In workshops, a common question is How do I begin the conversation? Here are a few conversation openers I’ve picked up over the years–and used many times!

* I have something I’d like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.
* I’d like to talk about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with you, but first I’d like to get your point of view.
* I need your help with what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?
* I need your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)? If the person says, “Sure, let me get back to you,” be sure to follow up.
* I think we have different perceptions about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  I’d like to hear your thinking on this.
* I’d like to talk about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  I think we may have different ideas about how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I’d like to see if we might reach a better understanding about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I really want to hear your feelings about this and share my perspective as well.
* I’ve noticed a recurring conversation (conflict, disagreement, problem) we seem to have. I’d like to talk about why that happens.
* I’d like to talk with you about some things I’ve noticed over the last little while. I have some observations I’d like to share with you and some of the conclusions I’m starting to draw, and then I’d be really interested in hearing your perspective.

**Write a possible opening for your conversation before you have it to make sure you’ve thought through everything you want to say.**