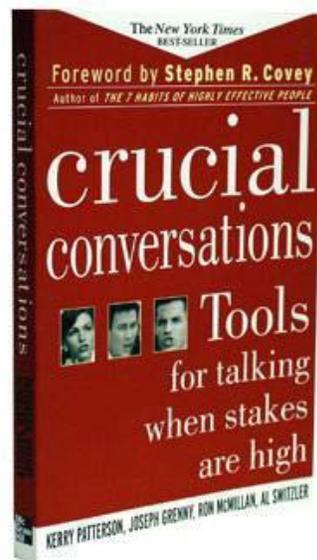


Crucial Conversations

“Tools for talking
when stakes are high”



Participant Preparation Sheet

Throughout the training you will have the opportunity to apply **Crucial Conversations** principles and skills to real life challenges you may be facing. To make your training experience as beneficial to you as possible, you should come prepared with a few potential **crucial conversations** in mind that will help you fully apply the skills you will learn, and measure the effectiveness of the training.

Part 1

Consider some of the chronic problems or barriers you face in your relationships, teams, or organization. Use the following questions to help you explore the possibilities.

- What bad results would you like to fix?
- What good results are you currently unable to achieve?
- What problem are you always trying to fix?
- What do people gripe about? What do people complain about at home and at work?

Write down your lists for your professional life and your personal life (continue on other side as necessary).

Chronic problems or barriers in my Professional Life

Chronic problems or barriers in my Personal Life

Part 2

What are the moments when you experience some sort of challenge and know you need to respond in an appropriate, effective manner (like holding a productive conversation), but end up responding in a different way and doing less than your best? Write down your lists of these *crucial moments* in your professional life and your personal life (continue on other side as necessary).

Crucial Moments in my Professional Life

Crucial Moments in my Personal Life

Part 3

Now consider conversations in your professional life and personal life that you're either dreading, or avoiding altogether, but if you learned how to step up to and handle well, would improve results significantly. List them below (continue on other side as necessary).

1.

2.

3.

Bring this worksheet with you to your training to learn the principles and skills that will help you improve results and hold even your most difficult crucial conversation.



Crucial Conversations Assignment

Everyone reads Chapters 1 & 2

Read Chapter 1 – What’s a Crucial Conversation? *And Who Cares?*

Read Chapter 2 – Mastering Crucial Conversations: *The Power of Dialogue*

Your Assigned Chapter – _____

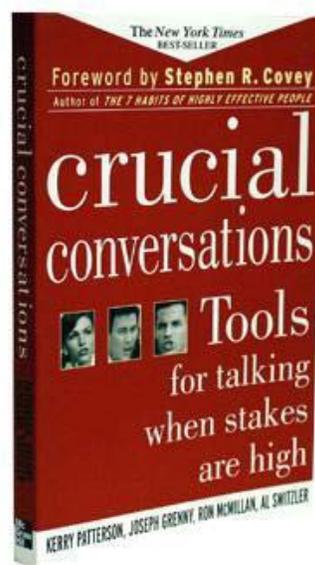
In your assigned group, read your group assigned Chapter.

- Be prepared to teach your assigned chapter to the class.
- You may choose to use visual aids and/or chart the following from page 214-216:
 - Chapter Principle
 - Skill
 - Crucial Question(s)
- After teach-back, be prepared to answer any questions. If no questions, have 1-2 questions for class to confirm transfer of knowledge
- All group members must participate equally
- You will have 5 minutes to teach your assigned chapter and 2 minutes for Q&A

Instructors will facilitate feedback and additional questions

*DO NOT use Style Under Stress Assessment in your presentation

*DO NOT use Jurassic Sales Call video in your presentation



WHAT IS YOUR STYLE UNDER STRESS™?

From the *New York Times* bestseller
*Crucial Conversations:
Tools for Talking
When Stakes are High*



*“When we use
crucial conversations skills,
we can influence decisions,
improve relationships,
and speak our minds
in a way that gets heard.”*

- Joseph Grenny

How do you react when conversations suddenly move from smooth and easygoing to tense or awkward? Do you retreat into silence? Do you go on the attack? Or do you do your best to keep the conversation calm and focused on the issues at hand?

Crucial conversations take place when the stakes are high, opinions differ, and emotions run strong. Handling crucial conversations well can dramatically improve your personal relationships, your career progress, and your work team’s performance.

Take this 33-question test to explore how you typically respond when you’re in the middle of a stressful situation. Have your friends, colleagues, or family members take the test as well. The answers may surprise you.

A self-scoring version of this test is available online at www.vital-smarts.com/styleunderstress. Information on what your score means can be found on pages 68-69 of the *New York Times* bestseller *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*.

