Principle: you start a discussion by
(1) creating the right atmosphere and avoiding distractions
(2) outlining the CORPI of the discussion
(3) asking if the other person agrees with this

CLARIFICATION/DETAILS:

(1) Creating the right atmosphere and avoiding distractions
- Avoiding external distractions, creating a quiet setting for a discussion, taking enough time, having a drink, or breaking the ice by talking about generalities (e.g., the weather is not a bad starter, but also sport, politics, or your weekend). You can also say something about the circumstances which you have created for the discussion e.g., “I’ve put my telephone off the hook and switched off my mobile phone. What about you? Was it easy to make some time for this discussion?”
- Talk in a friendly manner, create a positive atmosphere, and use ‘we’ language (inclusive language). Here are some model openings:
  - “I’ve been looking forward to this discussion and I’m glad we can make a start.”
  - “Have you managed to do any preparation?”
  - “I hope that by the end of our discussion we’ll have loads of new ideas.”
  - “What do you think about this discussion?”
  - “Has anything else important happened since we made our appointment?”

(2) Outlining the CORPI of the discussion
- Context: concentrate gradually on the subject of the discussion: outline the reason, the framework, and the history. Here are some examples:
  - “We’ve had some recent incidents and I asked you to investigate.”
  - “The project that you’re co-ordinating could take on a broader scope at the request of the management.”
  - “We rounded off our previous discussion with …”
- Objective: outline the purpose of the discussion clearly (a joint or pro-social aim, if possible) or the desired result of the discussion e.g., “What I’d like to see by the end of the discussion is that we can adopt a joint point of view regarding …” “… find a joint solution which we can both accept.”
- Role: if necessary, clarify your role e.g., “Firstly, I’d like to hear from you how you wish to approach this project rather than tell you how I see it.”
- Procedure: suggest an approach/structure/procedure e.g., “I suggest first of all that we make a list of possible solutions without assessing them immediately and then assess the advantages and disadvantages of these solutions and then make our choice and plan our actions.”
- Interaction: clarity in the above points will usually ensure a more effective discussion.

(3) Asking if the other person agrees with this
- “Shall we approach it like that or do you have another suggestion?”