



“CALLING IN” TECHNIQUES

Although calling someone out often feels good in the moment, it can have lasting negative impacts. An alternative is to “call in,” to invite someone into a conversation to consider alternative perspectives, grow in our understanding, and learn new ways for collaborating.

Not all situations will be right for a call in, and sometimes you can’t or won’t want to. But next time you want to try calling someone in, consider these techniques.

ASK YOURSELF: IS NOW THE RIGHT TIME?

Start with yourself. Pause and notice any emotions or physiological reactions starting to rise to the surface. If you only feel anger or rage instead of curiosity or empathy, it’s not the best time.

Calibrate the conflict. What damage was done? Was the harm caused minor? Was it unintentional? If so, this could be a good opportunity for a call in.

YES. WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Consider the iceberg. What might exist beneath the surface of a negative comment or disruptive action? Most conflicts are more complex than they seem and being curious about that complexity can lead to better outcomes.

Approach with empathy and invite further communication. Consider sharing your reaction to what happened paired with a question rooted in empathy and a genuine attempt to understand. “Can we go back to something you said? It felt harsh to me, and I’d like to better understand what you meant.”

Accept the reaction. The reaction someone has to your attempt at calling them in may not be what you expect. They could respond positively but they could also be annoyed or shut down. Acknowledge their response and try to adapt. The conversation may keep going or may need to slow down or stop.

Reach a resolution. Part of calling in is asking for accountability or amends. Once you’ve communicated what it was that was harmful, try to share something the person can do differently for future success.

REMEMBER:

Calling in is a skill that will develop over time and repeated use.