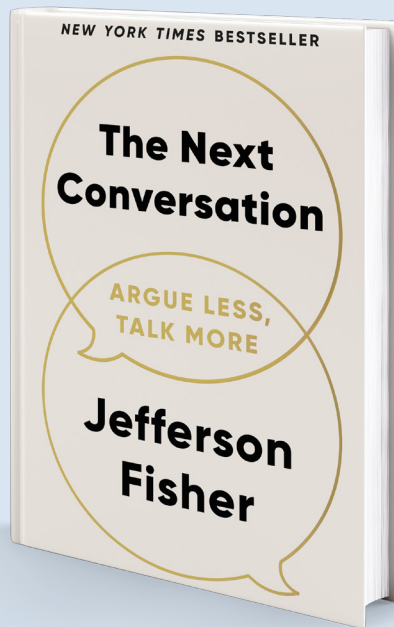


# Book Snaps™

In-depth reviews of best-selling business books.



## The Next Conversation

Argue Less, Talk More

By Jefferson Fisher

**Jefferson Fisher** is a trial lawyer, writer, and speaker whose work to help people communicate during life's everyday arguments and conversations, with his practical videos and authentic presence, has gained millions of followers around the world, including celebrities and global leaders. He is a sought-after speaker on communication at Fortune 500 companies and governmental agencies, and hundreds of thousands of people subscribe to his actionable email newsletter and podcast. Fisher is a Texas board-certified personal injury attorney and the founder of Fisher Firm, where he helps people all over the United States connect to trusted legal services.

*A Book Review by Soundview*

## Change Everything with Your Next Conversation

Conversations happen in every aspect of life. They can be lighthearted, full of laughter and fun, and bring people together. They can share stories, convey information, and help further a common goal in ways that encourage both parties and bring them together. Conversations are a way for people to find common ground that helps them move forward together more unitedly. This is the ultimate goal for people, but getting there isn't always easy.

Conversations can be exceptionally challenging. What may have started as a quiet conversation in which the conversants are trying to find their way back to each other ends full of tension and harmful words that can't be taken back. It can divide groups of people instead of uniting them. Why does this happen? Particularly when simply trying to share one's feelings or what they feel is helpful information. When blood pressures rise and communications become charged, what can be done? Is there a way that difficult conversations can occur and end without rabbit trails, frustration, or heated words?

Jefferson Fisher believes so, and in *The Next Conversation: Argue Less, Talk More*, he shares the wisdom he has gained over the years. A lawyer by trade, he learned at a young age that communication and learning how to read people well was vital. Fisher started sharing his strategies via short videos online, and, after receiving thousands of messages from his social media followers, he realized their problem wasn't necessarily what they wanted to say. Instead, the issue was how to say what they were thinking or feeling in a way that would help them connect with people and avoid arguments and awkward moments.. Fisher states that part of the reason he wrote this book was to help people gain skills to help their next conversation go smoothly and bypass harsh, unnecessary words.

Communication is modeled and observed, and if the communication style that has been learned isn't healthy, then it is time to break the cycle and learn a new way of communicating.

*The Next Conversation* is divided into two parts. Part One teaches the reader how to connect with themselves so they know what to do and how to react well when conflict arrives. Part Two

teaches how to leverage their new mindset so they can better connect with the people around them. Fisher shares three rules for changing conversations for the better: 1. Say it with control, 2. Say it with confidence, and 3. Say it to connect.

Fisher is confident that the difficult conversations will be removed and that in their place, there will be space to experience real growth and real connections, allowing them to show up confidently in each space of their life. Each chapter ends with a summary that can be referenced quickly. Fisher encourages the starting by picking one tip that resonates with them and learn how to apply it well before moving on to the next one. Doing this will prevent feeling overwhelmed as though everything must be implemented at the same time. This is a process, and Fisher is confident that the reader will gain the needed confidence to communicate and connect well.

## Part One: The Essentials

While it is common knowledge that how one communicates matters, its ripple effect is not as commonly acknowledged. The way that someone communicates with their coworkers, servers, or friends is observed by the people around them, particularly children. They will then communicate that way to those around them, so what started as a drop in the ocean eventually creates a tidal wave the original communicator could have never anticipated.

Contrary to the popular belief that winning an argument is paramount, something else is more important. Rather than proving one's rightness, it is vital to understand and remember that people might be dealing with several different things simultaneously, and only the tip of the iceberg is being seen. It is essential to show compassion and recognize the struggle resulting from communication conflicts.

If the ultimate goal is winning an argument, the trust and rapport built between people will be broken. Instead, the goal should be unraveling the issue to reveal the matter's core and gaining an opportunity to connect with others. Doing this will allow conflict to evolve into connections and open doors for a more meaningful life.

