



MKC

*Shared growth.
Shared success.*

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS



Crucial Conversations

- “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” George Bernard Shaw
- “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”
Martin Luther King

Disclaimer

- You can't learn to conduct effective conversations in crucial situations from watching a one hour presentation.
- You must embrace the importance of effective communications.
- You must research the necessary skills and then practice them.
- You must be passionate about learning.

Practice makes perfect

- You didn't learn to be good accountants by going to a one hour seminar.
- You studied and then practiced your skills.
- How? Get a partner at work or home. Shut the door. One person is the communicator and the other is the communicatee. Pick a subject i.e. attendance. Then practice your skills.

Personalities

You can be even more effective at communications if you understand the other person's personality traits.

We use a tool called "The Predictive Index."

Assertive, Extroversion, Patience, Formal.
Behavior combinations.

What is a Crucial Conversation?

When:

- Opinions vary.
- Stakes are high.
-
- Emotions run strong.

How Do We Handle Crucial Conversation?

- Avoidance
- Face them and do poorly.
- Face them and handle them well.

When Conversation Move from Casual to Crucial?

- We yell.
- We withdraw.
- We say things we later regret.

Why?

- Generations of genetic shaping.
- Our bodies move blood from our brain to our fists or our feet.
- Fight or flight.

Typical Crucial Conversation

- You disagree with another person on a topic of importance to you.
- Your body pumps adrenaline into your blood.
- Your brain diverts blood from non essential activities such as thinking to high priority tasks – hitting or running.

Types of Crucial Conversations

- Talking to a coworker who behaves offensively.
- Giving your manager feedback.
- Critiquing a colleague's work.
- Dealing with a rebellious teen.
- Talking to a team member who is not keeping their commitments.
- Giving an unfavorable performance review.

Why get good at Crucial Conversations?

- **Kick start your career.**

People are able to express controversial opinions in a way that gets heard.

- **Improve your organization.**

Companies respond 5 times faster to financial downturns, are 2/3 less likely to have injuries or death due to unsafe conditions, substantially increase trust in work teams.

- **Improve your relationships.**

Couples are 50% less likely to be unhappy or break up.

- **Improve your health.**

Strengthen your immune system and increase quality of life.

Mastering Crucial Conversations

- **The Fools Choice**

Speak up and turn a powerful manager into your sworn enemy.
Suffer in silence and let a bad decision be made.

- **Dialogue**

People openly and honestly express their opinions, share feelings, and articulate theories. This is called the shared pool of meaning.

- **Filling the pool of shared meaning**

People skilled at dialogue make it safe for everyone to add their meaning to the shared pool.

They don't agree with every idea, they simply ensure all ideas get into the open.

As people are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, they make better choices.

Start With Heart

- **Work on me first, us second.**

The only person you can directly control is yourself.

- **Focus on what you really want.**

What do I really want for myself? For others? For the relationship?

When you find yourself moving toward silence or violence, stop and pay attention to your motives. What does my behavior tell me about my motives?

Then ask yourself what do I really want for me, others, and the relationship. Then ask how would I behave if this is what I really wanted?

- **Second, refuse “The Fools Choice”.**

Don't go to win or lose options. Clarify what you don't want, add in what you want, search for healthy options to bring you to dialogue.

Learn to Look

How to notice when safety is at risk

- **Watch for conditions**

Content (the topic under conversation) and conditions (what people are doing in response). If you can see why people don't feel safe by becoming upset or holding back their views, or going silent, you can do something to get dialogue back on track.

- **Learn to spot Crucial Conversations**

Physical signs – stomach tightens, eyes get dry.

Emotions – scared, hurt, angry.

Behavioral – raising their voice, pointing their finger, becoming quiet.

- **Learn to look for Safety Problems**

When you fear your ideas aren't being accepted, you start pushing too hard. When you fear you will be harmed, you start withdrawing.

Learn to Look

How to notice when safety is at risk

- **Silence** (purposefully withhold information from the pool of meaning)

Masking - sarcasm, sugarcoating, and couching

Avoiding – steering away from sensitive subjects

Withdrawing – pulling out of a conversation completely

- **Violence**

Controlling – coercing others to your way of thinking

Labeling – putting a label on people or ideas so we can dismiss them under a general stereotype

Attacking – moving from winning the argument to making the person suffer

Learn to Look

How to notice when safety is at risk

- Look for your style under stress

Become a vigilant self monitor – be able to step out of an argument and notice what you are doing and the impact you are having?

Make It Safe

How to talk about almost anything

- When others move to silence or violence - step out, make it safe, step back in
 - Start with heart – what do I really want?
 - Mutual Purpose means that others perceive you're working toward a common goal. Do others believe I care about their goals? Do they trust my motives?
What do I want for me, for others, for the relationship?
 - Mutual Respect – as others perceive you don't respect them, the conversation becomes unsafe and dialogue stops. Watch for signs that people are defending dignity.

Make It Safe

How to talk about almost anything

- What to do once you step out

- Apologize

When you've made a mistake that has hurt others, apologize. Give up saving face, being right, or winning to focus on what you really want.

- Contrast to Fix Misunderstanding

When others misinterpret either your purpose or your intent. Contrasting is a what I don't want, what I do want statement.

- Create a Mutual Purpose

Commit to stay in the conversation until we find a solution that serves both our purposes.

Recognize the purpose behind the Strategy – the why?

Invent a mutual purpose – move to more encompassing goals

Brainstorm new strategies – suspend judgment, think out of the box

Master My Stories

How to stay in dialogue when your angry, scared, or hurt

- **Retrace your path**
 - Notice your behavior – am I in some form of violence or silence?
 - What emotions are encouraging me to act this way?
 - What story did I create to feel this way? Question your conclusions and look for other possible explanations behind the story.
 - Get back to the facts. What evidence do I have to support my story?
- **Tell the rest of the story**
 - Am I pretending not to notice my role in the problem?
 - Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?
 - What do I really want?
 - What would I do right now if I really wanted these results?

State My Path

- **Share your path**
 - Start with the least controversial, most persuasive elements from your Path to Action. Be frank but respectful.
- **Tell your story**
 - Explain what you're beginning to conclude.
- **Ask for others' paths**
 - Encourage others to share their facts and stories.
- **Talk tentatively**
 - State your story as a story not facts. "I was wondering why..."
- **Encourage testing**
 - Make it safe for others to express differing or opposing views.

Explore Other's Paths

- **Ask**
 - Start by expressing interest in the other person's views.
- **Mirror**
 - Increase safety by respectfully acknowledging the emotions people appear to be feeling.
- **Paraphrase**
 - Restate what you have heard from others to show you understand and it's safe for them to express their views.
- **Prime**
 - If others are holding back, express what you think they may be thinking or feeling.

Explore Other's Paths

- As you begin to share your views
- Agree when you share views
- Build on what you agree on
- Compare – when others differ with you, don't suggest they are wrong. Compare your two views.

Move To Action

- Turn your crucial conversation into great decisions by avoiding two traps to action
- **Decide how to decide**
 - Command – decisions are made without involving others
 - Consult – input is gathered from a group, then a subset decides
 - Vote – an agreed upon % swings the decision
 - Consensus – everyone comes to a decision then everyone supports the decision
- **Finish clearly**
 - Determine who does what by when
 - Follow up and hold people accountable

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crucial conversations



**TOOLS FOR TALKING WHEN
STAKES ARE HIGH**

NEW FOREWORD BY STEPHEN R. COVEY

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHORS
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