Instructions

Before you start, read through the following points:

- **RELATIONSHIP**

Think about the relationship you want to improve— with your boss, coworker, direct report, friend, or family member— and keep this relationship in mind.

- **CIRCUMSTANCE**

Next, think of a tough situation—one you might have handled poorly or avoided altogether.

- **APPLY**

Now, with that situation in mind, respond to the statements on the following pages as either true or false.

Style Under Stress™ Test

- T F 1. At times I avoid situations that might bring me into contact with people I'm having problems with.
- T F 2. I have put off returning phone calls or e-mails because I simply didn't want to deal with the person who sent them.
- T F 3. Sometimes when people bring up a touchy or awkward issue I try to change the subject.
- T F 4. When it comes to dealing with awkward or stressful subjects, sometimes I hold back rather than give my full and candid opinion.
- T F 5. Rather than tell people exactly what I think, sometimes I rely on jokes, sarcasm, or snide remarks to let them know I'm frustrated.
- T F 6. When I've got something tough to bring up, sometimes I offer weak or insincere compliments to soften the blow.
- T F 7. In order to get my point across, I sometimes exaggerate my side of the argument.
- T F 8. If I seem to be losing control of a conversation, I might cut people off or change the subject in order to bring it back to where I think it should be.
- T F 9. When others make points that seem stupid to me, I sometimes let them know it without holding back at all.
- T F 10. When I'm stunned by a comment, sometimes I say things that others might take as forceful or attacking—terms such as "Give me a break!" or "That's ridiculous!"
- T F 11. Sometimes when things get a bit heated I move from arguing against others' points to saying things that might hurt them personally.
- T F 12. If I really get into a heated discussion, I've been known to be tough on the other person. In fact, they might even feel a bit insulted or hurt.
- T F 13. When I'm discussing an important topic with others, sometimes I move from trying to make my point to trying to win the battle.
- T F 14. In the middle of a tough conversation, I often get so caught up in arguments that I don't see how I'm coming across to others.
- T F 15. When talking gets tough and I do something hurtful, I'm quick to apologize for my mistakes.
- T F 16. When I think about a conversation that took a bad turn, I tend to focus first on what I did that was wrong rather than focus on others' mistakes.
- T F 17. When I've got something to say that others might not want to hear, I avoid starting out with tough conclusions, and instead start with facts that help them understand where I'm coming from.
- T F 18. I can tell very quickly when others are holding back or feeling defensive in a conversation.
- T F 19. Sometimes I decide it's better not to give harsh feedback because I know it's bound to cause problems.
- T F 20. When conversations aren't working, I step back from the fray, think about what's happening, and take steps to make it better.
- T F 21. When others get defensive because they misunderstand me, I immediately get us back on track by clarifying what I do and don't mean.
- T F 22. There are some people I'm rough on because, to be honest, they need or deserve what I give them.
- T F 23. I sometimes make absolute statements like "The fact is..." or "It's obvious that..." to be sure my point gets across.
- T F 24. If others hesitate to share their views, I sincerely invite them to say what's on their mind, no matter what it is.

- T F 25. At times I argue hard for my view hoping to keep others from bringing up opinions that would be a waste of energy to discuss anyway.
- T F 26. Even when things get tense, I adapt quickly to how others are responding to me and try a new strategy.
- T F 27. When I find that I'm at cross purposes with someone, I often keep trying to win my way rather than looking for common ground.
- T F 28. When things don't go well, I'm more inclined to see the mistakes others made than notice my own role.
- T F 29. After I share strong opinions, I go out of my way to invite others to share their views, particularly opposing ones.
- T F 30. When others hesitate to share their views, I do whatever I can to make it safe for them to speak honestly.
- T F 31. Sometimes I have to discuss things I thought had been settled because I don't keep track of what was discussed before.
- T F 32. I find myself in situations where people get their feelings hurt because they thought they would have more of a say in final decisions than they end up having.
- T F 33. I get frustrated sometimes at how long it takes some groups to make decisions because too many people are involved.

Scoring

Fill out the following score sheets. Each domain contains two to three questions. Next to the question number is either a (T) or (F). For example, under "Masking," question 5, you'll find a (T). If you answered question 5 true, check the box. With question 13, on the other hand, you'll find an (F). Only check that box if you answered the question false—and so on. Finally, add the number of checks in each column to determine your total score.

Your Style Under Stress score will show you which forms of silence or violence you turn to most often. Your Crucial Conversations Skills score is organized by concept and chapter from the book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* so that you can decide which chapters will benefit you the most. Again, a self-scoring version of this test is available at www.vitalsmarts.com/styleunderstress. This test is also duplicated on pages 63-69 of *Crucial Conversations*.

