

# CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

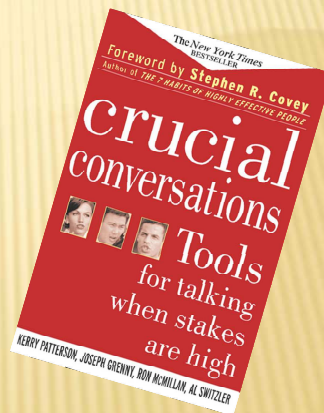
Tools for Talking When Stakes are High



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## ABOUT THE BOOK

- ✘ New York Times Best Seller
- ✘ Authors: Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler
- ✘ Paperback or eBook
- ✘ Information available online at [www.crucialconversations.com](http://www.crucialconversations.com),
- ✘ [www.vitalSMARTS.com](http://www.vitalSMARTS.com)



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## WHAT IS A CRUCIAL CONVERSATION?

- ✘ A Crucial Conversation is a discussion between two or more people where:
  - + Stakes are high,
  - + Opinions vary, and
  - + Emotions run strong.



## SOME EXAMPLES

- ✘ Talking to a coworker who behaves offensively
- ✘ Giving the boss feedback about his/her behavior
- ✘ Critiquing a colleague's work
- ✘ Talking to a team member who is not keeping commitments
- ✘ Giving an unfavorable performance review
- ✘ Talking to a coworker about a personal hygiene problem



## THREE OPTIONS

- ✘ When faced with a Crucial Conversation you can do one of three things:
  1. Avoid it
  2. Face it and handle it poorly
  3. Face it and handle it well



## REASONS WE HANDLE THEM POORLY

- ✘ We are designed wrong
- ✘ We are under pressure (with a barely functioning brain)
- ✘ Caught off guard, we improvise
- ✘ We're stumped
- ✘ We act in self-defeating ways and make things worse!



## REASONS TO LEARN TO HANDLE THEM WELL

- ✘ Improve your career
- ✘ Improve your organization
- ✘ Improve your relationships
- ✘ Improve your personal health
- ✘ Revitalize your community



## YOUR STYLE UNDER STRESS

- ✘ Silence
  - + Masking: understating opinions, sarcasm, sugarcoating, couching.
  - + Avoiding sensitive subjects
  - + Withdrawing from the conversation entirely



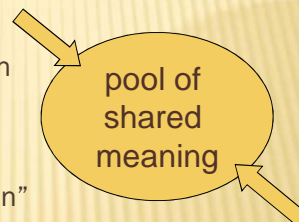
## YOUR STYLE UNDER STRESS

- ✘ Violence
  - + Controlling: cutting off, overstating facts, speaking in absolutes, changing subject, controlling
  - + Labeling people or ideas so we can dismiss them under a general stereotype or category
  - + Attacking: making the other person suffer, belittling, threatening



## THE POWER OF DIALOGUE

- ✘ What it is:
  - + The free flow of meaning between two or more people
- ✘ What it is not:
  - + Debate or argument, trying to “win”
  - + Hints, sarcasm, innuendo, verbal attacks, accusations
  - + Giving the silent treatment, running away
  - + Playing games



## HOW TO STAY IN DIALOGUE

- ✘ “Start With the Heart” - begin with the right motives
- ✘ Stay focused on your goal no matter what
- ✘ Refuse the “Sucker’s Choice”; open yourself to change, search for the elusive “And”
- ✘ If you fall out of dialogue ask:
  - + What am I doing, and what does it tell me about my underlying motive?
  - + What do I want for myself?
  - + What do I want for others?
  - + What do I want for the relationship?
  - + **How would I behave if I really wanted these things?**



## LEARN TO LOOK: MAKE IT SAFE

- ✘ Know when you get so caught up in the *content* that you ignore the *conditions*, and the conversation has become unsafe.
  - ✘ Physical signs
  - ✘ Emotional signs
  - ✘ Behavioral signs
  - ✘ Thoughts-lack of trust in other’s motives/ability



## MAKE IT SAFE

- ✘ Establish and maintain mutual purpose and respect
  - ✘ Do others believe you care about their goals?
  - ✘ Do they trust your motives?
  - ✘ Do others believe you respect them?
- ✘ How can you come to respect people you don't respect?



