

How to Hug a Cactus

A Blueprint for Tough Conversations

A Guide By: LeeAnah James

The Prickily Part

There are many different types of hard conversations. Especially when you are building a life with someone very different than yourself. You may want or need to talk to your spouse or partner about a topic that is a trigger for one or both of you and need a guide. Or perhaps you are in a space where you seem to argue about everything. Use this to help have those tough conversations.

The Juice

There is no way to completely avoid challenging discussions. They help us establish boundaries, clarify expectations, and strengthen relationships. However, you can prepare for them and you can think through in advance how you will respond to the challenging parts.

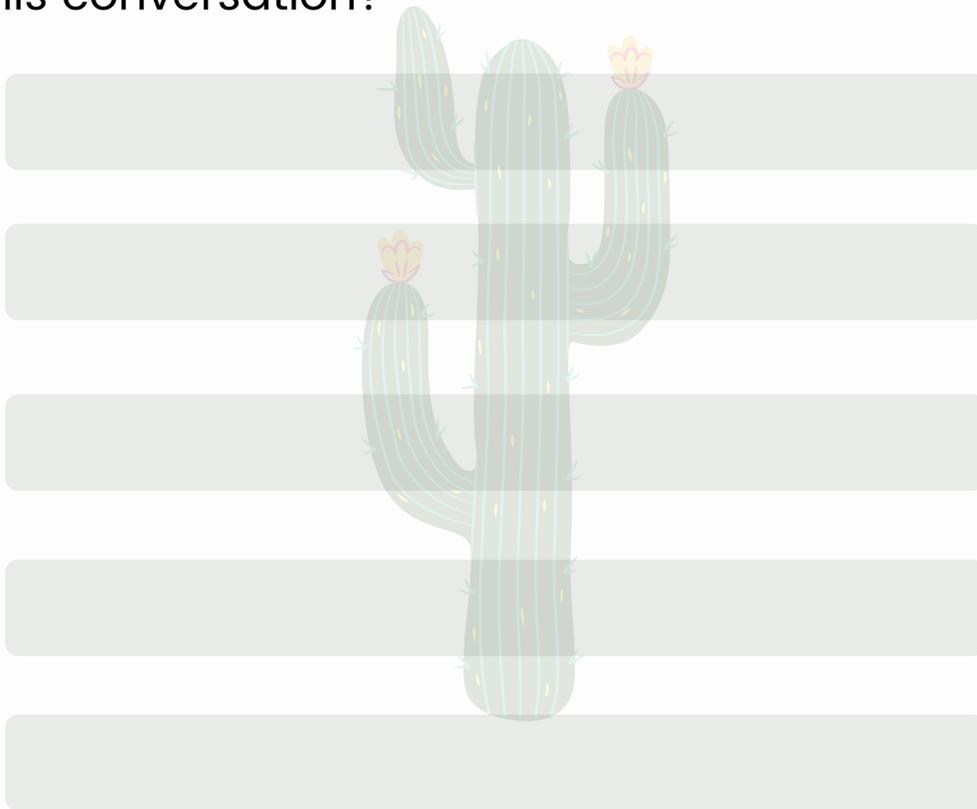
The Flower

When had with respect, grace, and intention, challenging conversations can lead to stronger more meaningful relationships. Its not about avoiding conflict but rather moving through it together. It's important to remember you're on the same team.

Step One: Establish Intent

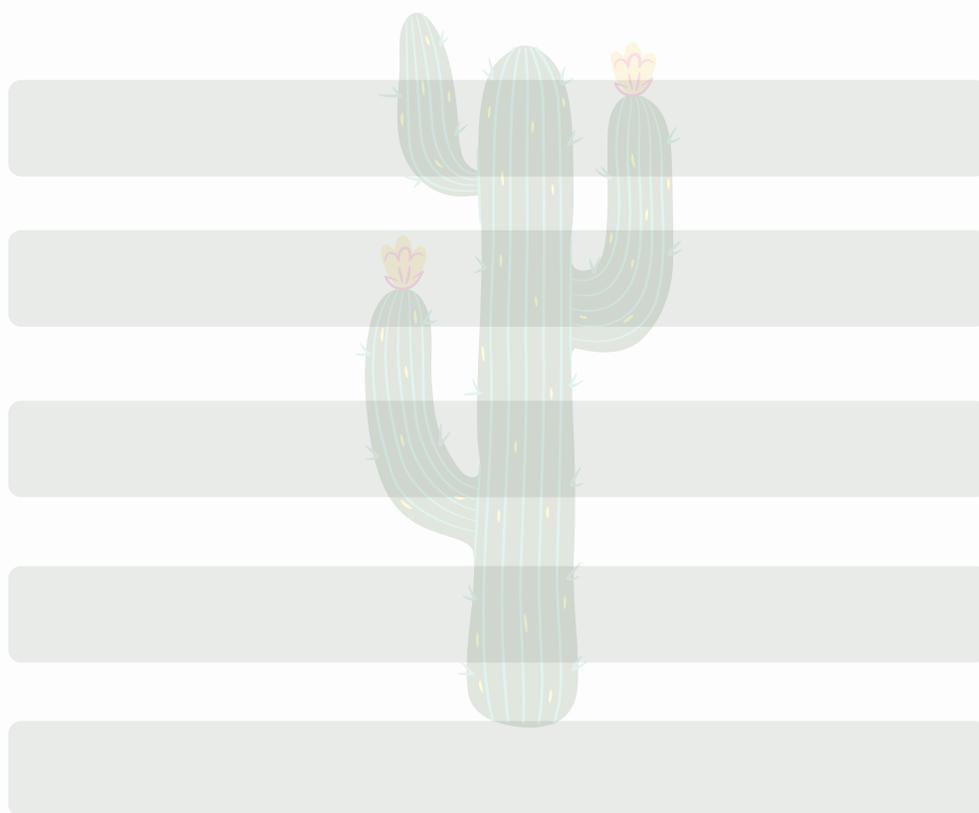
Intent sets the tone. It doesn't matter if you initiated the conversation or not, you have the opportunity and responsibility to set the tone of your expectations. This will help the conversation stay on topic and will assist you in maintaining control of your emotions.

