Tactics to communicate more effectively

Using phrases such as "Are you OK with this?" or "Does anybody have a problem with that?" send the message that you're unsure of yourself or that you are afraid of instigating any sort of conflict, says Dianna Booher, CEO of Booher Research. And people often discount or ignore this kind of indirect language.

To communicate effectively and ensure you're heard, try a more direct approach. Start by adopting a mindset that values diverse opinions and demonstrates you appreciate those that express opposing viewpoints, Booher advises. Sharing a variety of viewpoints doesn't have to lead to conflict.

Next, try to employ these communication tactics:

• **Go round-robin.** Pose a question and ask each member of the group for a one sentence or one-word response. For example, ask "What's your take on this situation?"

• **Try a "temperature check."** This is similar to when a nurse asks you to rate your pain on a scale of 1 to 10. You can ask "How committed to this approach are you on a scale of 1 to 10?" Then you can ask follow-up questions to learn more.

• **Adopt a truth-in-sharing policy.** This is when you force yourself to tell the truth about what you think. This policy can benefit your relationships and productivity.

• **Start speaking on the record.** Don't just gossip or grumble in the hallway where no one can hear you. When you have negative opinions, offer them out loud at the right time and place, and to the right people.

— Adapted from "Communication Cures for People Who Avoid Conflict at All Cost," Dianna Booher, *The Huffington Post*.