Style Under Stress

Your silence and violence scores give you a measure of how frequently you fall into these less-than-perfect strategies. It's actually possible to score high in both. A high score (one or two checked boxes per domain) means you use this technique fairly often. It also means you're human. Most people toggle between holding back and becoming too forceful.

Masking

5 (T)

6 (T)

Avoiding

3 (T)

4 (T)

Withdrawing

1 (T)

2 (T)

Controlling

7 (T)

8 (T)

Labeling

9 (T)

10 (T)

Attacking

11 (T)

12 (T)

Silence Total _____

Violence Total _____

Crucial Conversations Skills

The seven domains below reflect your skills in each of the corresponding seven skill chapters found in *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*. If you score high (two or three boxes) in one of these domains, you're already quite skilled in this area. If you score low (zero or one), you may want to pay special attention to these chapters.

Start with Heart

(chapter 3)

13 (F)

19 (F)

25 (F)

Total _____

STATE My Path

(chapter 7)

17 (T)

23 (F)

29 (T)

Total _____

Learn to Look

(chapter 4)

14 (F)

20 (T)

26 (T)

Total _____

Explore Others' Paths

(chapter 8)

18 (T)

24 (T)

30 (T)

Total _____

Make It Safe

(chapter 5)

15 (T)

21 (T)

27 (F)

Total _____

Move to Action

(chapter 9)

31 (F)

32 (F)

33 (F)

Total _____

Master My Stories

(chapter 6)

16 (T)

22 (F)

28 (F)

Total _____

Conclusion

Since these scores represent how you typically behave during stressful or crucial conversations, they can change. Your score doesn't represent an inalterable character trait or a genetic propensity. It's merely a measure of your behavior—and you can change that.

Here are two ways to improve your skills:

• ATTEND TRAINING

Crucial Conversations is an award-winning, two-day course that teaches skills for fostering open dialogue around high-stakes, emotional, or risky topics.

www.vitalsmarts.com/crucialconversationstraining

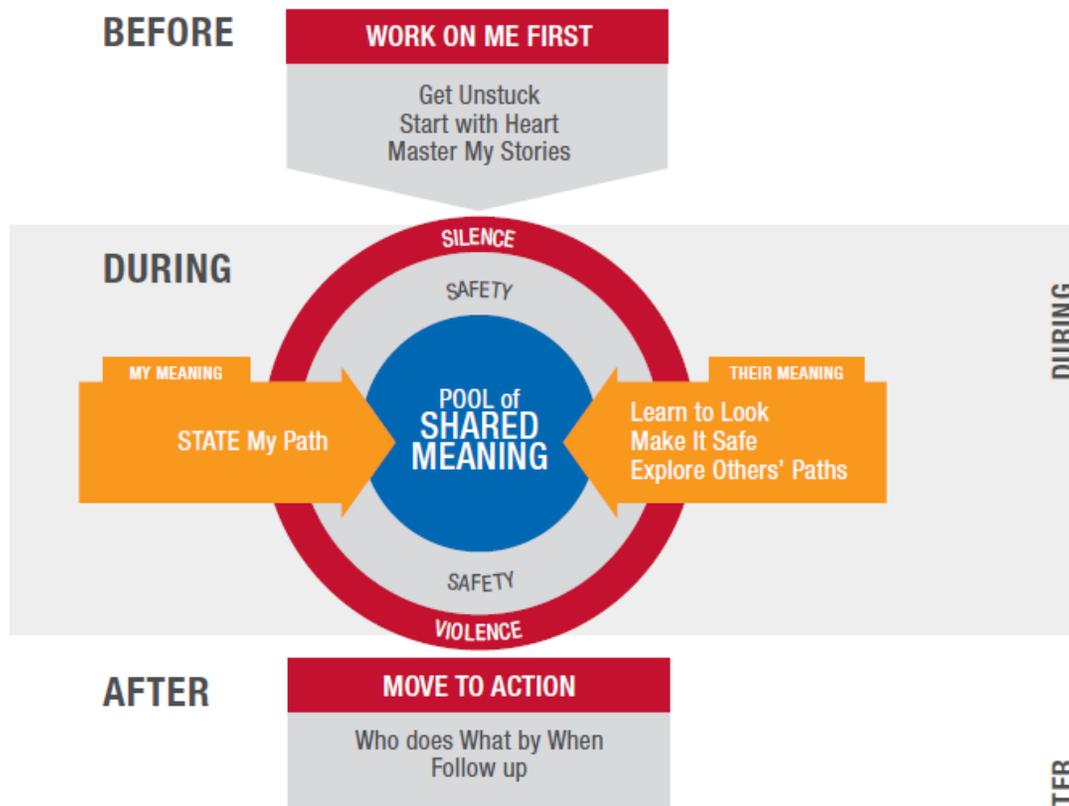
• FREE NEWSLETTER

One of our best learning resources is our free, weekly e-newsletter. Subscribers of the *Crucial Skills Newsletter* receive expert instruction from our bestselling authors on handling real-life crucial conversations.