## WHEN SAFETY IS AT RISK

*When mutual purpose and or respect are at risk, it is no longer "safe" and you are no longer in dialogue!*

- ✘ Step out of dialogue and use these tools
  - + Apologize (**when appropriate and sincere**)
  - + Contrast to fix misunderstandings
  - + "CRIB" to get mutual purpose



## USE CONTRASTING

- ✘ A don't/do statement that:
  - + Addresses others' concerns that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose
  - + Confirms your respect or clarifies your real purpose
  - + **Is not apologizing**
- ✘ Provides context and proportion
- ✘ Useful for prevention or first aid



## CONTRASTING EXAMPLE

- ✘ Address the other's conclusion that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose (the *don't* part)
 

**I don't want to suggest the problem is yours. The truth is, I think it's ours. I'm not trying to put the burden on you.**
- ✘ Confirm your respect or clarifies your real purpose (the *do* part)
 

**I do want to be able to talk so that we can understand each other better. Perhaps that will change how I'm reacting to you, too.**

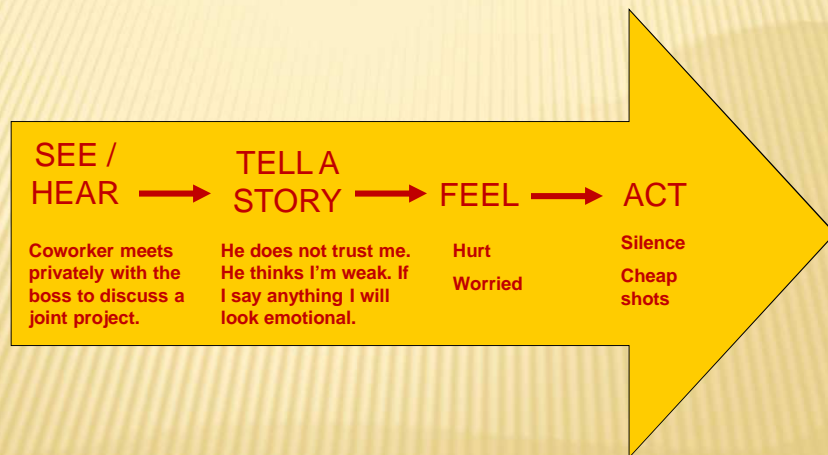


## “CRIB” TO GET MUTUAL PURPOSE

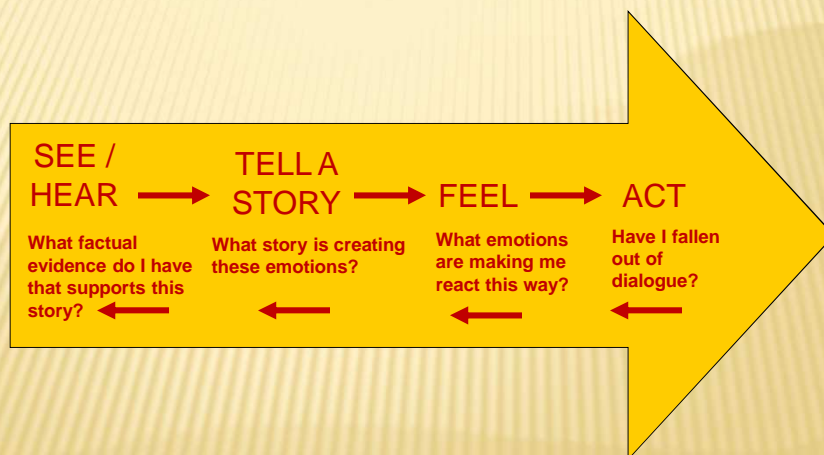
- ✘ Commit to seek mutual purpose
- ✘ Recognize the purpose behind the strategy
- ✘ Invent a mutual purpose
- ✘ Brainstorm new strategies