When heated conversations end, one often thinks about what they could have said differently. When given the chance to speak to the other party again, they may have an idea of what to say, but it is vital to have a goal in mind before beginning the next conversation. Doing this will help organize thoughts and begin moving toward each other. The most basic goal should be to learn from the other person, not to prove something. Recognizing unrealistic and realistic goals and proposing to set them is the beginning of understanding the other person and their point of view. The next step is defining and setting values, the true north of the conversation. They allow the reader to stay authentic while navigating the conversation and help them align the conversation to meet their goal before it begins.

Despite all the ways technology brings people together, it doesn't make up for the connection that is longed for. This should be considered when approaching conversations because

it could mean the difference between building or breaking connections with other people. Rather than connection, conversations through texts or email can seem more transactional because they focus on efficiency, not understanding or authenticity. Connection in this context is an understanding, acknowledgment, and discernment, which are vital to a conversation. It doesn't mean the result will be a happy conversation in which both parties always agree or come to a united resolution. It means that control and confidence are present when difficult conversations need to take place.

## Part 2: The Application

Rather than sharing quick fixes with the reader, Fisher provides a concrete three-step method for building a connection in the next conversation.

Say it with control.

Say it with confidence.

Say it to connect.

He explains that one's views, needs, and truth are the essentials of self-expression that make each individual unique and bring out an assertiveness they either didn't know or forgot they had. By following the directions shared, he promises the output will be a bolder, more assertive place in the conversation.

### Rule 1: Say it with control

Conversations that lead to harsh words and heightened tensions are often regretted almost immediately. While the spoken battle may be won, the relationship could have been lost, and it doesn't need to be that way. Learning to control oneself and recognize the triggers that ignite an argument's flame is essential—such as feeling threatened, becoming defensive, or facing personal attacks. This rising heat in a discussion is succeeded by cooling off - walking away from the conversation, reaching a place of mutual understanding, or encountering an impasse. The cooling process can only begin when there is a noticeable pause, and both parties can recognize the damage inflicted. These can also be labeled as Fight or Flight (heating) and Rest and Digest (cooling), and knowing these can help conversations be seen differently and lead to a place of internal curiosity. Fisher encourages reverse-engineering one's triggers, which results in becoming more adept at identifying what triggers the people around them and helping them defuse them.

Controlling the moment during a heated conversation is necessary because while it may not be possible to see a disagreement coming, the tension that leads up to it can almost always be felt. By learning how to leverage what the body is already doing, one can gain higher ground in an argument in a healthy way. Three highly effective tools can help weather the storm that comes in an argument.

The first tool is Your First Word is Your Breath. Taking a moment to breathe will allow for a moment of calm instead of letting heated words spill out. The next tool is Your First Thought



*It is vital to remember that words don't just affect the person at the other end of the conversation but the person speaking.*

is a Quick Scan. When a Quick Scan is completed, the result will be a better understanding of how they feel in the moment, and it will help them keep control of their emotions. Finally, using Your First Conversation is Small Talk helps bring mindset to the forefront. It is vital to remember that words don't just affect the person at the other end of the conversation but the person speaking. Choosing words that treat oneself better will also serve them as they work to improve their overall mindset.

Learning how to control the pace of a conversation is helpful when learning to communicate thoughts effectively. Rushing indicates the speaker was planning their response instead of listening well to the other person. While silence in a conversation is considered uncomfortable, a well-timed pause can be an effective tool to help fix communication struggles. Pausing in a conversation allows for time to reflect, reconsider, and regulate and can be used to create meaningful moments in each conversation.

## Rule 2: Say It with Confidence

Feelings, like confidence, cannot be switched on like a light. To feel more confident, one must take a more proactive approach and pair it with assertiveness. Assertiveness is how confidence is expressed, and the pair feeds into each other. Taking small steps, choosing assertive words, and eliminating filler words in conversations will help strengthen sentences and arguments and empower the reader to meet their needs. By choosing and focusing on one of the ten ways to practice assertiveness, confidence will slowly begin to bloom until it becomes second nature in conversation.

Word choice and speaking pace are also indicators of confidence. Choosing words carefully and avoiding filler words will show those around that the speaker is confident and knows exactly what they are conveying. Eliminating unnecessary apologies will also assist as they grow in confidence. Even though it might come from a place that feels like humility, what is actually happening is underselling oneself, which will end up being a distraction.

Feeling confident is important when conversing with difficult people, and it can be even more so when they are relatives. It is typically advised to find common ground and live peaceably with each other, but when this can't be done, being assertive can change the perspective of the conversation. When met with a half-hearted apology, constant interruptions, and hurtful or insensitive comments, standing up for oneself is paramount as a form of self-care. The person making those comments seeks to make themselves feel better, so the reader needs to slow down and use firm, concise phrases to combat this and call out the behavior.

