

Crucial Conversations – What’s a crucial conversation, and who cares?

What makes a conversation crucial?

- 1) ***Opinions vary*** – you think you’re ready for a new task, your boss thinks your not.
- 2) ***Stakes are high*** – There is a performance issue in the organization and something has to change.
- 3) ***Emotions run strong*** – a colleague snaps at you, and you have no idea why.

These are crucial conversations because the outcome can have a big impact on your quality of life. If a stranger snaps at you in the market, what difference does that make – apologize and move on. If the issue isn’t really important, then just leave each person with their own understanding and don’t bother.

What can we do?

- 1) Avoid
- 2) Face it and handle it poorly
- 3) Face it and handle it well

What do we usually do? – Either the first or second.

Why does this happen? We respond with emotion. We respond with preconceptions.

- 1) ***We’re designed wrong*** – our wiring disposes us to react with fight or flight
- 2) ***We’re under pressure*** – life is stressful – we’re trying to do too much, too quickly, with too little
- 3) ***We’re stumped*** – life is complicated, and we don’t have enough information or perspective
- 4) ***We act in self-defeating ways***

List some ways that you get tripped up. Are there warning signs that tell you where you’re headed?

Chapter 2 – Mastering Crucial Conversations: The Power of Dialogue

THE “ONE THING” – cf “city slickers” - <http://youtu.be/A4ID7t4Y1VE>

Dialogue – the free flow of meaning between two or more people:

Filling the pool of shared meaning –

The Pool of Shared Meaning is the birthplace of synergy

- 1) As individuals are exposed to more accurate and relevant information, they make better choices.

It’s the measure of a group’s IQ

- 2) Since the meaning is shared, people willingly act on whatever decisions they make.

The good news: Dialogue skills are learnable

Discussion Questions for Chapters 1 & 2

1. What are the three elements that make a conversation crucial?
2. What are some examples of typical crucial conversations?
3. How do we typically handle crucial conversations?
4. Why are we often on our worst behavior?
5. What is dialogue? What is the Pool of Shared Meaning? How does the Pool of Shared Meaning both motivate and enable people to make better choices?

Looking Ahead:

Chapters 3 (Start with Heart) and 4 (Learn to Look)

Staying focused on what you really want – don't get sidetracked by feelings.

What do I want for myself, others, the relationship?

Refuse the sucker's choice

How to spot crucial conversations

Looking for safety, and its absence

Style under stress test – online: <http://www.vitalsmarts.com/styleunderstress.aspx>

Sign up for more resources online at www.CrucialConversations.com