## MASTER YOUR STORIES



## RETRACE YOUR PATH

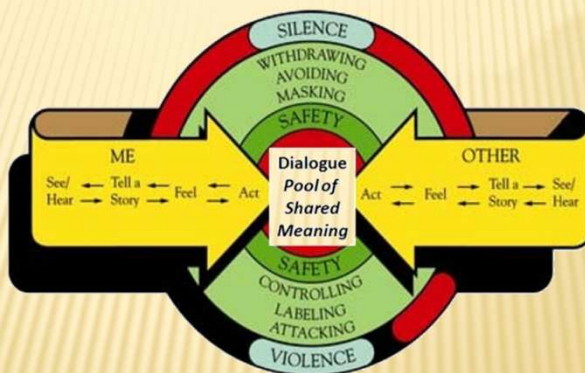


## TELL THE WHOLE STORY

- × VICTIM STORY: Turn victims into actors
  - + Am I pretending not to notice my role in the problem?
- × VILLIAN STORY: Turn villains into humans
  - + Why would a reasonable, rational and decent person do what this person is doing?
- × HELPLESS STORY: Turn the helpless into the able
  - + What do I really want for me? For others? For the relationship?
  - What would I do right now if I really wanted these results?**



## THE DIALOGUE MODEL



## TOOL: STATE YOUR PATH

- ✘ When you need to share controversial, touchy or unpopular views:
  - + **S**hare your facts
  - + **T**ell your story
  - + **A**sk for other's paths
  - + **T**alk Tentatively
  - + **E**ncourage Testing

## TOOL: STATE YOUR PATH

- × **S**hare your facts first
  - + Non-controversial
  - + Persuasive
  - + Least insulting



## TOOL: STATE YOUR PATH

- × **T**ell your story
  - + “Based on the facts, I am beginning to conclude...”
  - + Be confident, but don’t pile on
  - + Watch for safety problems



## TOOL: STATE YOUR PATH

- × Ask for other's paths
  - + What are their facts?
  - + What is their story?



## TOOL: STATE YOUR PATH

- × Talk Tentatively
  - + I was wondering... Perhaps you were unaware... In my opinion...
  - + Don't be wimpy and do the message a disservice



## TOOL: STATE YOUR PATH

- × **E**ncourage Testing
  - + Encourage others to challenge you
  - + Invite opposing views
    - × *“Does anyone see it differently?”*
    - × *“What am I missing here?”*
  - + Play Devil’s Advocate
    - × *“What if I’m wrong here...?”*



## TOOL: AMPP

- × When others blow up or clam up:
  - + **A**sk them to tell their stories
  - + **M**irror to confirm their feelings
  - + **P**araphrase to acknowledge their stories
  - + **P**rime when you’re getting nowhere



## TOOL: **A**SK TO GET THINGS ROLLING

- ✘ “I’d really like to get your opinion on this.”
- ✘ “Please let me know if you see things differently.”
- ✘ “Don’t worry about hurting my feelings. I really want to hear your thoughts.”



## TOOL: **M**IRROR TO CONFIRM FEELINGS

- ✘ “You say you’re okay, but by the tone of your voice, you seem upset.”
- ✘ “You seem angry at me.”
- ✘ “You look nervous about confronting her. Are you sure you’re willing to do this?”



## TOOL: PARAPHRASE TO CONFIRM FEELINGS

- ✘ “Let’s see if I’ve got this right. You’re upset because I’ve voiced my concern about some of the clothes you wear. And that seems controlling or old-fashioned to you.”



## TOOL: PRIME WHEN YOU’RE GETTING NOWHERE

- ✘ “Are you thinking that the only reason we’re doing this is to make money? That maybe we don’t care about your personal lives?”



## USE **ABC** WHEN YOU DISAGREE

- × **A**gree when you can
- × **B**uild on what you heard (start with how we agree, then build on the part I agree with)
- × **C**ompare – (start with how we agree, then compare what she/he said with what I think to be true)



## REVIEW

- × Stay in Dialogue
- × Make it Safe
- × Master your Stories
  - + Retrace your path to action
  - + Tell the Whole story
- × STATE your path
- × AMPP when others blow up or clam up



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