What would you like to happen as a result of this conversation?

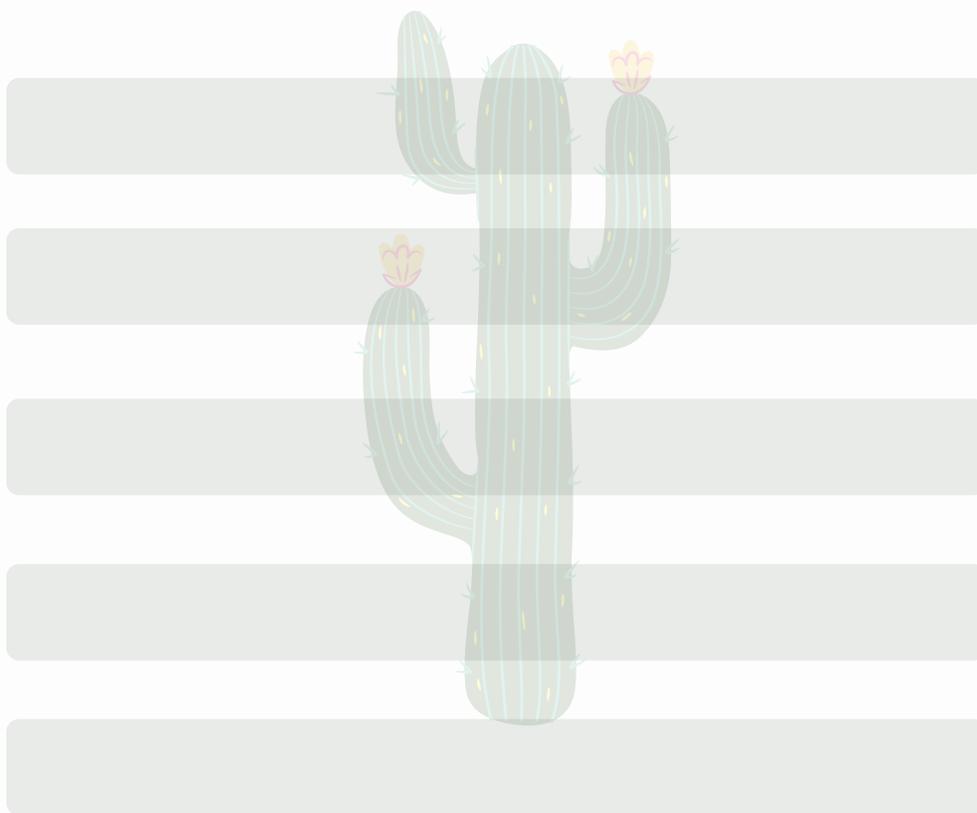


Five horizontal grey input bars for writing a response, with a faint cactus illustration in the background.

What is the minimum you are willing to accept?

A central illustration of a green cactus with yellow flowers is overlaid on five horizontal grey bars. The bars are intended for writing an answer to the question above.

