

Diplomacy helps everyone grow

PTA is a professional association advocating on behalf of children. As we speak for every child, it is important to be tactful, sensitive, politically correct and cautious when speaking or writing as a representative of PTA. Diplomacy is a skill that can be acquired with practice and thought. Leaders are those we want to follow, so how we speak to and in front of others is important. Think about the following:

It's all in the delivery of the message – Be aware of your body language and tone of voice. Both are indicative of showing respect.

Think before you speak and plan your words ahead of time, especially if you anticipate a problem during a discussion.

What is the intention of your message? Select your words and consider the consequences of your statements.

How will your message be interpreted by attendees or readers?

Who is your audience? Anticipate the situation and how it should be handled.

Do you need to rephrase your thoughts?

Try this valuable exercise with your board members. Rephrase statements you've heard and situations you've encountered.

Examples

I'm in charge now, so here's how things are going to be. **Diplomatic version** – “I believe in teamwork and cooperation and I will be expecting that from you as well.”

You need to let go of this, move on, and let me do it my way. This is my job now. **Diplomatic version** – “This is awkward for both of us. How do you see us working together as a team?”

When there is a problem or conflict situation that's causing problems: **Diplomatic version** – “We have an issue that we need to solve quickly. I know we can do that with everyone's thoughts, input and energy.”

When discussions get off-track and meetings get too long. **“Let's table that discussion and get back on track. We're beginning to lose sight of the main point.”**

