

# Preparing for the Coaching Conversation

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Check your attitude!

*Are you prepared to listen?*

*Are your emotions in check?*

*Have you planned well?*

*Are you ready?*

## Listening

Value listening. Listening requires us to:

- Be present
- Listen for the commitment that exists in the speaker
- Listen for possibilities that may be hidden
- Listen outside boundaries, judgments, evaluations and opinions
- Listen at a depth that creates space for future possibilities

## Body Language

Be aware of messages you might convey through your body language:

- Maintain eye contact
- Keep an open body stance (e.g., avoid crossing your arms)
- Maintain a relaxed posture
- Try to avoid distracting mannerisms (e.g., constantly tapping your fingers or feet)
- Maintain a steady volume when talking (not too loud, not too soft)

## Give Balanced Feedback

- Identify strengths and abilities
- Look for opportunities for the staff member to leverage their strengths in their work
- Reinforce good behavior and results with specific, positive feedback
- Address underperformance directly and honestly with specific examples and impacts (Observation, Example, Impact)
- Remember that goals should be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Timely)
- Avoid focusing only on negative feedback or only on areas for improvement