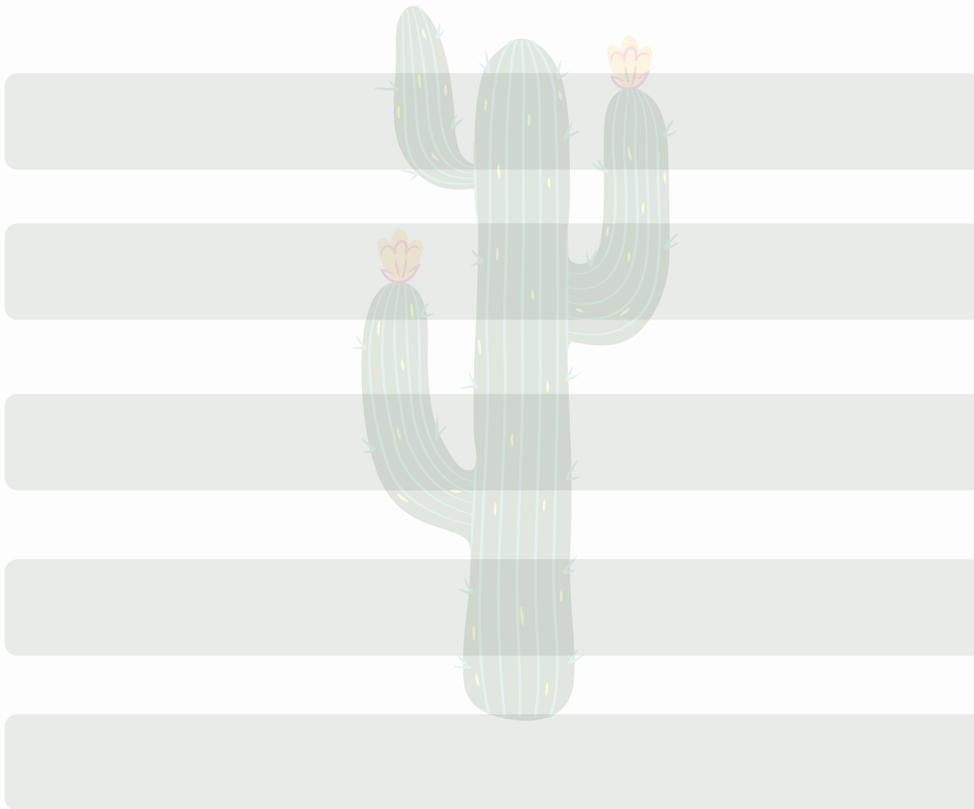
Why is this important to you?



Step Two: Lay the Groundwork

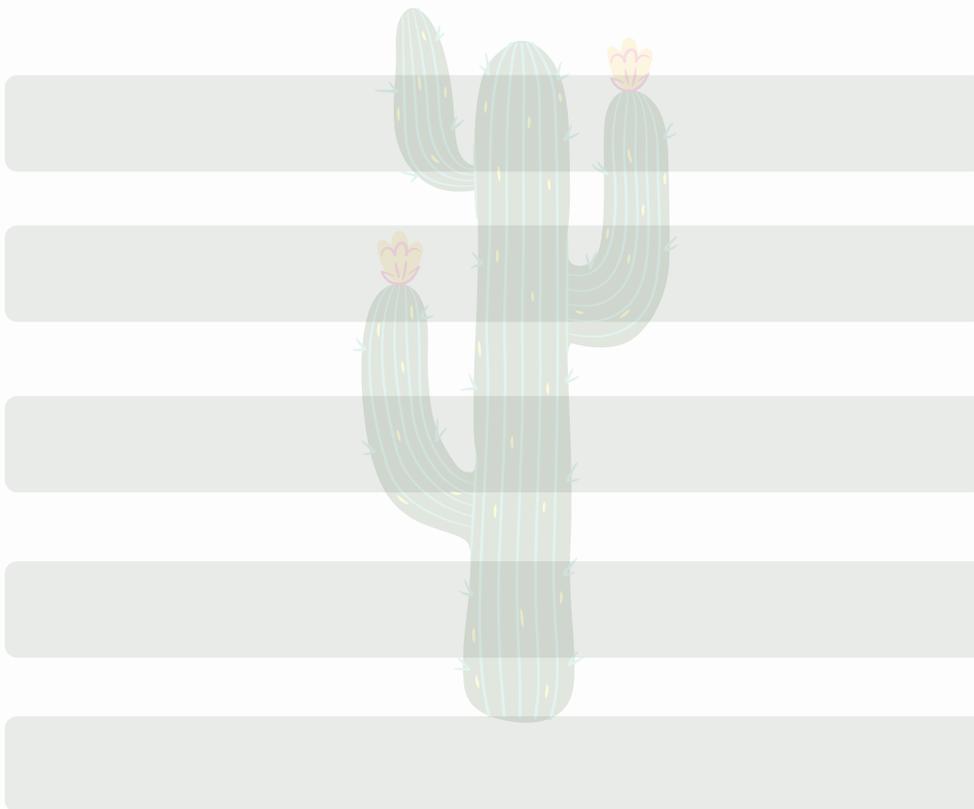
Share your intent with your spouse. Agree on a common value, belief, or goal. Decide that any communication from you will be delivered with love and respect.

I.e. We both want what's best for our family.



Step Three: Define Next Steps

Your next steps may be an apology and changed behavior. The next steps may also be making time to check-in or to making space for future discussions. It can even be to revisit later. If you choose to revisit set a date and follow-through do not leave things to fester.



Five horizontal grey bars are provided for writing the next steps, with a green cactus illustration overlaid in the center.

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What is the minimum you are willing to accept?

Why is this important to you?

Step Two: Lay the Groundwork

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Decide that any communication from you will be delivered with love and respect.

Step Three: Define Next Steps

Define and agree on next steps.