

Crucial Conversations

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- The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.
- George Bernard Shaw

TODAY

- What type of business climate are you experiencing today?
- Are your ethics challenged?
- Are you doing things differently?
- Do you plan to make more changes?

Riddle

You can hardly ever find it anymore — especially in politics or business. Lots of schools don't teach it anymore. We want more of it in our children and in all the adults who interact with them. We want it from our bosses and the people who fix our cars. And most of us believe we have plenty of it.

Answer

- Character
 - Character is a morally neutral term describing the nature of a person in terms of major qualities. So everyone, from iconic scoundrels like Hitler to Saints like Mother Teresa,
Have 'a' character

Character

- A person's character refers to the sum total of his or her moral qualities:
 - Is she a good person or bad person?
 - Is he worthy of trust and admiration or not?
- When we say someone has good character we are expressing the opinion that his or her nature is defined by worthy traits like integrity, courage, and compassion.

Character

- People of good character are guided by ethical principles even when it's physically dangerous or detrimental to their careers, social standing, or economic well-being
- They do the right thing even when it costs more than they want to pay

Character

- No one is born with good character; it's not a hereditary trait
- It isn't determined by a single noble act
- Character is established by conscientious adherence to moral values, not by lofty rhetoric or good intentions

Character

- The way we treat people we think can't help or hurt us
 - Like housekeepers, waiters, and office workers
- Tells more about our character than how we treat people we think are important

Character- Reputation?

- Abraham Lincoln recognized an important difference between character and reputation.
- “Character,” he said “is like a tree and reputation like its shadow.
- The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”

Reputation

- Reputation matters
- It determines how others think of us and treat us and...
- Whether we are held in high or low esteem

Reputation

- That’s why many people and organizations are so preoccupied with their image that
 - They actually undermine their character by concealing or creating facts to make them look better
- It’s ironic that reputations are often the result of dishonesty or the lack of accountability

Crucial Conversations

- What makes them crucial?
 - First, opinions vary
 - Second, stakes are high
 - Third, emotions run strong

How do we handle?

- We can avoid them
- We can face them and handle them poorly
- We can face them and handle them well
- Speak up and turn the most powerful person in the company into their sworn enemy
- Suffer in silence and make a bad decision that might ruin the company

Dialogue

- The free flow of meaning between two or more people
- Skilled people find a way to get all relevant information (from themselves and others) out into the open
 - Free flow of meaningful information
 - What can you do to encourage meaning to flow freely

Dialogue

- Pool shared meaning
 - As individuals are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, they make better choices
 - As people begin to understand the whys and wherefores of different proposals, they built off one another.
 - Eventually, as one idea lead to the next, and then to the next, they came up with an alternative that no one had originally thought of and that all could wholeheartedly support.
 - The final choice was truly greater than the sum of the original parts.

Irony of Dialogue

- When we are sharing controversial ideas with potentially resistant people, the more forceful we are, the less persuasive we are. Talking tentatively can actually increase our influence.

More Irony of Dialogue

- The more you care about an issue, the less likely you are to be on your best behavior.

Why is it difficult to start and manage a difficult conversation?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Remember – People talk When

- It's safe
- They feel you genuinely care
- What can you do to make the environment right?

How to stay focused

- Start with your own heart
 - Work on me first, us second!
 - Focus on what you really want
 - If you can't express yourself, how can you hope that others will understand
 - Begin high-risk discussions with the right motives, then maintain focus and have smart dialogue
 - Don't let your emotions get the best of you

Before you start talking you must know the answers to these questions

1. What do I really want for myself?
2. What don't I want?
3. What do I really want for others?
4. What do I really want for the relationship?
5. How would I behave if I really wanted these results?

Learn to Look

- At content and conditions
- For when things become crucial
- Watch for safety problems
- To see if others are moving toward silence or violence
- For outbreaks of your own style

When it is not safe, people go to:

- 1. Silence
- 2. Violence

- “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter”
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Silence

- Withholding information from the shared pool of meaning
 - Masking – understating opinions (sarcasm and sugarcoating)
 - Avoiding – steering away from sensitive subjects
 - Withdrawing – pulling out of conversation altogether

Violence

- Any verbal strategy that attempts to convince, control or compel others
 - Controlling – forcing your views or dominating the conversation
 - Labeling – name calling
 - Attacking – belittling or threatening
 - Subtle manipulation

Make it Safe

- Step out and start back when safety is restored
- Decide which condition of safety is at risk
- Apologize when appropriate
- Contrast to Fix misunderstanding
- Create a mutual purpose
 - Commit to see mutual purpose
 - Recognize the purpose behind the strategy
 - Invent a mutual purpose
 - Brainstorm new strategies

- “Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret”

- Ambrose Bierce

Master My Stories

- Am I in some form of silence or violence?
 - Get in touch with your feelings
- What emotions are encouraging me to act this way?
 - Analyze your stories
- What story is creating these emotions?
 - Get back to the facts
- What evidence do I have to support this story?
 - Watch for clever stories.

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?
- Remember, you and only you, create your emotions, and you and only you can change your emotions.

ASK a question

- The power of the question
Great leaders stop thinking about what they have to say, and start thinking about what they have to ask.

When there's conflict.

Asking a question clarifies the situation.

- *How do you think we should proceed?*
- *Can we agree to disagree and still work together?*
- *Do I understand your position correctly?*

When there's a lack of focus

Questions help get a discussion back on track.

- *What can I do to help you?*
- *What are we trying to accomplish?*
- *Are we approaching this from the right standpoint?*

You want to build rapport

Asking for an opinion shows you value the person.

- *What's your advice?*
- *How does the situation look from your perspective?*
- *Am I overlooking something?*

When you're at a loss for words

Questions buy you time.

