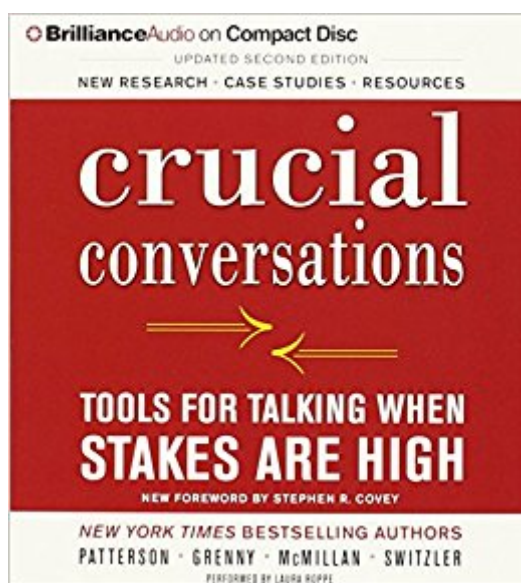


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Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High, Second Edition



Synopsis

The first edition of *Crucial Conversations* exploded onto the scene and revolutionized the way millions of people communicate when stakes are high. This new edition gives you the tools to:

- Prepare for high-stakes situations
- Transform anger and hurt feelings into powerful dialogue
- Make it safe to talk about almost anything
- Be persuasive, not abrasive

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Conversations move life forward. They can also stop things from moving forward. Relationships end on conversations and begin. Teams are formed and broken apart. Goals are made, expectations laid out, visions happen, all around conversations. Feelings get hurt in conversations, lies are told, deception, betrayal, all of these can happen in conversations. Enter the book *Crucial Conversations Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*. I heard Joseph Grenny, one of the authors speak on this topic recently at the leadership summit and got a lot out of his session. All of us know the feeling of this kind of conversation and we know that this is where life changes. Here are 10 things I got from the book that I have found helpful in my life and leadership:

1. When we face crucial conversations, we can do one of three things: We can avoid them, We can face them and handle them poorly, or We can face them and handle them well. At the heart of almost all chronic problems in our organizations, our teams, and our relationships lie crucial conversations—ones that are either not holding or not holding well. Christians and church staffs are notorious for avoiding crucial conversations. This is why churches often split, people leave hurt and visions never move forward. Instead of doing the hard work in a conversation, they are avoided. When in reality, because of what is at stake (salvation) and because of the calling of Jesus, we should do a better job of having crucial conversations.
2. Individuals who are the most influential—who can get things done and at the same time build on relationships—are those who master their crucial conversations. We all know this to be true. If you aren't very good at dialogue, you sit back in wonder at those who are. They are able to gain more influence, get more done and people want to be on their team and a part of what they are doing. This is why raising the value of this skill and getting better at it matters so much. Things move forward or stop around conversations.
3. The mistake most of us make in our crucial conversations is we believe that we have to choose between telling the truth and keeping a friend. Grenny said this at the summit and it grabbed my attention. This is one of, if not the main reason, most conversations stop and things do not move forward. Fear. Fear of a relationship ending, something stopping, getting fired or hurting someone. Yet, if we don't tell the truth, we often can't be a friend.
4. People rarely become defensive simply because of what you're saying. They only become defensive when they no longer feel safe. The problem is not the content of your message, but the condition of the conversation. If you are a boss and want honest feedback and

conversation, people can't fear for their jobs or that you will yell at them. Recently, there has been a lot of writing online about pastors abusing people, creating a culture of fear, yelling at staff members, elders and volunteers and it blows my mind. If you are known for that as a pastor, you should be embarrassed.

5. Be careful not to apologize for your views. This can be easy to do and it often happens as a way to soften your opinion or the blow in a conversation, but you shouldn't apologize for what you think. It is what you think. It might be hard or unpopular to say, but don't shy away from it. You may be wise to change how you phrase it, but always be willing to share what you think in a conversation.

6. One of the ironies of dialogue is that, when talking with those holding opposing opinions, the more convinced and forceful you act, the more resistant others become. I done this very easily in the past. Yet, this practice keeps people from buying in and helping to make something happen. When we do this, we don't understand why people aren't on board. The reason is the harder we push our way, the harder they push their way.

