

Bestseller:
The New York Times
BusinessWeek
Wall Street Journal

(and curiously popular in Singapore)

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The Principle of Crucial Conversations

Anytime you're stuck, there's a crucial conversation keeping you there.



- Influence
- Team performance
- Productivity
- Marriage success
- Change management
- Diversity
- Safety
- Quality

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Where are We Stuck?

1. 44% of workers say they put in only the effort required to keep from being fired.
2. Only 23% of workers report working at their full potential.
3. 75% report they could be significantly more effective.

Source: Daniel Yankelovich

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The Leadership Skill



1. What **results** do you want that you're not getting?
2. What **crucial conversation** is not being held or not being held well that perpetuates your problem?

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Crucial Conversations are at the Root of All *Persistent* Problems



The measure of success is *not* whether or not you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it's the same problem you had last year.

- John Foster Dulles

What is the crucial conversation I'm not holding or not holding well?



Not holding

Don't trade the **possibility** of an uncomfortable conversation for the **certainty** of bad relationships and results.

Exercise




1. Is this a content, pattern or relationship issue?
2. What is the gist of my concern? Boil it down to one sentence.
3. What are the consequences of my not holding this conversation (or not holding it well)?

II. Why are Crucial Conversations So... *Crucial*?



This is your brain



crucial conversations

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This is your brain in a Crucial Conversation




... so we are left to deal with the most complex and challenging conversations of our lives with the same set of skills we would use to deal with a salivating predator.

crucial conversations

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A Tough Day



“Shut up.”
 “No, you little wimp.”
 ‘You get out of that room or I’m gonna tell!’
 “Fruitcake!”

crucial conversations

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A Tough Day in the House Ways and Means Committee



“Shut up.” Rep. Scott McInnis
 “No, you little wimp.” Rep. Pete Stark
 ‘You get out of that room or I’m gonna tell!’ Rep. Bill Thomas
 “Fruitcake!” Stark


- July 23, 2003 Meeting of the House Ways and Means Committee as described in USA Today

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III. Can you really get better? crucial conversations

Dialogue



The free flow of meaning

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IV. How? crucial conversations



Start with Heart


Learn to Look
Make It Safe
Master My Stories

STATE My Path
Explore Others' Paths
Move to Action

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Principle #1: Start with Heart crucial conversations

The Problem
The first thing to degenerate during crucial conversations is our motives—and we rarely see it happening.



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Motives that Kill Dialogue crucial conversations



- **Save Face**
- **Look Good**
- **Keep the peace**
- **Avoid Conflict**
- **Win**
- **Be Right**
- **Punish**

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Start with Heart




The Problem
 The first thing to degenerate during crucial conversations is our motives—and we rarely see it happening.


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

- for *me*
- for *others*
- for the *relationship*

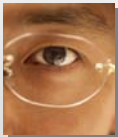




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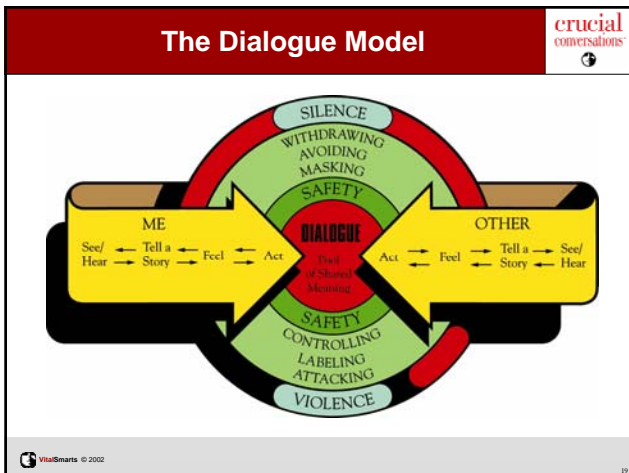
Learn to Look



The Problem
 During crucial conversations, we either miss or misinterpret early warning signs of problems.





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Learn to Look for Silence and Violence





SILENCE

Withdrawing—Pulling out of communication completely; physical, emotional, psychological

Avoiding—staying away from unsafe topics or issues

Masking—understating, sugar coating, sarcasm, selectively showing

DIALOGUE

Controlling—coercing others through how we share our views—interrupting, overstating, absolutes

Labeling—trying to win or have others give in through ridiculing their ideas


Attacking—making sure others hurt; emotional, physical, psychological

VIOLENCE


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Learn to Look at your own Style Under Stress

crucial conversations



"It is as hard to see oneself as to look backwards without turning around."

Thoreau

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Style Under Stress Test

crucial conversations

0 - 6 0 - 6

<p>Silence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Masking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 (T)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 (T)</p> <p>Avoiding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 (T)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 (T)</p> <p>Withdrawing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 (T)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 (T)</p>	<p>Violence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Controlling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 (T)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 (T)</p> <p>Labeling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 (T)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10 (T)</p> <p>Attacking</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 11 (T)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12 (T)</p>	<p>Dialogue</p> <p>•Start with Heart 0 - 3</p> <p>•Learn to Look 0 - 3</p> <p>•Make it Safe 0 - 3</p> <p>•Master my Stories 0 - 3</p> <p>•STATE my Path 0 - 3</p> <p>•Explore others' Paths 0 - 3</p> <p>•Move to Action 0 - 3</p>
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1- 6 ask, "At what costs?"

Lower scores = opportunity

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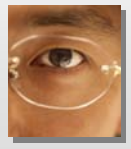
Learn to Look

crucial conversations

The Problem
During crucial conversations, we either miss or misinterpret early warning signs of problems.

The Solution
- Learn to look for your Style Under Stress

- Learn to look for silence and violence—signs of deteriorating safety.




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Make it Safe


crucial conversations

The Problem
With too little safety, *nothing* is discussable.



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Candor is Never the Problem crucial conversations



People never become defensive about *what* you're saying.

People become defensive because of *why* they think you're saying it.

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Ingredients of safety crucial conversations

Mutual Purpose – The Entrance Condition



“You know that I care about *your* goals.”

Mutual Respect – The Continuance Condition



“You know that I care about *you*.”

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Make it Safe crucial conversations

The Problem
With too little safety, *nothing* is discussable.



The Solution
With enough safety, you can talk about *anything*...

Step out of the content of the conversation and build Mutual Purpose and Respect.

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Jane Wagner crucial conversations

**All my life I've wanted to be somebody.
Now I see that I should have been more specific.**

- The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe

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