

Executive Book Summary

crucial conversations®

Tools for talking when stakes are high.

This is a breakthrough book. . . They show how to effectively blend and use both intellectual and emotional intelligence to enable crucial conversation. “

Stephen R. Covey



Kerry Patterson
Joseph Genny
Ron McMillan
Al Switzler

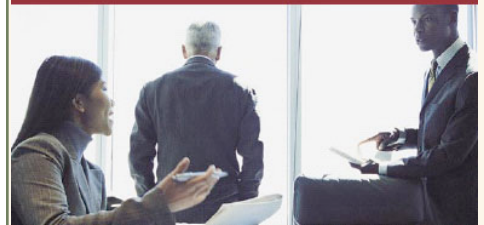
Crucial conversations is a hands on practical approach, which allows the reader to develop the skills necessary to successfully engage in difficult conversations. This book focuses on seven principle skills, which include examples and questions to help you understand and practice improving your dialogue skills. These principles are starting with your heart, learning to look, making it safe, mastering my story, stating my path, exploring others' paths, and moving to action.

The authors recognized the importance of engaging in productive dialogue to make successful decisions. They also recognized that some people were very skilled at engaging in difficult conversations. Their research led them to observe some of these people and identify common skills. People skilled in conversation were also skilled in controlling their bodies physiology. The good news that they found is that conversation skills can be learned.

By

Michelle Sarenco

ARE YOU GETTING THE RESULTS YOU WANT?



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Learn to Look

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What's a Crucial Conversation

A crucial conversation can take place any time any where. It is those everyday conversations that affect our lives.

Definition:

“Crucial Conversation

A discussion between two or more people where (1) Stakes are high, (2) opinions vary and (3) emotions run strong.” (p. 3)

Three options for handle crucial conversations.

- 1 We can avoid them.
2. We can face them and handle them poorly.
3. We can face them and handle them well.



Curly says: If you want to succeed in life you have to do one thing.

Dialogue

Physiological responses occur when we encounter these conversations.

Adrenaline is pumped into our body which causes the brain to direct our blood flow to the larger muscles, while blood is reduced to non-essential parts of the brains that controls higher reasoning.

Dr. Glaser and Dr. Glaser's research shows that people who can master crucial conversations are healthier and live longer.

Power of Dialogue

“Dialogue - The free flow of meaning between two people” (p. 20).

Thoughts and feelings formulate our meaning that drives our actions.

A person skilled at dialogue makes it a safe environment for everyone to share their information.

When everyone shares their ideas and information, it allows for more accurate information and therefore better choices.

Commitment and action come from decisions made when people have been involved in meaningful dialogue.

Dialogue skills can be learned

How of Dialogue

Start with Heart

The only person you can control is yourself.

One of the first things you need to do is refocus your brain. Asking yourself questions helps to refocus back on dialogue.

Asking yourself what you want helps you to take charge of the physiology of your body. When we ask ourselves a challenging question it causes the brain to recognize that we are not in physical danger and it moves the blood away from the major muscles and back to the brain.

So asking yourself what you really want serves two purposes. It keeps your focused on your goals and it helps the body's physiology.

The only person you can control is yourself.

Avoid sucker choices. These include believing you are choosing between peace and honesty, or winning and losing and so on.

When faced with what could be a sucker choice, work on formulating an and question. The and question is made up of two parts. First is a question that clarifies what you want and the second part clarifies what you don't want. ie) “How can I have a candid conversation with my husband about being more dependable *and* avoid creating bad feelings or wasting our time?” (p. 41)

And questions cause people to become more reflective and engaged in the dialogue.

What do I really want for myself?

What do I really want for others?

What do I really want for the relationship?

How would I behave if I really wanted these results?

Learn to Look

Learn to look for the content and conditions of the conversation.

When people become emotional in the conversation they tend to focus on the content of the conversation and forget to watch for the conditions.

Conditions to look for include spotting when a conversation is becoming crucial, looking for safety problems, and recognizing your style under stress.

Recognizing when a conversation is becoming crucial involves recognizing physical, emotional or behavioral signs occurring in your body. These could include such signs as stomach tightening, or an angry feeling.

When people are feeling safe they will engage in dialogue. Not feeling safe caused people to head down one of two paths. They either move to silence or to violence.

Often we fail to monitor our own behavior. We become consumed with the content and we fail to notice ourselves saying or acting in inappropriate ways.

Watch to see if others are turning towards silence or violence, as well as yourself.



Fight

Consists of any verbal attempt to convince, control or compel others to your point of view.

Three most common forms of violence are:

Controlling: coercing others to your way of thinking.

Labeling: dismissing others by putting a label on them.

Attacking: move from winning to making the person suffer. Belittling or threatening.

Flight

Seen as silence, which causes the person to actively withhold information that could add to the dialogue.

Three most common forms of silence are:

Masking: includes sarcasm, sugarcoating or couching.

Avoiding: steering away from the sensitive subject.

Withdrawing: pulling out of the conversation.



Step out to make it Safe.

