

# Avoiding the ambush approach

When an employee or coworker is out of line, you need to address the behavior. While you must discuss the sensitive topic with the person, you should also provide warning before you bring it up. That lessens the chance that the person will be surprised—or offended—by your comments.

Explain why you want to talk, what you want to talk about and why it matters to you. Then invite the person to explore the issue with you. *Here are some examples:*

- “Hey, Jim, yesterday you said something about the new compensation package that’s bothered me ever since. I know you have some concerns about it, and I’m worried about the effect your comments may have on the new people. Can we talk about it?”
- “John, I know you’re still upset about missing out on that trip next month. I know you question why you’re not coming along, but I felt a lot of pressure from upstairs to justify every expense in advance. I’d like us to talk about it.”
- “Carrie, do you have a few minutes? I’m still upset about this morning’s planning session. I know you’re under the gun to complete the project by next week, but I have some real concerns about the shortcuts you’re proposing. I’d like to kick around some ideas with you.”

—Adapted from *True Partnership*, Carl Zaiss, Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., [www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com).