

Crucial
Conversations
Training

How to Navigate Difficult Conversations with Confidence and Clarity

Presented

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What Makes a Conversation Crucial?

- ▶ • Stakes are High
- ▶ • Emotions are Strong
- ▶ • Opinions Vary



Icebreaker:

- ▶ Think of a difficult conversation that didn't go well. What went wrong?
- ▶ 1. Reflect (1 min)
- ▶ 2. Discuss in pairs (1 min each)
- ▶ 3. Group share (3 min)

What Happens When We Avoid Crucial Conversations?

- ▶ Scenario Discussion:
 - ▶ • Toxic Boss
 - ▶ (absentee, angry, micromanaging)
 - ▶ • Toxic Employee
 - ▶ (low performer, undermining, political)
- ▶ What happens without direct conversation?
- ▶ How does it impact the organization?

The Two Options

- ▶ 1) Talk it out
 - ▶ 2) Act it out
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- ▶ “If we don’t talk it out, we act it out.” – Crucial Conversations

Core Concepts of Crucial Conversations

▶ LAG Time

- The longer you wait to address an issue, the harder the conversation becomes
- The critical factor in the difficulty of conversation is amount of time between when you are aware of the issue and when you address it

Core Concepts of Crucial Conversations

▶ Facts vs. Stories

- There is a difference between facts and stories
- We create “stories” about situations that may not be fully accurate.
- “They ignored my email” (story) vs. “They haven’t replied in 48 hours” (fact).
- *“We feel the need to be right more than we feel the need to understand.” – Crucial Conversations*

Anatomy of a Crucial Conversation



SEE & HEAR



TELL A STORY



FEEL



ACT

Key Skills for Handling Crucial Conversations

- ▶ Ask the 3 Key Questions:
 - ▶ What do I want for me?
 - ▶ What do I want for them?
 - ▶ What do I want for the relationship?

Key Skills for Handling Crucial Conversations



Identify Mutual
Purpose



Use 'The Story I'm
Telling Myself' Tool

Key Skills for Handling Crucial Conversations

▶ MUTUAL PURPOSE

- ▶ Mutual purpose doesn't eliminate disagreement — it gives us a starting place that's not adversarial.
- ▶ A mutual purpose puts us on the same team.
- ▶ It turns me against you into *us against the problem.*

Key Skills for Handling Crucial Conversations



Identify Mutual
Purpose



Use 'The Story I'm
Telling Myself' Tool

Key Skills for Handling Crucial Conversations

- ▶ Story I am Telling Myself

- ▶ IT ACKNOWLEDGES

- ▶ “I don’t have all the information”

- ▶ IT ADMITS

- ▶ “I have begun to make assumptions”

- ▶ IT INVITES

- ▶ “Help me fill in the blanks & write the story”

Structuring the Conversation



Structuring the Conversation

Start

Start with Transparency



"This might be tough to hear, but I want to have a conversation that will help us both."



Ask permission: "Can we have a candid discussion about this?"

Structuring the Conversation

State

State the Facts, Not the Story



Describe observable
behavior, not assumptions.



leave out emotions and
motivations

Structuring the Conversation

Ask

Ask for Help and Perspective



I need your help.

Can you help me understand....?



Invite them to re-write Your story
Share your story after theirs



"The best way to get the truth is to start by assuming you don't have it." – Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference

Structuring the Conversation

Offer

Offer Help & Identify a
Path Forward



Here's how I/we can
support you in improving



Set clear expectations and
agreements

Structuring the Conversation

Clarify

Clarify Consequences &
Follow Up



If this doesn't change, here's
what will happen.



End with: "What did you hear
me say?" to ensure clarity.

Structuring the Conversation



Role-Playing Activity

- ▶ Practice a conversation using the 5-step structure
- ▶ **4 SCENARIOS**
- ▶ **Missed Deadlines:** A team member has repeatedly missed deadlines, affecting the project.
- ▶ **Negative Attitude:** A colleague has been making passive-aggressive comments in meetings.
- ▶ **Performance Issues:** An employee isn't meeting expectations, and others are picking up the slack.
- ▶ **Lack of Communication:** A coworker frequently fails to update the team on important changes.

Structuring the Conversation



Wrap Up

- ▶ Final Discussion:
 - ▶ What's one takeaway you will apply this week?
- ▶ Next Steps:
 - ▶ Identify a crucial conversation you've been avoiding
 - ▶ Plan for it with 3 key questions and 5 step framework
 - ▶ Have the conversation
- ▶ Let's Connect:
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