beginning and **Echoes** back each part of what the person said to make sure he understands what was said, and the person knows that Jim heard and genuinely understands them.

Jim **Pauses, Listens, and Echoes.**

He also does the next step: **DISARM**. He DISARMS the tension by saying something like: "what you have told me makes sense. I understand and appreciate your concerns. They make sense."

We must do the same when we find ourselves in a tough spot with our spouse, our child, a friend or anyone. We must think: PLEDGEtalk. First we **Pause**, then we **Listen** to the other person's concerns, and **Echo** back what we heard them say. Then, we **DISARM** the tension between us by saying something that validates the other person's frustration. We say something like: "that makes sense. I can understand your concern."

My friend Jim says that when he validates the person sharing with him, the tension in the room immediately drops - for there is no need for the other person to repeat again why they are so mad. He also says it's fun watching the person's jaw drops -- because they feel heard and understood -- a rare thing these days!

We all have moments when we are frustrated or hurt because of something someone has said or done. We wonder if we are crazy for feeling what we do. We don't think we are, but we don't know for sure. So when the person we have had the conflict with listens to us in a non-defensive manner, echoes back and even validates our concerns, it feels pretty good and goes along way to bringing peace to the relationship.

You and I can lead the way to peace and respect and love in our relationships with others through the PLEDGEtalk process if we regularly practice:

Pausing

Listening

Echoing

Disarming or validating...when there is tension in those relationships.

After LISTENING to my daughter's frustration with me treating her like a child, and ECHOING back to be sure I understood correctly, I DISARMED the conflict between us by telling her I could understand her frustrations. They made sense. When I said that, it helped make her feel like she wasn't crazy for feeling like she did, and there were reasons why she felt that way.

Now...I know the big question everyone is asking with this step we call DISARM.

What if you feel you can't say, "that makes sense" because it really doesn't! Even after they explained everything, and you did your best to listen, it still doesn't make sense why they are upset or why they see things the way they do?

Take a look at this picture: (a picture of a two people talking, looking at a sideways 9 or 6 depending upon their perspective.)

Two people arguing back and forth over whether the number they see is a 9 or 6. And the only way this will get resolved is if one person walks around to the other side to see the number from the other person's perspective. Then and only then will things begin to make sense.

It is the same for you and I. At the root of most conflicts there are one or more areas where things are seen and experienced from a different perspective. To bring resolve, we must walk over to see the other's perspective so we can say: "Oh - I get it. I see now what you are talking about. That makes sense."

Keep in mind by saying "that makes sense," you aren't telling them they are completely right in everything. What you ARE saying is that you can understand their perspective.

Ok - so here's the challenge for today:

Practice DISARMING and VALIDATING.

If you find yourself in tension or conflict today, be sure to Pause, Listen, Echo, and then Disarm the tension by validating what they other has said with the phrase: "That makes sense. I can see your viewpoint."

And when NOT in tension with others today, practice validating what others say.

- Applaud someone for speaking up in a meeting. Appreciate their perspective. Maybe even draw them out to listen more by asking them to explain their thoughts further.
- When your spouse tells you about their day, don't tell them they shouldn't have felt the way they did, instead tell them it makes sense they felt the way they did.

- Seek to be affirming in some way or another to every person you meet or spend time with today.

Ok - see you tomorrow for the 5th step in the PLEDGETalk process!