

THE COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT CONVERSATION CARD



**A relational, curiosity-first
approach to difficulties and
challenges**

The Collaborative Spirit conversation framework developed by Sue Chandler.
Influenced by the principles of Collaborative and Proactive Solutions
developed by Dr Ross Greene.

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THE MINDSET

Before the Conversation: Your Stance Matters

The Collaborative Spirit means meeting low-level behaviour concerns with:

- Curiosity over certainty
- Empathy before judgement
- Partnership instead of control-over
- Clarity that supports - not threatens - accountability

It is a way of meeting difficulty early - *in the gap* - before frustration escalates.

THE THREE COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT STEPS

Everything on the card sits underneath these three moves.

1. Invite Their Perspective

Stay with their experience long enough to see what's getting in the way.

2. Explain Your Perspective

Share what matters from your side clearly, calmly, and without judgement.

3. Plan a Way Forward Together

Co-design one realistic next step you'll test and revisit.

OPENING THE CONVERSATION:

Noticing Without Blame

Start with a neutral, consistent entry line:

"I've noticed..."

Use it only for observable facts:

- "I've noticed the draft hasn't come in yet."
- "I noticed morning arrival times are inconsistent."
- "I've noticed you haven't changed out of your sports uniform."

Why it works:

It signals safety, lowers defensiveness, and invites perspective before solutions.

STEP 2: EXPLAIN YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Keep it brief, neutral, and grounded. Frame it as a concern.

Short concern statements:

- "My concern is you might fall behind."
- "I'm worried we won't know where you are."
- "It's important to me because...."

Your concerns should relate to impact – on learning, safety, wellbeing, or others' experience – not to compliance or inconvenience.

One sentence is enough. Clarity works better than persuasion.

STEP 1: INVITE THEIR PERSPECTIVE

This is the step adults rush most. Slow down.

Curiosity prompts:

- "What can you share with me about that?"
- "Which part is hardest?"
- "What's been getting in the way?"
- "What would help me understand this better?"

If shame shows up:

- You may see shutdown, avoidance, or denial.
- This is protection – not refusal.
- Stay steady. Stay curious longer than feels comfortable.
- Stay connected. This is where insight lives.

STEP 3: PLANNING A WAY FORWARD TOGETHER

Aim for "solve with," not "solve for."

Prompts:

- "What's one step that could make this easier?"
- "What idea is worth trying first?"
- "If we tested something for a week, what might that be?"

If they're stuck:

Offer two or three options, not a menu.

Ask: "Which feels doable for you?"

Close with a small experiment:

- "So, the step we'll try is..."
- "Let's check in on ___ to see how it's going."