

C1

NEGOTIATIONS

DIALOG · 5 MIN.

Negotiating Across Cultures When "Direct" Sounds Rude · Podcast

A German manager says "That is not possible" — and the British side escalates. Why German clarity sounds harsh in English, and how to keep both substance and relationship.

Listen to the episode +
comprehension test:

<https://www.englisch-lehrer.com/podcasts/negotiating-across-cultures-when-direct-sounds-rude>

NAME

DATE

BRICK 1 · LEARN THE KEY PHRASES



Read the eight phrases with meaning and example. You will hear all of them in the episode.

ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	EXAMPLE
that's putting it mildly	das ist noch untertrieben	<i>'Difficult meeting?' — 'That's putting it mildly.'</i>
to walk someone through something	jemandem etwas Schritt für Schritt erklären	<i>Let me walk you through the revised timeline.</i>
I have some concerns	ich habe Bedenken (höfliche erste Widerspruchsstufe)	<i>I have some concerns about the payment terms.</i>
to see it quite differently	es deutlich anders sehen (deutlicher Widerspruch, höflich verpackt)	<i>To be honest, I see it quite differently.</i>
a hard no	ein klares, endgültiges Nein	<i>Their polite reply was, in substance, a hard no.</i>
to flag a problem	auf ein Problem hinweisen	<i>I want to flag a problem with the delivery schedule.</i>
to come across	wirken, ankommen (bei anderen)	<i>I may have come across more directly than intended.</i>
see you next week	bis nächste Woche / wir sehen uns (NIE „we see us“!)	<i>Thanks for the productive call — see you next week in Leeds.</i>



BRICK 2 · FILL THE GAPS



Complete the missing word from the conversation.

through

over

across

along

other

us

ourselves

one

01 I see a real problem with that timeline — may I walk you _____ it?

02 Say 'see you next week' or 'we'll see each _____ in Leeds.'

BRICK 3 · TRUE OR FALSE?



Tick one. T = true, F = false.

01 Emma says that 'quite interesting' from a British partner is always praise.

T ☐ F ☐

02 Emma advises Stefan to send Manchester a bridge-building message the same day.

T ☐ F ☐

BRICK 4 · ORDER



Number the steps of the conversation (1–5).

01 ☐ She corrects "we see us" and suggests a bridge-building message

02 ☐ Emma explains why direct phrasing lands like a door slamming

03 ☐ She shows how to stage disagreement in steps

04 ☐ Stefan reports the failed call and the email about his tone

05 ☐ She replaces "that is not possible" with a softer frame

BRICK 5 · YOUR VERSION



Write two sentences of your own using phrases from Brick 1.

.....

.....

.....

MINI-CHECK – CAN I DO THIS YET?

☐ I can announce a delay politely.

☐ I can propose an alternative.

☐ I can promise written confirmation.

Listened twice and ticked everything? Then you are ready for the real conversation.

Cut-out flashcards

× Cut out, fold on the line – English in front, German on the back. Or practise digitally:

<https://www.englisch-lehrer.com/podcasts/negotiating-across-cultures-when-direct-sounds-rude>

that's putting it mildly

'Difficult meeting?' — 'That's putting it mildly.'

das ist noch untertrieben

to walk someone through something

Let me walk you through the revised timeline.

jemandem etwas Schritt für Schritt erklären

I have some concerns

I have some concerns about the payment terms.

ich habe Bedenken (höfliche erste
Widerspruchsstufe)

to see it quite differently

To be honest, I see it quite differently.

es deutlich anders sehen (deutlicher
Widerspruch, höflich verpackt)

a hard no

Their polite reply was, in substance, a hard no.

ein klares, endgültiges Nein

to flag a problem

I want to flag a problem with the delivery schedule.

auf ein Problem hinweisen

to come across

I may have come across more directly than intended.

wirken, ankommen (bei anderen)

see you next week

Thanks for the productive call — see you next week in Leeds.

bis nächste Woche / wir sehen uns (NIE „we see
us“!)

Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why**.

BRICK 2 · FILL THE GAPS

01 **through**

"To walk someone through something" means explaining it step by step — the polite alternative to "the plan is wrong".

02 **other**

The trap: literal "wir sehen uns" becomes "we see us" — to native ears that describes a mirror. Correct: "see you" or "we'll see each other".

BRICK 3 · TRUE OR FALSE?

01 **False**

False — she warns that 'quite interesting' often isn't praise at all.

02 **True**

True — 'send Manchester a bridge today', acknowledging he may have come across more directly than intended.

BRICK 4 · ORDER

- 01 **1.** Stefan reports the failed call and the email about his tone
- 02 **2.** Emma explains why direct phrasing lands like a door slamming
- 03 **3.** She replaces "that is not possible" with a softer frame
- 04 **4.** She shows how to stage disagreement in steps
- 05 **5.** She corrects "we see us" and suggests a bridge-building message

KEEP PRACTISING LIVE

Want to practise these phrases in a real conversation?

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· Online.

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