

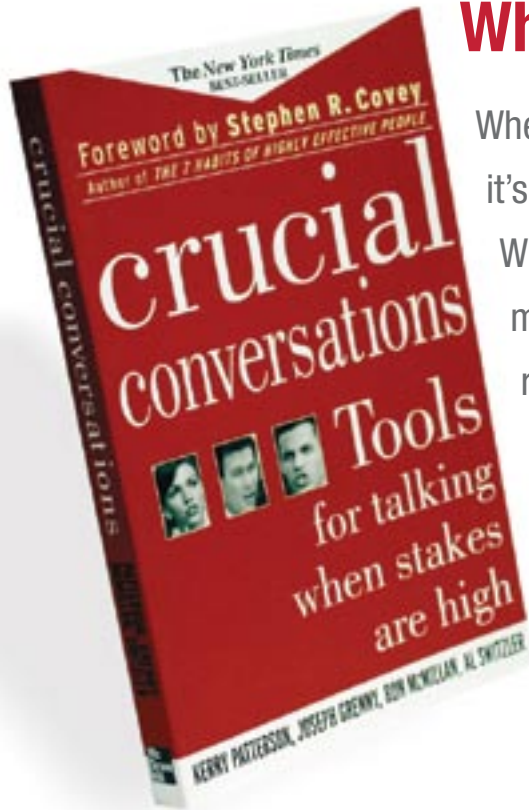


**crucial**  
conversations®

T R A I N I N G

**Get Unstuck  
and Achieve Synergy,  
Alignment, and  
Agreement**





## What Makes the Best the Best?

Whenever you're not getting the results you're looking for, it's likely that a crucial conversation is keeping you stuck. Whether it's a problem with poor quality, slow time-to-market, declining customer satisfaction, or a strained relationship—whatever the issue—if you can't talk honestly with nearly anybody about almost anything, you can expect poor results.

On the other hand, make Crucial Conversations skills your best practices and everything gets better.

## It's a Skill Thing. Really.

If you're like most people—or teams or organizations—when stakes are high, emotions run strong, and opinions vary, you toggle from silence to violence—and then you pay the price.

Top-rated leaders and employees do no such thing. The best individuals, teams, and organizations choose neither fight nor flight. Instead, they have the skills to step up to controversial and heated issues, then professionally discuss them in a way that makes it safe for everyone to speak. As a result, people share their best ideas, make wise choices, and then act on their choices with conviction.

Easier said than done? No more. Put Crucial Conversations training to work and you'll drive rapid and sustainable change, get stalled change initiatives

back on track, and turn good individuals and teams into key contributors.

### Are You Getting the Results You Want?

If your team or organization isn't exactly gifted at handling crucial conversations, you're likely getting less-than-desirable results. Do any of these sound familiar?

- A colleague is constantly trying to win you over to his views through high-energy debate tactics. You merely want to discuss issues calmly and professionally. You don't want to be strong-armed or misled. What do you say?
- Your boss has a leadership style that is smothering you. You hesitate to speak up.

Accolades for *The New York Times* bestseller *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* (McGraw-Hill 2002) based on Crucial Conversations training include:

*"This is a breakthrough book. I found myself being deeply influenced, motivated, and inspired."*

— Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

*"Crucial Conversations is one of the most powerful and useful tools I have found."*

— Mike Miller, Director of Business Billing, AT&T

*"These skills . . . enabled us to win the largest contract in our industry's history."*

— Dain Hancock  
Former President, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics

- People who report to you aren't sharing their differing opinions. You're being cut off from essential information and as a result your most important initiatives are eroding. Why don't people just speak up?
- Important issues are not brought up in a timely manner to those who can do something about them. Only those near the water cooler hear the problems.
- You find yourself disagreeing with your boss and yet your head bobs up and down like you are a fully supportive puppet. The last person who disagreed was "shot on sight."
- One of your employees sits quietly during key concept discussions, disagrees with many of the ideas, says nothing, and then complains to you off-line. When you brought it up with her, she said it wasn't safe to be honest.
- Your spouse is constantly toggling from silence to violence. He or she seems satisfied with your relationship until one day—bam! Insults and accusations fly.
- Infighting rules as people from different shifts, departments, specialties, and cultures turn diversity into hostility and debate rather than collaboration and synergy.



*"Crucial Conversations skills ensure that customer issues and questions are handled in keeping with our goals as a company. Truly important conversations are the ones that matter the most for customers in our business. What could be more important as you think about your work and your life than to improve your ability to talk about what is truly important?"*

— Sharon Sullivan  
Chief Learning Officer, Eli Lilly Co.

## Cultures of Synergy and Improved Results

During the past twenty-five years, we've studied thousands of influential individuals, hundreds of effective teams, and dozens of productive organizations. We've carefully examined top performers to identify what separates them from the rest. Here's what we've learned: The best routinely employ skills that turn diverse thought into synergy and synergy into results—by mastering crucial conversations. And so can you. Implement the principles and tools taught in the award-winning Crucial Conversations training, and you will see significant improvement in areas such as:

1. **Performance**—talking honestly and openly with people no matter how delicate the topic or powerful the individual.
2. **Productivity**—making decisions in a way that encourages people to act on them with conviction; eliminating resistance and infighting.
3. **Teamwork**—jointly reaching agreement as to how you'll work together and treat one another as teammates.
4. **Change Management**—creating a culture where people are able to come to agreement about difficult changes (Six Sigma, SAP, change initiatives, mergers, etc.) and then follow through.
5. **Quality**—developing processes and methods that are not only helpful, but are also eagerly implemented.
6. **Relationships**—working through differences with a loved one in a way that not only solves the problem, but that also strengthens the relationship.
7. **Safety**—brainstorming causes and solutions in a way that comes up with the best ideas without pointing fingers or creating resentment.
8. **Diversity**—willingly and ably discussing diversity problems face to face and in the moment, rather than blowing a gasket or requesting a transfer.
9. **Meetings**—speaking up when things get off track and suggesting how to improve them.

