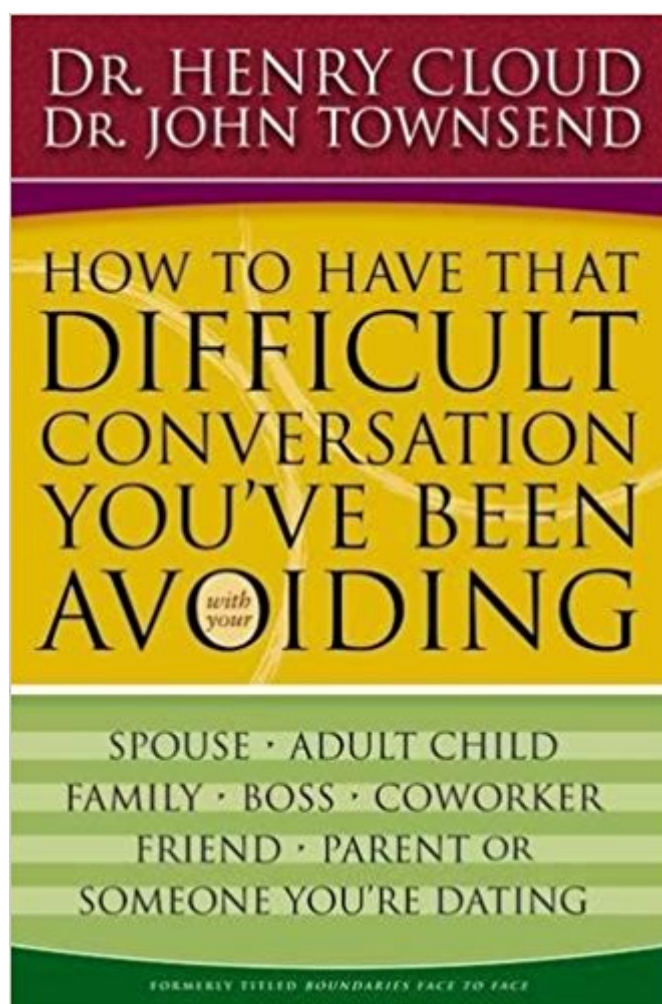


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# How To Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding: With Your Spouse, Adult Child, Boss, Coworker, Best Friend, Parent, Or Someone You're Dating





## Synopsis

A practical handbook on positive confrontation, now available in softcover with a discussion guide. Successful people confront well. They know that setting healthy boundaries improves relationships and can solve important problems. They have discovered that uncomfortable situations can be avoided or resolved through direct conversation. But most of us don't know how to have difficult conversations, and see confrontation as scary or adversarial. Authors Henry Cloud and John Townsend take the principles from their bestselling book, *Boundaries*, and apply them to a variety of the most common difficult situations and relationships in order to:

- Show how healthy confrontation can improve relationships
- Present the essentials of a good boundary-setting conversation
- Provide tips on preparing for the conversation
- Show how to tell people what you want, stop bad behavior, and deal with counterattack
- Give actual examples of conversations to have with your spouse, your date, your kids, your coworker, your parents, and more!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dr. Henry Cloud is an acclaimed leadership expert, psychologist, and New York Times best-selling author with his books selling more than 10 million copies. As a speaker, Dr. Cloud has shared the stage with many business and global leaders and experts, such as Tony Blair, Jack Welch, Condoleezza Rice, Desmond Tutu, Malala Yousafzai, and others. In his leadership consulting practice, Dr. Cloud works with Fortune 500 companies and smaller private businesses alike. He has an extensive executive coaching background and experience as a leadership consultant, devoting

the majority of his time working with CEO's, leadership teams and executives to improve performance, leadership skills, and culture. Dr. Cloud lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Tori, and their two daughters, Olivia and Lucy. Dr. John Townsend is a leadership consultant, psychologist, and New York Times bestselling author. He has written twenty-seven books, selling 10 million copies, including the 3 million-selling Boundaries series. John is founder of the Townsend Institute for Leadership and Counseling and conducts the Townsend Leadership program. He travels extensively for corporate consulting, speaking, and working with leadership families. He and his wife Barbi have two sons, and live in Newport Beach, California. One of John's favorite hobbies is playing in a band that performs in Southern California lounges and venues.

