Light Up Idaho is a call. A call to have difficult conversations with your family, friends, or partner. It’s the call to encourage Idahoans to make our state a brighter, more inclusive place. If you’ve been silent, or have sat passively by when someone spouted racist, sexist, unjust, or fear-based remarks

**IT’S TIME TO SPEAK UP.**

When you begin conversations with openness and honesty, you start a chain reaction. Your bravery will encourage others to do the same. Your ability to be thoughtful and calm during tough talks might just be what makes another person stop and think a little differently.

We can’t rely on anyone other than ourselves to change our state. So, let’s do our best to Light Up Idaho

**BY SPEAKING UP AND SPARKING CHANGE.**
It’s not easy to find the courage to speak when someone you love says something that makes you feel uncomfortable. However, lasting change can only occur when you do.

We can’t just wait and hope for the world to change around us. We are woven into our culture because we create it. This guide is for anyone who understands that the responsibility of improving our community, our state, our country, and our world lies with us.

**OUR GOAL IS TO EMPOWER YOU TO USE YOUR VOICE, EVEN WHEN YOU’RE AFRAID.**
HOW TO HAVE A HARD CONVERSATION:

Don’t worry. We wouldn’t tell you to finally confront the person or people who have consistently made you uncomfortable without giving you some support! Below you’ll find a helpful guide that will support you in having these conversations and make them feel constructive.

WHAT TO DO:

*Start with curiosity.*

Instead of going forth in attack mode, begin by asking questions. Asking questions that are direct and fair may help the person you’re talking to actually analyze why they think the way they do.

Examples:

- “Can you be more specific?”
- “How do you know this to be true?”
- “Where did you get that information? Is it based on fact or opinion?”
- “May I offer a different perspective?”
- “Does that make you uncomfortable? Why?”
Ask for supporting evidence from a credible source.

Try to respond by asking follow-up questions that revolve around supporting claims with evidence. Now, we recognize that sometimes the source itself can be problematic. However, responding to claims by asking people to consider where they’re getting information can be a helpful way to get into important issues.

Examples:

- “Do you think that’s a trustworthy source? Why?”
- “Have you looked at the data?”
- “Did you read that yourself?”
- “Are you open to hearing another interpretation of that information?”
- “Have you examined other sources for this data?”

Hold fast to boundaries.

Hold fast to boundaries about language. It’s totally fine to tell the person you’re talking to to not use offensive language. If the conversation is important to the other person they will respect your boundaries.
Examples:
- “If you’d like to continue having this discussion, please don’t use that word.”
- “I’d appreciate it if you didn’t use that type of language.”
- “Can we please set some ground rules about the language we use?”
- “I’m sorry if you thought I’d be okay with that word. I’m not.”

*Manage your emotions.*

It may be REALLY difficult not to get angry. And, it’s okay if you do. Your job in this discussion is to help open a doorway into another viewpoint. It’s also important that you don’t get caught up in semantics or get off-track into judgemental or accusatory language. Find a way to present your facts and ask a lot of open, honest questions. Try to allow curiosity to be your main emotion.

*Actually listen. Don’t just wait for your turn to talk.*

You may ask a question with the rebuttal to the answer already in your mind. You may also spend the entire time calculating your response while the other person speaks. If you really want to understand why someone thinks the way they do, then you need to pay attention to what they say. The greater your understanding, the more likely you’ll be able to explain a different way to think in a way the other person is likely to hear. By listening,

**YOU MAY ALSO UNCOVER SOME INSIGHTS TO YOURSELF AND HOW YOUR PERSPECTIVES MAY BE BIASED.**
Try not to “win.”

Remember the purpose of this conversation in the first place: You’d like to help your loved one begin to think differently. Convincing them to change their world view in a single conversation is impossible, so don’t try.

Instead, introduce new methods of information-gathering. Look for ways you can understand each other. Try to remember not everyone has the same access or opportunity. Offer new thought processes without demanding that they’re “right.”

WHAT NOT TO DO:

Treat the conversation with contempt.

If you begin your conversation with anger, you probably won’t end the conversation in any way that feels progressive or constructive. If you want any kind of response, then you need to at least respect the other person as a flawed, dynamic human being who is just as capable of kindness as you are.

Assume the person is stupid.

If you carry assumptions about the person you’re talking to into the conversation, you’re making the same mistake they do about the world they live in. Try to recognize how their worldview was built and give them the grace of time. It takes a long time to effect change, especially in personal growth.
Give up before you begin.

If you can, approach the conversation with the hope of a positive outcome. If you start with a defeatist attitude, then there’s really no point of starting in the first place. Remember the goal of the conversation and keep that in the front of your mind. And, remember that each time you present a broader, more colorful worldview,

YOU’RE HELPING THE OTHER PERSON WIDEN THEIR PERSPECTIVE.

Attack.

If you come into the conversation with your dukes up, you’d better believe the person you’re talking to will do the same. It’s difficult to bring about a thoughtful, engaging conversation if it begins with aggression.

Use your opinion to make a point.

It’s really HARD not to do this, but it’s pretty essential. Your experiences are important, yes, but you can’t make points about the community or the world in general by using your personal experience as a rule of thumb for everyone’s experience. Your points should come from relevant data, from expert opinion, and from news sources that are fair and unbiased.

HELPFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Sometimes, the biggest hurdle is just getting started. Here are some ways you can do it:
“I used to have the same perspective, but I’ve been doing a lot of thinking. Can I tell you about that?”

“It sounds like you’re pretty passionate about this subject. Can I offer a different viewpoint?”

“Can I bring something up that might be difficult for you to hear? Are you open to that right now?”

“Do you mind if we talk? I have something I’ve been meaning to bring up for a long time.”

HELPFUL MATERIAL:

You don’t have to come to this conversation “armed” with anything other than an open mind and honesty. However, if you’d like to learn more, and examine some of your own biases, check these out:

On White Privilege:

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack - Peggy McIntosh (1989)

White privilege definition: Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.

On Gender:

Doing Gender - Candace West, Don H. Zimmerman (1987)

Gender definition: Either the male or female division of a species, especially as differentiated by social and cultural roles and behavior.
On Intersectionality:  
https://youtu.be/O1islM0ytkE
Intersectionality definition: The theory that the overlap of various social identities, as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to the specific type of systemic oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual.

On Heterosexism:  
Heterosexism definition: A prejudiced attitude or discriminatory practices against gay people by heterosexuals.

On Sexual Orientation:  
https://www.apa.org/topics/lgbtq/sexual-orientation
Sexual orientation definition: One’s inherent attraction to a sexual partner of a certain gender, or the absence of gender preference in a sexual relationship; one’s identity as asexual, bisexual, heterosexual, gay, pansexual, etc.

On Ableism:  
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6488478/
Ableism definition: The tendency to regard people with a disability as incomplete, diminished, or damaged, and to measure the quality of life with a disability against a nondisabled standard.

THANK YOU  
& GOOD LUCK!