

# Confident Conversations Toolkit *Expanded*

## *Explanations + Real Examples for 13 Leadership Tools*

 <p><b>TERRY WILLIAMS</b></p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">CONFIDENT CONVERSATIONS CHEAT SHEET</h2> <p>New Zealand Leadership Trainer / Speaker. I give New Zealand workplace leaders simple tools to engage people. I've been delivering leadership training &amp; people-skills courses to people thrown in the deep end for years.</p> <p>For TikTok video explainers on these go to: @terrywilliamsnz</p>	
<p><b>01. SELECTS</b></p> <p>Shared purpose, Emotional regulation, Looking forward, Experiential learning, Curiosity, Traction, Specifics.</p>	<p><b>02. I-FEEL</b></p> <p>I statement, Facts, Emotion, Effect, Let's solve it – assertive phrasing.</p>	<p><b>03. SAFE</b></p> <p>For psychological safety: Set tone, Ask don't assume, Focus on learning, Encourage follow-up.</p>
<p><b>04. SBI</b></p> <p>Situation + Behaviour + Impact – give feedback without making it personal.</p>	<p><b>05. PAUSE</b></p> <p>Spot &amp; respond to quiet quitting: Pay attention, Ask, Understand, Share expectations, Encourage.</p>	<p><b>06. CLEAR</b></p> <p>Set expectations: Clarity, Link to purpose, Examples, Ask for input, Review regularly.</p>
<p><b>07. FLAG</b></p> <p>Spot underperformance: Focus loss, Late/lax, Attitude shift, Goals missed.</p>	<p><b>08. NOTE</b></p> <p>Document conversations: Name it, Outline facts, Takeaways, Email or log.</p>	<p><b>09. R.E.S.P.E.C.T.</b></p> <p>Recognise the request Explain your capacity Suggest alternatives Pause to think Empathise with their needs Clarify your message Thank them</p>
<p><b>10. LEAP</b></p> <p>Active listening: Listen, Echo, Acknowledge emotion, Pivot to problem-solving.</p>	<p><b>11. TRIANGULATION</b></p> <p>Use a shared physical "third point" to reduce direct tension in conversations. Avoid straight-line polarity.</p>	<p><b>12. CURIOSITY CUES</b></p> <p>Starter Phrases: "Help me understand how you see it" "Talk me through", "What's the story?" – lowers defensiveness.</p>
 <p>Grab the free eBook</p> 	<p><b>13. XYZ</b></p> <p>"We're here to talk about X" "This is because of Y" "What we need is Z"</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WWW.TERRYWILLIAMS.INFO</b></p>

## 1. SELECTS Framework

**Purpose:** Navigate tough workplace conversations with structure and confidence.

- **Shared Purpose Over Winning:** Focus on shared goals (e.g. "better teamwork") instead of proving a point.
- **Emotional Regulation Over Reactivity:** Pause, breathe, and stay calm. Your tone sets the tone.
- **Looking Forward Over Blame:** Shift from past mistakes to future solutions.
- **Experiential Learning:** Reflect after the conversation – what worked, what didn't?
- **Curiosity Over Assumptions:** Ask questions before judging. Use: "Help me understand how you see this."
- **Traction Over Closure:** Aim for progress, not perfection. One conversation rarely fixes everything.
- **Specifics Over Comfort:** Don't soften the message to avoid discomfort. Be clear and kind.

**Example:** "Let's talk about how we can work better together moving forward. I know last week's deadline caused stress, and I want to understand what happened so we can avoid repeat issues."

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## 2. I-FEEL Model

**Purpose:** Deliver assertive, non-blaming messages.

- **I Statement:** Begin with your experience.
- **Facts:** Describe the behaviour, not the person.
- **Emotion:** Share how it made you feel.
- **Effect:** Explain the practical impact.
- **Let's Solve It:** Invite collaboration.

**Example:** "I noticed the report was late. I felt stressed because it delayed the client review. Let's talk about how to avoid that next time."

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### 3. SAFE Model

**Purpose:** Build psychological safety so people feel safe to speak up.

- **Set the Tone:** Be open and vulnerable first.
- **Ask, Don't Assume:** Use curiosity, not accusation.
- **Focus on Learning:** Prioritise solutions over blame.
- **Encourage Follow-Up:** Keep the door open.

