

Crucial Conversation Worksheet

What are crucial conversations?

Crucial conversations are conversations that matter.

Conversations that have the potential to significantly affect the course of your life and relationships.

Conversations where you get down to the serious business of connecting deeply and honestly with another person. They're an expression of your authentic self – what you really want, need, and would like in order to be your best self and live up to your values.

THEY'RE DIFFICULT.

They're often emotionally fraught, awkward, or frustrating.

They generally have three main components:

1. The stakes are moderate to high (although they could have started off pretty low); this discussion will likely have some significant impact.
2. You don't necessarily see eye-to-eye with the other person. Opinions and perspectives differ.
3. The discussion could generate strong emotions.

It's lizard-brain-trigger city.

THEY IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND SENSE OF SELF.

As you improve in identifying and having crucial conversations, you'll see the results.

For example,

- You'll see the results in more authentic relationships.
- You'll get what you truly need. You'll be understood and heard.
- You'll be able to define your boundaries, values, and priorities clearly, in a way that's assertive and mature.

Use the worksheet below as a tool for improving: It's a framework for preparing and reflecting on your practice of crucial conversations.

Working through a crucial conversation

REFLECT FROM ALL ANGLES

What's the root cause or trigger for this crucial conversation? *Try to be as specific and literal as possible.*

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What's the best-case-scenario that could explain the other person's words or actions in this situation?

What are the ways that the other person has good intentions for you and your relationship?

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How could you be potentially contributing to the conflict and/or tension that you're experiencing?

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PREPARE FOR YOUR UPCOMING CRUCIAL CONVERSATION

List the facts as you know or understand them to be, right now.

Leave your emotions at the door for this one, and aim to be objective about what is factually true.

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Have you encountered situations similar to this in the past? If so, how did you respond to that situation?

What worked about the way you responded?

How could you have responded differently and/or better?

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What are your known triggers surrounding this topic?

How will you stay aware of those, and work around them in the heat of the moment?

For example, "I'm reactive and defensive when I feel like I'm being told what to do. When I start to feel reactive, I'm going to pause, and calmly express what I'm feeling and why."

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What are some phrases that will help you break the ice and clearly express what you're thinking and feeling?

For example:

"When you do / say X, I feel Y. I think we can find ways to work together in order to both avoid that conflict / tension. I have a couple of ideas, and I'd really like to hear yours, too."

"In X kind of situation, I need to have support through Y kind of relationship."

"In order for us both to get to the goal of X together, we're going to need to be frank and honest. Is it ok if I tell you what my honest feedback is here? It's not necessarily 100% true, and maybe we can discuss how the feedback lands with you."

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REFLECT ON HOW IT WENT

How did the crucial conversation go?

Use a scale of 1-10 (where 1 = terrible and 10 = incredible) to rate how you think it went.



What do you understand now about this person/situation that's different than before?

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ADJUST YOUR ACTION PLAN

Moving forward, what are you going to change about yourself in order to improve the relationship and/or situation?

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References Crucial Conversations, Kerry Patterson et al., 2012.

