

Crucial Conversations

What Makes That Conversation Crucial?

- Opposing Opinions
- Strong Emotions
- High Emotions

Why Do We Make a Fool's Choice?

- Faced with danger, our body prepares for blunt trauma.
- The rush of adrenaline drives blood from our brain and into our muscles for “fight or flight.”
- Our brain diverts tough jobs to our brain stem, or “reptilian brain.”
We get dumbed down.

Master My Stories

- How to stay in dialogue when you're angry, scared, or hurt

The Most Difficult Person – Part 1

- As a class, let's brainstorm the TYPES of people you find most difficult.

The Most Difficult Person – Part 1

- Now we'll choose one of the types and give that type a creative name.

On Your Own: The Most Difficult Person – Part 1

- On your own, think about the things this type of person does that made us give them the name we did.

Video Prompt

- What happens when he acts on his story?

Stories – The Master Key

- **We guess.** We try to figure out motive. We judge – leading to a feeling and, finally, an action.
- **We do so quickly.** Sometimes we don't even notice we're doing it.
- **We're our own worst enemy.** Our negative story escalates our emotions and we act our worst when it matters the most.

Skill # 1: Separate Facts from Stories

- What is a Fact?
 - An actual occurrence; something that can be proven through observation or measurement (e.g., what you saw vs. what you thought about what you saw).

Skill # 1: Separate Facts from Stories

- How are stories different from facts?
 - Stories are judgements, conclusions, and attributions we make from the facts.
 - Judgments determine whether facts are good or bad.
 - Conclusions help us fit elements together.
 - Attributions tell us why people do what they do.

Video Prompt

- Bruce wants some feedback about his intentions with coworkers. He's about to start a conversation with Michelle. He really wants facts, so focus on behaviors.

Big Idea

- We tend to believe that the stories we tell are facts.
- When we separate facts from stories we realize that with the same set of facts we could tell an infinite number of stories. It allows us to suspend judgment and open our minds to alternative stories.

The Most Difficult Person – Part 2

- Go back to the descriptions you wrote.

Skill # 2: Watch for Three Clever Stories

- We often tell stories that help us feel good about doing things that ruin our relationships and results.

Three Clever Stories

- Victim Stories: “It’s not my fault!”
 - With these stories, we’re innocent sufferers.
- Villain Stories: “It’s all your fault!”
 - These stories emphasize others’ nasty qualities and typically rely on ugly labels.
- Helpless Stories: “There’s nothing else I can do!”
 - These stories convince us that we have no healthy options for taking action.

Video Prompt

- Let's watch as a team demonstrates the three clever stories.

Poll: How about us?

- Which stories (victim, villain, helpless) do you hear the most in your organization?

STATE My Path

- How to speak persuasively, not abrasively

The Skill: STATE My Path

- The five steps for helping us share tough messages can be easily remembered with the acronym STATE.

• **S**hare your facts “What Skills”

• **T**ell your story

• **A**sk for others’ paths

• **T**alk tentatively

• **E**ncourage testing

The Skill: STATE My Path

- The five steps for helping us share tough messages can be easily remembered with the acronym STATE.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share your facts• Tell your story• Ask for others' paths | “What Skills” |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk tentatively• Encourage testing | “How Skills” |
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Share Your Facts

- Start with what you see and hear.
- You may need to include how what you see and hear differs from your expectations.
- This adds clarity

Share Your Facts

- For example:
 - “I noticed that...”
 - “The last three times we talked about this...”
 - “I was expecting to receive this on Tuesday, and it’s now Friday...”

Tell Your Story

- Once you've shared your facts, it's time to tell your story.

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Tell Your Story

- Why tell your story?
 - Facts by themselves don't always paint the whole picture.
 - Once you've mastered your story, it's appropriate to share your story when the other person might not be sure why the facts you're sharing are a concern.

Tell Your Story

- For example:
 - “It leads me to conclude that...”
 - “I believe that...”
 - “I start to think that...”

Ask for Others' Paths

- Once you've shared your facts and told your story, ask others to share.

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Ask for Others' Paths

- **Be humble.** Let others share new ideas and challenge your story.
- **Fill the pool.** In order to fill the pool of meaning, everyone needs to share his or her view. So once you've shared yours, ask others to do the same.

Poll: Ask for Others' Paths

- Which of these are effective questions?
 - “How do you see it?”
 - “Isn't that the case?”
 - “What can we do to make sure this doesn't happen again?”
 - “What's your view?”
 - “Can you help me better understand?”
 - “No one disagrees with that, do they?”

Talk Tentatively

- When we share facts and stories, it's important to do so tentatively.

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Talk Tentatively

- Tell your story as a story, not a fact.
- Allow room for others' stories to be shared.
- Avoid absolutes

Too forceful

- “The fact of the matter is...”
- “That’s a dumb idea.”
- “The only reasonable option is to...”
- “If I agreed with you, then we’d both be wrong.”

Too forceful

- “In my opinion...”
- “Maybe it would make more sense to...”
- “I believe that what we should do is...”
- “I’m wondering if that example applies to our company...”

Encourage Testing

- Sincerely invite differing opinions. Make it safe for others to react to your story.

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Encourage Testing

- Remember your purpose: to get more meaning into the pool.
- If your goal is to convince, compel, or control, you'll do a good job of speaking your mind and a poor job of encouraging others.

Prompt

- Our only limit to how strongly we can express our opinion is our willingness to be equally vigorous in encouraging others to challenge it.

Video Prompt

- Let's watch Suzie give Jan some feedback. Jan's starting to tell a story about Suzie's intentions. What does Jan do that illustrates (1) facts, (2) story, and (3) ask?

As a Class: Fact, Story, Ask

- As a class, we'll look at a problem that we need to bring up with the person in the scenario.

Fact, Story, Ask

- Fact:
 - “I saw...”
 - “I heard...”
 - “I noticed...”
- Story:
 - “I’m starting to think...”
 - “It seems to me...”
 - “I’m wondering if...”
- Ask:
 - “How do you see it?”
 - “Can you help me understand...?”
 - “What’s your view?”

The Liar

You have a concern with your employee. You ask her if she will do a certain job, she hesitates, you explain why it needs to be done, and then she agrees – but doesn't do it. This has happened with the last three commitments you have gotten from her.

Each time, she's left you an e-mail or note saying she's sorry, but always after it was too late. You think she's afraid to tell you no, pretends to agree, and then purposely leaves messages so she won't have to tell you face-to-face.

To share resources

- Text “SKILLS” to 201-482-1199