7. Speaking in absolute and overstated terms does not increase your influence, it decreases it. The converse is also true—the more tentatively you speak, the more open people become to your opinions. The more harshly we speak or the more we give the impression that there is only one way, the less likely it becomes that people will speak up. Now, on issues like vision, it must be clear and have agreement. But, in conversations, if we give the impression that something has been decided or that we aren't open to suggestions, we will kill discussion.

8. When we feel the need to push our ideas on others, it's generally because we believe we're right and everyone else is wrong. This is another way the previous one. If you find yourself pushing your ideas, you aren't having a good dialogue and instead are simply giving out orders. That may be your leadership style, but it won't accomplish a healthy team environment and in the end, your church or business will never reach its full potential.

9. The more you care about an issue, the less likely you are to be on your best behavior. As a leader or a person in a relationship, you must learn this well. This was an eye opening insight for me. I get very passionate about things, as most people do, and when I do, I can shut down dialogue and end up hurting people. We do this, often unintentionally because we care about something, because we believe we are right and have the only way forward.

10. The fuzzier the expectations, the higher the likelihood of disappointment. When a crucial conversation ends, there must be clear expectations and guidance moving forward. It cannot be fuzzy or gray. Otherwise, a conversation has not ended, it is simply on pause.

All in all, this was an incredibly helpful book. Some of it covered things I already knew but showed some helpful insights. I've already seen a change in some of my conversations with leaders at my church and in my family through this book. Definitely one I'd recommend.

This has staying power as a reference. Combined with another classic, "Getting to Yes", I refer this book to my emerging leader clients that want to improve their interpersonal communication, collaboration, and negotiation styles. To be fully effective and to grasp subtle insights, it requires multiple re-readings. And as with any advice about working with people, the reader would be wise to acknowledge that the effectiveness of approaches delineated within this or any such book are subject to the vicissitudes of certain personalities and situations. Never-the-less, a 5-Star recommendation.

This book grabbed me in the first 25 pages! It has some great guidance when you lead a large group of 80 as I do in my profession and giving feedback is always crucial conversations to the individual and the organization. It works for personal life in the family as well. So far, I love this book! Will probably buy copies for my subordinate supervisors under me.

A friend of mine from a game studio I look up to recommended me this book. I can now see why the studio's culture is so solid. This book can be a bit of a didactic read and the writing style comes across as condescending at times (I suspect to sound witty/humorous) but it has great ideas on how to solve spontaneous problems. Definitely not a 100% guide-on-how-to-human, which it shouldn't even strive to be, though it does give one some tools to cope with social situations. I disagree with some reviewers on their thoughts about how one would have to engage a person that has also read this book in order to make these tricks work. They seem to have missed the point...

I want to leave this positive feedback to thank the authors and other people who made this book available to me! I Bought the CD version and got a total of 4 CDs! The speed is perfect for listening while driving. It provides very practical techniques illustrated by vivid life examples. Whether as a member in the Corporate America or a parent, I found this book to be such a useful tool/guide and wish I had got it earlier in my life.

Outstanding book! It gives you the tools to have that conversation you NEED to have. I read the book in preparation for the Crucial Conversations 4-hour class at work. It shows you how to be honest & straightforward in a non-threatening way. It puts the other person at ease as well, since they may also be feeling the same way (about needing to have a CC). It helps you recognize the danger signs in a conversation, so you can correct them and get the communication back on

track. Use the CC methods on your teenagers as well. Up until I read the CC book & took the course, my approach to my sons was "Do it my way. Any questions? I didn't think so" - a very dictatorial approach. When you ask someone (even a teenage) what they think, or how they'd handle a situation, they'll surprise you with an unbelievable level of insight, cooperation & buy-in. This may be the best book you've ever read. It's in my top 5.

I really liked this book. It made me understand what was lacking from my communication style, and enabled me to take an introductory step in that direction. I would recommend reading this book if you feel that sometimes you are not able to convey your message in the most effective and timely manner. I used to feel like that all the time. I couldn't understand why. So my aunt recommended this book, and it opened my eyes to why I was communicating the way I was, and also what I could do better. The book is broken down into different aspects of the conversation and there are multiple examples of different situations where people have used this book to improve their communication skills.

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