While they can be challenging to set, boundaries are also essential when taking and staying in control of a conversation.

Setting boundaries is also healthy because it protects and prioritizes health and happiness over continuing to acquiesce to others. This can be avoided by creating a manual and enforcing it. Crafting replies and being prepared when someone starts to escalate and push buttons is a form of self-care and prevents being pushed around.

Enforcing boundaries can feel awkward, but the more it is done, the easier it will become. The boundary should begin with the value attached to the conversation to prevent others from pushing past it. If they are applying pressure on a topic that is uncomfortable or nonnegotiable, remind them of it. This needs to be quickly followed by naming a consequence, beginning a condition, and then an action step. Following through must happen if they persist trying to move past the boundary. Consistency is key, and holding boundaries firm is imperative on the path to gaining confidence.

## Rule 3: Say It to Connect

Connecting with people should be easy, but it can be tricky when neither party knows how to frame a conversation. While there might be a vague goal in mind, several rabbit trails and diversions will be on the way. Framing a conversation will make it easier to connect with others; it eliminates the small talk and the recaps that aren't needed and gets straight to the point of the matter at hand.

First, a direction must be set so that each party knows where they are going and where they will end up. When communicating this, the reader must be sure their goals and values are clear. Next, they should call their shot and share the projected end. It should be as specific as possible so that they know what the goal is. Finally, get their commitment to the frame that has been presented. Doing this will enhance the conversation by keeping what is necessary and ignoring what isn't, meaning each conversation will need a separate frame to avoid making things muddled or confusing. It will also help reach the goal of connecting.

Getting defensive in a conversation is costly and will ultimately break any connection that may have been made. Becoming defensive happens when something triggers, and it may show itself in ways such as giving someone the silent treatment or brushing off serious topics. It erects a wall that results from being uncomfortable, and while it is a mechanism designed to protect, it can prevent either party from understanding the other. When the trigger is allowed to take control, it looks for things to keep feeding the defensiveness. However, there is a way to stop allowing defensive break connections.

Continuing to be defensive doesn't have to remain the default

by purposing to understand the other person and what they are trying to communicate. It is essential to take a few seconds to pause and think about where they are coming from. It is more likely they are going through a hard time rather than taking verbal shots for no reason. Picking up every gauntlet that is thrown down isn't necessary, but what is crucial is showing them grace and staying in control of oneself. Refusing to enter into every argument presented will prevent walls being raised and preserve the desired connection.

Finally, having a difficult conversation and staying in control is possible. It doesn't have to become a situation where voices are raised, tensions are high, and the result ends with even more frustration. To start, set a time for the conversation when both parties are available to speak without distractions. Removing external factors will help avoid embarrassment and frustration. Asking the other party to set aside a time to speak also shows respect for their autonomy.

In today's world, it is common to begin with pleasantries to hopefully soften the blow when delivering difficult news, but skipping them and reaching the end goal would be more effective and succinct. Starting with unnecessary pleasantries and platitudes will only delay the difficult conversation that needs to take place. There is also the possibility that the pleasantries will delay the inevitable and see the original end goal ignored and pushed to the side. While it may seem harsh, it isn't because clarity in challenging conversations is a kindness to both sides and allows them to walk away with their dignity intact.

To avoid losing the end goal, it should be stated in one of the opening sentences. Moving everything else after that will bring clarity and allow the point to be made quickly. It will also ensure that the listener doesn't get lost because they became hooked on a word that then proceeds them down a rabbit hole away from the current conversation. This can easily be applied to conversations over text or email because removing pleasantries, justifications, and unnecessary words will help prevent confusing conversations.

Conversely, when approached by someone who wants to have a difficult conversation, it is essential for them to know that they are coming to a safe place. That means they know they can reach the reader and will not be shouted at or belittled for sharing their needs. Being a safe space, no matter what side of the conversation one might be on, is an excellent opportunity to connect with people. This doesn't mean the conversation will be easy but by being proactive and working to shift mindsets to be a person who is ready and able to handle difficult conversations.

## In Conclusion

*The Next Conversation: Argue Less, Talk More* by Jefferson Fisher is an enjoyable read that draws the reader in and shows them how to shift their mindset so they don't walk into their next difficult conversation being anxious. He shares the tactics he has learned and honed over the years, which have helped him gain confidence and communicate with the people around him. While it goes in depth, he states upfront that he is not

a psychologist or a therapist but a man sharing what he has learned from the daily grind of conversations with people in his life. The reader will soon see the benefits in real life by putting the mindset tips he shares into practice. They will also see their confidence grow as they are able to share their thoughts, ideas, and more with the people around them.

Learning how to communicate well is not something that can be taught in school, but those skills can be gained if one is willing to slow down, read people, and change one's mindset. Knowing what to say is the easy part. Knowing how to say it is now easy, too.

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