

# Crucial Conversations Chapter 8: Explore Others' Paths

## *How to listen when others blow up or clam up*

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*“When others do damage to the pool of shared meaning by clamming up (refusing to speak their minds) or blowing up (communicating in a way that is abusive and insulting), is there something you can do to get them to dialogue?”*

*You'll never work through your differences until all parties freely add to the pool of meaning.*

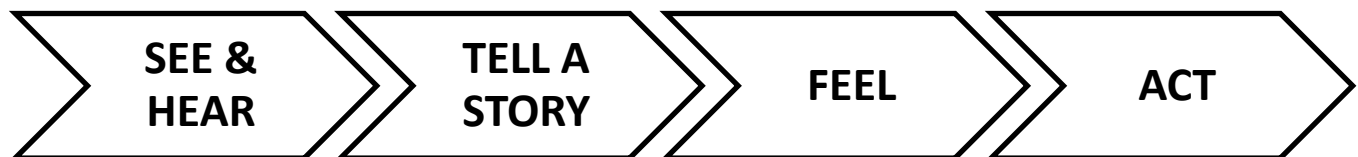
### **Notice when safety is at risk and restore it (Chapter 5)**

1. If you offended, even accidentally, apologize
2. If someone misunderstood, use Contrasting
3. If you are at odds, find mutual purpose

### **Start with Heart**

1. **Be sincere** – when you invite others to share, you have to mean it
2. **Be curious** – when others become furious, we must become curious – move to wonder  
Getting at the source of fear and discomfort is the best way to return to dialogue  
Notice physical fight/flight responses in self and others
3. **Stay Curious** – don't react to their story, continue to listen and wonder  
“Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person say this?”
4. **Be Patient** – Emotional change often lags behind changed thoughts

### **Encourage others to retrace their path**



### **PATH TO ACTION**

1. **Every sentence has a story** – When we enter into the middle of someone's story, we have to guess at what came earlier to bring the story to this point.
2. **Break the cycle** – don't respond to what's in the middle of the story. Ask questions to get to the beginning of the story they are telling themselves  
Step out and make it safe

## **Inquiry Skills**

1. When? – look for cues that others are moving toward silence or violence
2. How? – Be sincere with our invitation for others to share
3. What? – Listen in a way that keeps it safe

## **AMPP – Ask, Mirror, Paraphrase, Prime**

1. Ask to get things rolling
2. Mirror to confirm feelings
3. Paraphrase to acknowledge the story
  - a. Remain calm and collected
  - b. Don't push too hard
4. Prime when You're Getting Nowhere
  - a. When others appear to want to share but don't feel safe
  - b. Power Listening – Offer your best guess, with humility and tentatively

## **But what if they're wrong?**

This is not about agreeing or assenting – it is about arriving at shared understanding – I understand you and you understand me – so that we can move toward dialogue

## **Remember your ABCs**

1. *Agree* – when you agree
2. *Build* – when others leave out key pieces
3. *Compare* – when you differ

Describe your own story of a time when you needed to explore another's path because they were finding it difficult to speak their mind with calm and peace.

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