How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding The Talk Can Change Your Life As we speak around the country at conferences on relationships, we will often hear some version of the following story. A man will come up and say, 'Thanks for your materials on setting limits and boundaries. They have changed my life and my marriage.' We will say, 'Thank you, too. So what book did you read?' 'I didn't read a book,' the man will say. 'My wife did!' He will go on to explain: 'I was a crummy communicator with my wife. I controlled her, I had some bad habits, and I had no spiritual life to speak of. Then she read Boundaries, and she started applying the principles. That's when things started changing for both of us. It took some time and effort, but I'm really different now. We are closer, and we have more respect for each other and more freedom in the relationship. I'm doing a lot better with those bad habits, and I'm waking up to my relationship with God.' You would normally expect someone to talk about a book he has actually read. However, this man's unexpected response illustrates a reality: The person who has the problem in a relationship often isn't taking responsibility for his problem. This was bad news for the man's wife. She wanted to see change, but he either didn't see a problem, thought it wasn't a big issue, or thought his wife was overreacting. This can leave the wife who cares for her husband feeling helpless, discouraged, and less able to feel love in her heart for him. But there is good news. Though the person with the problem may not be taking responsibility for, or 'owning,' the problem, the person affected by the problem can change things. You may be the motivated one, the one who is concerned, sees the problem, and feels discomfort from it, whether it be a bad attitude or a bad behavior. In fact, you may be feeling more pain and discomfort than the other person. In our example, the wife, before confronting her husband, most likely had to deal with isolation, lack of freedom, his bad habits, and the emptiness of not having a spiritual partner. Things can change when the person experiencing the effects of the problem takes the initiative to resolve it. This wife took the first step. She became

aware that her husband's ways weren't good for either of them and that nothing would change unless she did something herself. That first step is often a conversation, a talk, a face-to-face confrontation with the other person. It is a conversation in which the two people discuss the problem and what can be done about it. It is a talk of truth. That single conversation may be all that's needed. But more likely, it will be the beginning of a series of conversations and events, as it was with the marriage in our example. We want to affirm and validate your decision to have 'the conversation you have been avoiding.' How to have that conversation is the core need this book addresses. You need a caring yet honest and effective way to confront someone in your life. The Bible teaches --- and research supports the idea --- that you can develop the skills and tools to be able to confront well. Things can change when the person experiencing the effects of the problem takes the initiative to resolve it. What Is a Boundary? Before we go further, however, we need to define a term that will come up a lot in this book: boundary. Simply put, a boundary is your personal 'property line.' It defines who you are, where you end, and where others begin. It refers to the truth, to reality, to what is. When you confront someone about a problem, you are setting a boundary. You can set a boundary with your words when you are honest and when you establish a consequence for another's hurtful actions. Boundaries help define who we are in our relationships. When we know what we want and do not want, what we are for and against, what we love and hate, what is 'me' and what is 'not me,' we are setting boundaries. People with good boundaries are clear about their opinions, beliefs, and attitudes --- in the way that Jesus taught: 'Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one' (Matt. 5:37). People without clear boundaries are unsure of their opinions, feelings, and beliefs. They find themselves easily controlled by the demands of others because they feel unsure of themselves when they need to take a stand. Boundaries also help protect us from injury and harm. By setting boundaries we can take responsibility for the lives and gifts God has given us: 'Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life' (Prov. 4:23). Boundaries protect our values, feelings, time, energy, and attitudes. When a person says to another, 'I want you to stop criticizing me in public,' he is setting a protective boundary. God himself has boundaries. He designed them and lives them out. He is clear on who he is, what he is for, and what he is against. He is for relationship, truth, love, and honesty, and he is against oppression, injustice, sin, and evil: 'For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity' (Isa. 61:8). (For more information on boundaries, please refer to our books *Boundaries*, *Boundaries in Marriage*, *Boundaries with Kids*, and *Boundaries in Dating*.) In this book we deal with one specific aspect of boundaries: We tell you how to set them by having a helpful and effective 'talk' with another person. We will sometimes refer to that confrontation as a boundary conversation, that is, a

talk with someone in which you confront a problem you want to resolve with the person. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Awesome for establishing boundaries and finding your voice. It definitely mixes useful advice and biblical advice. You can get a lot out of it.

I am a veteran Mediator. In addition to conducting Mediations I consult with people about how to have difficult conversations that many of them would avoid. This book is a very good aid to anyone because we all have occasions when we need to have that difficult conversation, or decide that it might be best if we forgive and decide to not ever have that conversation.

This book is a good tool for people who are looking to repair or set boundaries. It helps you to not feel guilty for setting them, and how to enforce them without feeling like a jerk. It also helps you approach people who don't respect your boundaries, and how to set clear limits with people.

It is just okay.

If you are like me, difficult conversations are like ingrown toe nails.....they just keep getting worse until you address the issue. This book will give you great instructions on how to remove the "ingrown toe nail"....Must Read!

This is one of those books that helps you in more situations than you might expect. From a new marriage with kids to difficult co-workers, I have used a lot of suggestions in this book to help make things better. That's really what I like about it: it is a completely different way of approaching things and making the situations better vs. coming out on top. You want EVERY relationship to be the best it can be, and this book will certainly assist with that.

This was an easy read and very practical advice to apply in many different relationships we have in life whether it be with family, friends, or co-workers in the office. I appreciated too the scriptural references that pointed us back to God's design for success in our relationships that were interwoven in the book. I would recommend this to anyone wanting to improve their skills in dealing with relationships and their interaction with others.

A must read for anyone who wants to improve their relationship with people through great communication. I learned a tremendous amount that is helping me to understand other people and let myself be understood.

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