

## Part Five

### Tips for Moving Forward: Building Consensus and Responding to Resistance

1

Teach and practice skills for dealing with conflict.

2

Ask teams to apply Senge's strategies for inquiry and advocacy (presented in chapter 5) to a current issue that is not laden with emotion. For example, a team could consider, "Should we keep minutes of our team meetings?" Debrief at the end of the exercise. What did we observe? What did we learn? How did we feel? Did we stay with the strategy? When would it be appropriate to use? How could we use it more effectively?

3

Ask teams to role-play a situation regarding a more volatile issue using the crucial conversation strategies we presented in this chapter. Once again, debrief at the end of the exercise.

4

Visit the Crucial Skills web site ([www.vitalsmarts.com](http://www.vitalsmarts.com)) and click on "Free Stuff" to get free video clips and role-play exercises for crucial conversations.

5

Create cues you can use to refocus when participants seem to be resorting to fight or flight. Signal timeout or simply ask, "Are we moving away from dialogue?"

6

Remember that facts are the required homework for any crucial conversation. What are the facts you can bring to the dialogue?

7

Build shared knowledge when faced with contrasting positions. Seek agreement on what research or evidence could help lead you to a more informed conclusion.

8

Use action research to explore differences. Create strategies that allow participants to put their theories to the test.

9

Recognize that conflicts are more productive when members have found common ground on major issues and approach one another with an assumption of good intentions.



**10** Remember that you are attempting to develop new skills that will require practice. As Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler advise, “Don’t expect perfection; aim for progress” (p. 228).

**11** Be tender with one another.

*(continued)*