Step out of the content of the conversation. You do this to allow yourself the opportunity to look at others reactions and your own responses. Look to see if safety is at risk. Dialogue will not occur if people are feeling unsafe. Identify which safety condition is at risk.

1. Mutual Purpose - working toward a common outcome in the conversation. When purpose is at risk it often is seen in both parties debating.
2. Mutual Respect- is the continuance condition of dialogue. When people feel they are not being respected it causes the dialogue to stop and defending of dignity takes over. Look for peoples with highly charged emotions.

What to do to make it Safe.

Apologize

A statement that sincerely expresses your sorrow for causing pain or difficulty to another person.

A sincere apology involves a change of heart.

Watch to see if the apology has restored safety and trust so that dialogue may continue.



Contrast

Contrasting is a do/don't statement that addresses the other persons concern that you don't respect them or you have malicious intent. This is the don't part of a contrasting statement.

The do part of the statement confirms that you respect the person and clarifies your real purpose or intent.

Contrasting is not apologizing. It is not meant to take back what we said but help to ensure that what we said didn't hurt more than what was intended.

Contrasting helps others to understand our intent in what we are saying. contrast



CRIB

CRIB is an acronym

Commit to seek mutual purpose. Start with heart by committing to stay in conversation. We need to stop thinking that our opinion is the only correct solution. We need to open our mind to other peoples thoughts and ideas.

Recognize the purpose behind the strategy and the need to change our strategy.

Ivent a mutual purpose. You need to more encompassing goals. This could include focussing on longer term goals.

Brainstorm new strategies. Join forces in finding a solution that benefits everyone.

CRIB- Commit, Recognize, Invent, and Brainstorm.



Master My Stories

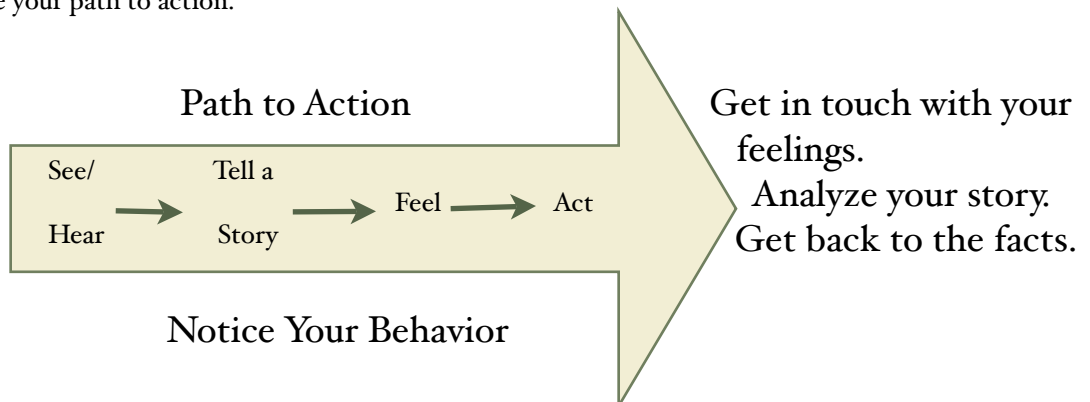
How to stay in Dialogue.

When your angry, scared or hurt.

Taking charge of your emotions.

No one can make you feel anything, it is you who chooses what you are feeling. You can act on them or be acted on by them.

If you are having difficulty moving away from responding with either silence or violence than you need to rethink your emotions and then retrace your path to action.



State My Path

How to speak persuasively not abrasively.

Share your facts

If you retrace your path of action to the source, you arrive at your facts.

Start your conversation with another person with the facts not the story we have created.

Facts are the least controversial and most persuasive component of a conversation.

Facts lay the ground work for all crucial conversations.



STATE

The first three tell what you should do and the last two tell how you should do it.

- Share your facts
- Tell your story
- Ask for others' paths
- Talk tentatively
- Encourage testing

Tell Your Story

It is the facts and your conclusion of the facts that make the dialogue.

Sharing your story takes confidence. Make sure that your story comes from a rational and reasonable examination of the facts. Not jumping to conclusions.

Don't pile it on. Don't let the problem simmer for a long time. The longer you let it simmer the greater the mind wanders.

Watch for the deterioration of safety and use contrasting to help you remain in dialogue.



Ask for others' paths

Asking for the others path helps to demonstrate humility.

Carefully listen to what they have to say.

Be willing to abandon your or reshape your story based on what you are hearing the other person say.

Talk Tentatively

This means to tell your story at a story and not to disguise it at fact.

You need to be confident in your story telling but humble as well. Again do not assume that the story is fact.

Talking tentatively does not mean you are talking as a wimp.

Encourage testing

Here you are encouraging others to talk and share their story.

Invite opposing views. This gives greater opportunity to add meaning to the pot of information.

Be sincere when inviting others to speak and listen to what they say. Use questions to encourage others to speak up.

Explore Others' Paths

How to listen when others blow up or clam up.



