

TIPS FOR REACHING AGREEMENT

It can work well if you choose three tips each because a new approach creates a new conversation.

1. Begin and proceed with agreement as your goal.
"I'm here to reach a workable, practical agreement."
2. Speak from your head and from your heart.
"It makes sense to me that..."
"It would feel better if we could..."
3. Speak only for yourself; leave others the space to change their point of view.
"I would prefer..."
"What are you thinking now that I've explained...?"
4. Decide what is most important to you and explain it clearly.
"It's most important to me that... and although ... is also important, I'm open to hearing other ways of looking at the situation."
5. Decide which is more important to you: maintaining your current point of view or reaching a workable agreement. Then work out creative ways of maintaining what is important to you about your current point of view and reaching a workable agreement.
"How about we consider doing it this way so that you will be able to ... and I will be able to ..."
6. Think of yourself as right. Think of the others as right. Think of the mediation as an opportunity to reach a creative, practical agreement.
"I think I can see your point of view and mine. What part of yours do you think I'm not quite getting?"
7. Listen as if you are listening for the first time. Listen as you would like to be heard.
"I'll have a go at letting you know what I heard you say. Then you'll know the parts that I need you to repeat."
8. Show that you have listened by letting others know what you heard before you reply.
"It seems as if you are saying ... and that it is important to you."
9. Ask questions...seek first to understand, then to be understood eg
"Why do you believe your proposal is the best way to proceed?"
"What is it about our proposal that is difficult for you?"
"How do you suggest dealing with those difficulties?"
"If you were in our shoes, what are two options you'd consider?"
10. Let people know what you have heard when you do not yet understand.
"I've heard you say that... I need to hear some more before I comment."



11. Let people know what you have heard when you do not yet agree.
"I think I hear that you see it that... It looks very different to me."
12. Explain how you agree and how you disagree with what's been suggested.
"Now that I hear where you are coming from, I think I can agree with ... I still need to think more about ..."
13. Explain what would need to change for you to get closer to considering an agreement.
"If you could consider ... I could probably start to think of some ways forward."
14. Expect differing points of view regarding past events and future preferences.
"We're different. We see it differently."
15. Remain open to becoming better informed and therefore to changing your perception of past events and future possibilities.
"I'm keeping an open mind here."
16. Make room for yourself and others to change your minds. You will have to change your mind as will the others if agreement is to be reached.
*"I'm starting to see that there are other points to consider."
"I'm keeping an open mind here."*
17. Make suggestions that are new to all.
"Here's a thought based on what we have each said so far..."
18. Show that you can change your point of view.
"OK, I get it now. Although I'd have preferred ... I'm open to trying ..."
19. Expect to walk away with the same beliefs you walked in with.
"It's still fundamental to me that ..."
20. Expect to walk away saying *"I didn't get exactly what I would have liked, but it was fair and it will still seem fair in 5 years' time"*.
21. Call a break when you need one.
"I've been concentrating for a while. I'll need a break in about five minutes. Then I'll be back in 15 minutes. OK?"
22. Be curious all the way through.
"Can you tell me about the importance of that to you?"
23. Be generous at the end to bring it to an end.
"It's more important to finish this than to keep going over this last aspect. How about...?"