- *How would you like me respond to that?*
- *Would you please repeat that?*
- *How do you think I should feel after hearing that?*

When you're under attack

A question turns the focus back on the attacker.

- *Why do you believe my idea won't work?*
- *What have I said to make you feel that way?*
- *If you were in my shoes, what would you do?*

When a relationship is in jeopardy

Questions build bridges.

- *What can we do to solve this problem?*
- *How do you think we can work together in the future?*
- *What do you suggest to make this situation better for both of us?*
- *Where do we go from here?*

When you are stuck

Questions keep things moving forward

- *What's a possible next step?*
- *What can we agree on?*
- *What don't I know that I need to know?*

State my Path

- Share your facts (start with least controversial, most persuasive elements)
- Tell your story (explain)
- Ask for others paths (share their facts and stories)
- Talk tentatively (don't disguise it as fact)
- Encourage testing (make it safe for others to express differing or opposing views)

Explore Others Paths

- ASK – start by simply expressing interest in the other persons point of view
- MIRROR – increase safety by respectfully acknowledging the emotions people appear to be feeling.
- PARAPHRASE – restate what you have heard to show not just that you understand but also that it's safe for them to share what they are thinking
- PRIME – If others continue to hold back, prime. Take your best guess and Ask questions
- Remember – Agree, Build and Compare

Move to Action

- Command – Decisions are made without involving others
- Consult – Input is gathered from the group and then a subset decides
- Vote – an agreed upon percentage swings the decision
- Consensus – everyone comes to an agreement and then supports the final decision.

Finish Clearly

- Determine **who** does **what** by **when**
- Make the deliverable crystal clear
- Set up a **follow up** time
- Record the commitments and then follow up
- Finally hold people accountable to their promises

Thoughts to ponder

- We were given two ears and one mouth for a reason
- Respect the other person buy controlling ourselves
- Why don't we both think about it and write down our thoughts
- Just because you are right, does not mean I am wrong

Thoughts to Ponder

- Speak the unspeakable
- You have to put the pig on the table
- Here is the situation as I see it
- Can we agree?
- Takes strength to ask THE question.

Great Communicators:

- Aim to listen so people will talk, knowing people will be more likely to listen to them when they talk.
- Commit to dialogue rather than monologue.

Aha!

“ A good listener tries to understand what the other person is saying. In the end he may disagree sharply, but because he disagrees, he wants to know exactly what it is he is disagreeing with.”

Kenneth A. Wells

Crucial Confrontations

- We must choose
 - What – the first time the problem comes up, talk about the original problem or the Content. If the problem continues, talk about the Pattern. As the impact spills over to how you relate to one another, talk about your Relationship. To help, pick the right level, explore what came after the behavior (the consequences) as well as what came before it (the intent). As the list of potential problems expands, cut to the heart of the matter by asking what you really do want and don't want- for yourself, the other person and the relationship.

Crucial Confrontations

- We must choose
 - If: To determine if you're wrongly going to silence, ask four questions: Am I acting it out? Is my conscience nagging me? Am I choosing the certainty of silence over the risk of speaking up? Am I telling myself that I'm helpless? To determine if you're wrongly speaking up, ask if the social system will support your effort. If you are committed to speak up while others continue to say nothing, differentiate yourself.

- “Have you ever noticed that anyone going slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac.”
– George Carlin

Six Sources of Influence

	Motivate	Enable
Self	Pain and Pleasure	Strengths and Weaknesses
Others	Praise and Pressure	Helps and Hindrances
Things	Carrots and Sticks	Bridges and Barriers

Master our own stories

- This step takes place before you speak.
- Work on your own thoughts, feelings and stories
- Tell the rest of the story – ask why a reasonable, rational, and decent person would do what you've just seen as well as if you yourself are playing a role in the problem.

- Look at all six sources of influence – examine the force of self, others and things – all either motivate or enable others to keep their commitment.
- Expand motive to include the force of others – do others praise and support the desired behavior or do they provide pressure against it? Is the reward system aligned? If people do what's required, will they receive a carrot or a stick?

- Finally, add ability – can others do what's required? Does the task play to their strength or weakness? Are people around them a help or a hindrance? Do the things around them provide a bridge or a barrier?

Confront with Safety

- Our overall goal is to confront with safety. Rather than leading with unhealthy conclusions or making accusations (both make it unsafe for the other person), we simply describe the gap. From there we listen carefully to see which branch of the model we'll pursue. Is the problem due to motivation, ability or both?

Don't start on the wrong foot

- Start with safety
 - Don't play games. Describe the gap. Deliver with respect and a mutual respect and purpose
- Share your path
 - Start with the facts as opposed to your conclusions
- End with a question
 - What happened?
- What's next
 - We've carefully described the gap and are now listening to see if the problem is due to motivation or ability.

How to help others take action

- Consequences motivate.
 - People are motivated by the consequences they anticipate. People act on the basis of the overall consequence bundle.
 - Natural consequences
 - Match method to circumstances – explain what needs to be done and why – search for consequences that matter to the other person
 - Wrap up the conversation by determining who does what and by when - follow up

Motivated but unable to act

- Are there barriers?
- Start by asking others questions
- Jointly explore root causes
- Check to see if others are willing to do what's required once you have taken the steps to enable them.

Stay focused and flexible

- If new problems come up, remain flexible enough to solve them and return to the original problem
- Keep the atmosphere safe
- Change
- Talk about the facts and help people keep their emotions in check

Move To Action

- Agree on a plan and follow up
 - Who
 - Does What
 - By When
 - Follow Up
 - What is the correct follow up? Be careful not to micromanage or abandon
 - Check up and Check back