VS



This is another tool for helping others to feel safe in the conversation. When exploring others' paths you need to be sincere. If you are sincere then you will be ready and willing to become an active listener. Look for chances to turn on your curiosity to understand the persons fear, anger or anxiety. This also helps you to remain calm by keeping your brain focused. It helps you to retrace the other person's path so you can better understand how they came to their conclusions. Be patient with the other people. Adrenalin can hang around in a person for a long time.

There are four listening skills that can help you to retrace another persons path.

Ask - this is expressing interest in another persons point of view

Mirror- This involves acknowledging what the other person is feeling.

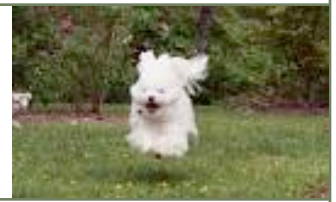
Paraphrase- restate what you are hearing in order maintain understanding and encourage continued dialogue by the other person.

Prime- If they will not engage then state your best guess at what they are feeling.

ABC's- agree when you do, build on the common understanding and compare your two points of view.

Move to Action

How to Turn Crucial Conversations into Action and Results



Moving to action doesn't always work for the following two reasons:

1. There is an unclear expectation on how decisions will be made.
2. They do a poor job acting on the decisions they do make.

Dialogue is not Decision Making
The two riskiest times in crucial conversations are at the beginning and the end. In the beginning you are setting up a safe environment. At the end everything needs to be clarified or you run the risk later on of expectations being violated or inaction occurring.

The people involved in the dialogue need to decide how the decisions will be made.



Methods of Decision Making

Command

This is when decisions are made with no involvement. Outside forces demand the decision or the decision is turned over to someone else and we just follow along.

Consult

Decision makers invite others in to hear their opinions prior to the decision being made.

Vote

This works best when you are choosing from a variety of good options and efficiency is the highest value.

Consensus

You talk until everyone honestly agrees with one decision. Can produce great synergy. Should only be used when everyone must support the decision.

How to Choose

Who Cares?

Decide who really wants to be involved and who will be affected by the decision.

Who Knows?

Decide who has expertise in the topic of the decision.



Who Must Agree?

Decide who's cooperation do you need in regards to authority or influence.

How many people to involve?

Goal is to involve the fewest number of people, while still considering the support needed.

Making assignments- Putting decisions into actions

Make and clarify the plan of
action

Decide who does what?
When it will be done by?
How will you follow up?

Decision Making Blunders and Solutions

- Don't pass out orders like candy.
- When you face a command decision, ask which elements are flexible.
- When giving an order explain why.
- When engaging consulting don't involve a lot of people if you have already made up your mind.
- Announce what your doing.
- Report your decision.
- If holding a vote, weigh the consequences.
- know when to vote.
- Don't cop out with a vote.
- Don't force consensus onto everything.
- Don't pretend that everyone gets their first choice.
- No martyrs
- Don't take turns.
- Don't engage in post decision lobbying
- Don't say "I told you so".



Putting it all Together



Coaching for Crucial Conversations

Principle

Skill

Crucial Question

1. Start with Heart
(Chapter 3)

Focus on what you really want.



Refuse the Sucker's Choice.

What am I acting like I really want?
What do I really want?

- For me?
- For others?
- For the relationship?

How would I behave if I really did want this?

What do I *not* want?
How should I go about getting what I really want and avoiding what I don't want?

2. Learn to Look
(Chapter 4)

Look for when the conversation becomes crucial.
Look for safety problems.
Look for our own Style Under Stress.

Am I going to silence or violence?
Are others?



Principle	Skill	Crucial Question
3. Make It Safe (Chapter 5)	Apologize when appropriate. Contrast to fix misunderstanding. CRIB to get to Mutual Purpose.	Why is safety at risk? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I established Mutual Purpose? • Am I maintaining Mutual Respect? What will I do to rebuild safety?
4. Master My Stories (Chapter 6)	Retrace my Path to Action. Separate fact from story.	What is my story?
		Paraphrase. Prime. (Chapter 8)



Coaching for Crucial Conversations (Continued)

Principle	Skill	Crucial Question
	<u>A</u> gree. <u>B</u> uild. <u>C</u> ompare.	Am I avoiding unnecessary disagreement?
7. Move to Action (Chapter 9)	Decide how you'll decide. Document decisions and follow up.	How will we make decisions? Who will do what by when? How will we follow up?



Personal Critique



This book is an excellent resource for learning how to keep your composure, control your emotions and think through your actions and comments when you enter into a difficult dialogue. Patterson, Genny, et al. have written a book that clearly describes seven principles to improve ones ability to engage in a difficult dialogue, while keeping their emotions in control. To demonstrate how to apply each of the seven principles, they accompany the principle with practical example and guiding questions. By practicing these questions and actions one could improve their ability to communicate.

This book focuses on how to control your physiological responses and it also teaches what to look for in the people you are engaging in dialogue. It helps you to identify when the people around you are feeling unsafe in the discussion and how you can step out of the conversation and restore safety.

This book can move you from failing at the tough conversations to a productive safe dialogue that can provide a pool of information to use to make decisions.

I highly recommend this book.