www.crucialskills.com

THE LAW OF CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Anytime you find yourself stuck, there's a crucial conversation you're either not holding or not holding well.



	SITUATION	PRINCIPLES & SKILLS
BEFORE	1 Results and Relationships are suffering.	You need to hold a Crucial Conversation . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify where you are stuck. Unbundle with CPR.
	2 You need to initiate a Crucial Conversation , or one is evolving.	Start with Heart Focus on What You Really Want for: you, them, the relationship, and the organization (your long-term results).
	3 If you are getting emotional or telling clever stories .	Master Your "Clever" Stories—Tell the Rest of the Story Victim Story: "What am I pretending not to notice about my role in the problem?" Villain Story: "Why would a reasonable, rational, decent person do this?" Helpless Story: "What should I do right now to move toward what I really want?"
DURING	4 If you have a tough message , be honest and maintain safety .	STATE Your Path Share your Facts: "I noticed ..." "Twice you ..." Tell your Story: "I'm beginning to wonder if ..." "It seems to me ..." Ask for Others' Paths: "How do you see it?" "Help me understand ..." Talk Tentatively: Own your story and avoid absolutes. Encourage Testing: "Do you see it differently?"
	5 Others are already in silence or violence and you missed the early warning signs.	Learn to Look <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the signs that a conversation is turning crucial. For early warning signs of silence and violence.
	6 If someone misunderstands your intent regarding Purpose or Respect .	Contrast "I don't think/mean/want _____ (their fear/misunderstanding)." "I do think/mean/want _____ (your actual purpose/meaning)."
	7 The discussion is going in circles . People are arguing . You're beginning a tough project or discussion .	Create Mutual Purpose Commit to seek Mutual Purpose. "Can we look for something we both agree on?" Recognize the Purpose behind the Strategy. "Why do you want _____?" "This is why I want _____." Invent a Mutual Purpose. "So, if you get _____ and I get _____, we're both happy?" Brainstorm new strategies. "What ideas do you have?" "I was thinking it may help if ..."
AFTER	8 If someone else is going to Silence or Violence , their full meaning isn't getting into the Pool.	Explore Other's Paths Ask: "I want to know what you think about ..." Mirror: (Silence) "You seem reluctant. Are you sure you're OK with it?" (Violence) "Wow, you seem really upset. What's up?" Paraphrase: "So you're saying _____." Prime: "Do you think that _____?"
	9 When you're ready to Move to Action .	Move to Action —Determine Who , does What , by When , and how we will Follow up .



CONVERSATION PLANNER

Use the following worksheet to plan your next crucial conversation.

Get Unstuck

1. Where do you feel stuck (personally or professionally)?

2. Unbundle with CPR. Identify:

Content Issues: _____

Pattern Issues: _____

Relationship Issues: _____

Which issue do you need to address, and with whom, in order to get unstuck? _____

Start with Heart

1. What do you really want:

For yourself? _____

For the other person? _____

For the relationship? _____

For the organization (if applicable)? _____

Master My Stories

1. What stories are you telling yourself about the situation or the person (Victim, Villain, Helpless)?

2. Tell the rest of the story. Ask:

a. What am I pretending not to notice about my role in the problem?

b. Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?

c. What should I do right now to move toward what I really want?

STATE My Path

1. Create a script for how you will begin the conversation. Start with facts, then tell your story, and be sure to end with a question that invites the other person into dialogue.

THE FACTS	MY STORY	THE QUESTION I'LL ASK

Make It Safe

1. What's the worst possible response you could get with your crucial conversation?

2. What safety skills would you use to address it (apology, contrast, create mutual purpose)?

3. If the other person misunderstands your intent, what is a contrasting statement you could use?

Don't: _____

Do: _____

Explore Others' Paths

1. How could you use the "AMPP" (Ask, Mirror, Paraphrase, Prime) skills to help the other person come out of silence or violence?

Move to Action

1. How will you establish a way to follow up after the crucial conversation?

Who: _____

Will do what: _____

By when: _____

How we'll follow up: _____