

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.

The Skill: STATE My Path

- The 3 steps for helping us share tough messages
 - Share your facts
 - Tell your story
 - Ask for others' paths

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

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.

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.

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?”

When You Notice Safety is at Risk

- Step out of the content
 - Stop talking about the issues and address the safety concerns.
- Rebuild safety.
 - Mutual Purpose
 - You believe that I care about your goals and vice versa
 - Mutual Respect
 - You believe that I care about you as a person and vice versa
- Then step back in.

Skill: Contrasting

- A Don't/Do Statement
 - In the “don't” half of your statement, answer:
 - How might others mistake my purpose?
 - How might they feel disrespected?
 - In the “do” half of your statement, answer:
 - What is my real motivation?
 - How do I really feel about the other person?

Skill: Contrasting

- For example:
 - You're in a project meeting and you're concerned about Tony's part of the project because he's working with vendors who have been unreliable in the past. You want his team to be successful, so you say, "I think Tony's piece is at risk." Tony comes back with a defensive, "Hey – you don't always make your deadlines either, you know!"
 - (Contrast) "Tony, I'm not saying you're not capable of delivering. I do want to make sure you consider that the vendor has been unreliable in the past and how that may affect you."

When to Use Contrasting

- Only use it if you believe your intentions have been misunderstood. If there's no misunderstanding, there's no need to contrast.
- Don't use it to “soften the blow” when delivering a difficult message. Use it as a clarification tool in two instances:
 - **In the moment:** when you notice others becoming defensive due to a misunderstanding.
 - **Up Front:** if you believe there is a high likelihood that the other person will misunderstand your intent.