**Example:** "I'd love to hear your perspective. I might not have the full picture yet."

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### 4. SBI Feedback Model

**Purpose:** Give clear, constructive feedback.

- **Situation:** When and where.
- **Behaviour:** What you observed.
- **Impact:** The effect it had.

**Example:** "In this morning's meeting, you interrupted Sione a few times. It made it hard for others to share ideas."

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### 5. PAUSE Model (Quiet Quitting)

**Purpose:** Re-engage a disengaged team member.

- **Pay Attention:** Spot signs of withdrawal.
- **Ask:** Open a non-judgmental conversation.
- **Understand:** Explore root causes.
- **Share Expectations:** Re-align on standards.
- **Encourage:** Ask how you can support them.

**Example:** "I've noticed you've been quieter in meetings lately. How are you feeling about things at work?"

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## 6. CLEAR Expectations Model

**Purpose:** Set expectations clearly to avoid confusion.

- **Clarity:** Define exactly what's expected.
- **Link to Purpose:** Explain why it matters.
- **Examples:** Give good/bad examples.
- **Ask for Input:** Check understanding.
- **Review Regularly:** Don't set-and-forget.

**Example:** "I expect timesheets to be submitted by Friday noon so payroll is processed on time. Any barriers to making that happen?"

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## 7. FLAG Early Warning Signs

**Purpose:** Spot and act on underperformance early.

- **Focus Loss**
- **Late or Lax**
- **Attitude Shift**
- **Goals Missed**

**Example:** "I've noticed your reports have had more errors lately, which isn't like you. Everything okay?"

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## 8. NOTE Documentation Tool

**Purpose:** Record performance conversations.

- **Name the Situation**
- **Outline the Facts**
- **Takeaways and Agreements**
- **Email or Log it**

**Example Log:** "March 20 – Discussed late arrivals with Ali. She acknowledged issues and committed to adjusting morning routine. Follow-up set for April 3."

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## 9. R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Model (Saying No)

**Purpose:** Say no assertively while keeping relationships intact.

- **R**ecognise the request
- **E**xplain your capacity
- **S**uggest alternatives
- **P**ause to think
- **E**mpathise with their needs
- **C**larify your message
- **T**hank them

**Example:** "I know this project matters, but I can't do it justice this week. Could we revisit next Monday?"

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## 10. LEAP Listening Tool

**Purpose:** Listen actively and build rapport.

- **L**isten Fully
- **E**cho What You Heard
- **A**cknowledge Emotion
- **P**ivot to Solutions

**Example:** "So what I'm hearing is that you felt blindsided by the change? That makes sense. Let's talk about how to keep you in the loop."

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## 11. Triangulation Technique

**Purpose:** Defuse tension by introducing a neutral third point of focus.

- Use a document, screen, or shared task as the 'object' of the conversation.
- Shifts focus from "me vs you" to "us vs the problem."

**Example:** Instead of saying "You're not doing this right," gesture to the task: "Let's look at this checklist together and see what's missing."

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## 12. Curiosity Cue

**Purpose:** Replace judgment with inquiry.

- Use this phrase: "Help me understand how you see this."
- Keeps conversation open, non-defensive.

**Example:** Instead of "Why didn't you follow the process?" say "Help me understand how you approached this."

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## 13. XYZ

**Purpose:** To get yourself off to a confident start and to ensure the other person is in no doubt as what the conversation is about.

- Use this 3-phrase starter: "We're here to talk about X." (Context).  
"This is because of Y." (Specific incident and why it's important).  
"What we need is X." (reminder of expectations / standards and the starting point of developing a path forward together).
- Starts conversations off open, non-defensive.

**Example:** "We're here to talk about the consumption of chocolate milk that was supposed to be disposed of. This is because of food hygiene law and supplier credit balancing, which could lead to fines or contract penalties in the tens of thousands of dollars if found in an audit. What we need is for you to help us understand why you drank the milk and to ensure moving forward you know not, the reasons why, and the consequences for you if it happens again."

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## Want to Build These Skills In-House?

### Training options include:

- **Live workshops** for frontline leaders
- **One-on-one coaching** for emerging leaders
- **Custom programmes** tailored to your industry or challenge

**Enquire now** to book a discovery call, mention this offer, and get a free eBook version of my book about employee engagement 'Getting Better Buy-In'.

Visit: [www.terrywilliams.info](http://www.terrywilliams.info)

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Let's make tough conversations easier, and more effective, for your leaders.

