What makes a Conversation Crucial?

High Stakes

Strong Emotions

Opposing Opinions

Crucial Conversations
CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS MODEL

BEFORE
WORK ON ME FIRST
- Get Unstuck
- Start with Heart
- Master My Stories

DURING
- POOL of SHARED MEANING
  - STATE My Path
  - THEIR MEANING
  - Learn to Look
  - Make It Safe
  - Explore Others’ Paths
- SAFETY
- VIOLENCE

AFTER
MOVE TO ACTION
- Who does What by When
- Follow up
Before the Conversation

The Law of Crucial Conversations: Anytime you find yourself stuck, there’s a crucial conversation you’re either not holding or not holding well

• Get Unstuck– how to spot the conversations that are keeping you from what you want

• **Start with Heart** – How to stay focused on what you really want

• Master My Stories
**PROBLEM**  The first thing that deteriorates during a crucial conversation is not our behavior (that comes second) but our motive

**SOLUTION**  Learn how to stay focused on what you really want and get better results
Think of a person who is really frustrating to work/live with – someone who you interact with frequently who is just plain hard to get along with. Now think of the last interaction you had with this person that left you frustrated. Perhaps you didn’t say what you wanted, or what you said didn’t work.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Hand Column</th>
<th>Right Hand Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>What was actually said</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Hand Column</td>
<td>Right Hand Column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>What I was thinking and feeling and didn’t say</em></td>
<td><em>What was actually said</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you don’t first change your heart, any efforts to change your actions are likely to be seen as insincere, shallow, and doomed to failure.
Before the Conversation

The Law of Crucial Conversations: *Anytime you find yourself stuck, there’s a crucial conversation you’re either not holding or not holding well*

- **Get Unstuck** – how to spot the conversations that are keeping you from what you want
- **Start with Heart** – How to stay focused on what you really want
- **Master My Stories** – How to stay in dialogue when you’re angry, scared, or hurt
PROBLEM When it matters most, and our emotions kick in, we often do our worst----and we feel like we are doing the right thing.

SOLUTION Learn how to create emotions that make you want to return to healthy dialogue.
THE COOKIE THIEF

A woman was waiting at the airport one night,
With several long hours before her flight.
She hunted for a book in the airport shop,
Bought a bag of cookies and found a place to drop.
She was engrossed in her book, but happened to see,
    That the man beside her, as bold as could be,
    Grabbed a cookie or two from the bag between,
Which she tried to ignore to avoid a scene.
She read, munched cookies, and watched the clock,
    As the gusty "cookie thief" diminished her stock.
She was getting more irritated as the minutes ticked by,
    Thinking, "If I wasn't so nice, I'd blacken his eye!"
With each cookie she took, he took one too.
When only one was left, she wondered what he'd do.
With a smile on his face and a nervous laugh,
Our Stories Create Our Emotions---We Create Our Stories
First, you see or hear.

What story might you tell yourself?
Second, you tell a story.

See & Hear

Tell a Story

Feel

Act

How would this make you feel?
Third, you generate a feeling.

How might you act?
Fourth, you act.

See & Hear

Tell a Story

Feel

Act
Stories – The Master Key

We guess.

We do so quickly.

We’re our own worst enemy.
During the Conversation

The Law of Crucial Conversations: Anytime you find yourself stuck, there’s a crucial conversation you’re either not holding or not holding well

• **State My Path** — How to speak persuasively, not abrasively

• **Learn to Look**— How to make it safe to talk about almost anything

• **Make It Safe** — How to stay in dialogue when you’re angry, scared, or hurt
PROBLEM   During crucial conversations we say things in exactly the wrong way

SOLUTION   Learn five skills for saying risky things in a way that minimizes defensiveness.
NO CONSEQUENCE

• Think of a tough message you’d like to share with someone but haven’t because you think he or she may become defensive or upset.

• If you could say anything without consequence, what would you say?

• Write out the first two or three sentences of the conversation.
STATE MY PATH

S - Share your facts
T - Tell your story
A - Ask for others’ path
T - Talk tentatively
E - Encourage testing

“What” SKILLS
“How” SKILLS
#1: SHARE YOUR FACTS
#2 TELL YOUR STORY
#3 ASK FOR OTHERS’ PATHS

Once you’ve shared your facts and told your story, ask others to share
#4 TALK TENTATIVELY

When we share facts and stories, it’s important to do so tentatively.
#5 ENCOURAGE TESTING

Sincerely invite differing opinions. Make it safe for others to react to your story.
OUR ONLY LIMIT

To how strongly we can express our opinion is our willingness to be equally vigorous in encouraging others to challenge it.
The Avoider

You work with a person in your department who prefers to avoid conversation rather than disagree with you. At least that’s what you’re beginning to conclude.
You ask her to do a specific project (i.e., serve on an institute committee, represent the dept. on a project, develop a curriculum proposal), 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 email 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.
THE CLOWN

You’ve recently been appointed department chair. You are preparing for a faculty evaluation with an individual you’ve worked with in the past on committees. Your experience with him in the past has not been that reliable. As a committee lead, you gave him an assignment, he’d agreed to do it, and he’d say he was on track when you’d check in with him, but then he’d miss the due date on his deliverables.
You dread having to talk with him because he really is likeable and you’ve even socialized (at department outings, the gym, etc.). He’s also pretty funny and often uses humor to get out of conversations he finds uncomfortable (especially negative performance feedback).

He’s just missed his latest deadline and is trying to joke his way out of it over email.
# Real Crucial Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Facts</th>
<th>My Story</th>
<th>The questions I’ll ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nothing changes if nothing changes……

• Questions???
• What will you do differently?