Put Crucial Conversations skills to work in nearly any area and measurably improve your individual, team, and organizational results.

## What Others Say About Crucial Conversations Training

*"I had three months to turn things around or I was gone! Now, a year later, I have mended all of the fences. My wife of thirty years says it is like being married to a different person! I am a different person—one even I like."*

— Tom Ehrenberg

Participant, Johnsonville Sausage



*"I immediately saw how elegant and accessible the Crucial Conversations tools are. The skills are practical and principle based and can benefit anyone. Life changing."*

— Sandra McCarthy van Winkelhoff

Director and Trainer, Creative Resources & Education Services Pty. Ltd.

*"I have never attended a development course that has completely changed my life and produced immediate results as much as Crucial Conversations has."*

— Richard D. Jarvis

President, Extraordinary Development, INC

*"If ideas can change the world, then the ideas in Crucial Conversations will change yours. Practice just one of the ideas Crucial Conversations teaches and you'll see what I mean."*

— Jim Granger

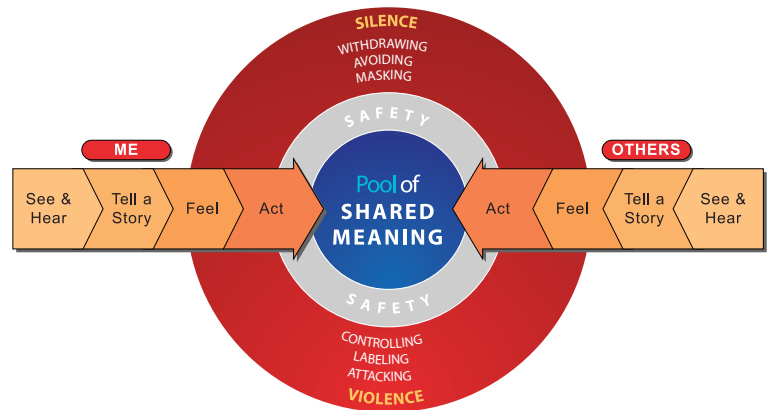
President, Worthlin Worldwide

## SKILL OVERVIEW

### What Makes the Best the Best?

Here are a few of the crucial conversations skills used by people whose bosses viewed them as their most valued employees. No matter how high the stakes or how strong the emotions, valued employees:

- **Stay focused on producing valued results and maintaining relationships.** Rather than getting sidetracked into saving face, keeping the peace, punishing, or winning, top performers do their best to stay in dialogue—they value the free flow of meaning. Knowing what a healthy crucial conversation looks like helps them move away from silence and violence and toward open communication.
- **Refuse the Sucker's Choice.** When others become abusive because they “need to be honest,” or back off because “it’s important to keep the peace,” the best refuse to believe that disrespect and honesty have to go hand in hand. They know that they can be completely candid and completely respectful.
- **Work on themselves.** Rather than continually pointing to others as the source of all that’s wrong, the best seek honest feedback and then find ways to improve their own skills.
- **Know what to watch for.** Rather than getting caught up in the content of an argument, the gifted watch what’s going on with people as the discussion runs its course. They note when the conversation becomes crucial and pay special attention to signs that others are feeling unsafe.
- **Get in touch with their own style.** By studying their own Style Under Stress™, the best become highly self-aware and continually work on decreasing their vulnerabilities while enhancing their strengths.



Crucial Conversations training teaches this model for achieving synergy, alignment, and agreement.

- **Know how to restore safety.** The mortal enemy of healthy dialogue is fear. When people feel unsafe, they turn to silence and violence—filling a normal conversation with unhealthy debate or awkward silence. Masters of crucial conversations know how to restore safety by fixing misunderstandings, maintaining mutual respect, and establishing mutual purpose.

- **Control their emotions.** Instead of jumping to harsh conclusions that cause them to immediately feel angry or hurt, the best cautiously seek the facts of the situation. Then, by assuming the best of others and looking for their own role in any problem, they enter every conversation in complete control of their feelings.
- **Know how to be persuasive without being abrasive.** Highly valued employees don't merely listen; they also willingly and capably express their views—even if they're controversial, not widely held, or unpopular. What makes these employees particularly valued is that they do so in a way that reduces defensiveness. They know how to candidly express their views and stick to the facts—and when they do share controversial conclusions, they share their opinions in a way that encourages others to share differing points of view. When they speak, others listen.
- **Help others stay in dialogue.** When others start to move to silence or violence, the best at crucial conversations help colleagues move away from their strong and emotional conclusions and back to their observations—where they can calmly discuss the facts and make the best choices.
- **Serve as a catalyst to synergy.** Under the deft influence of the conversationally gifted, everyone speaks more effectively, everyone is heard, and the resulting solutions are far better than any one individual might have conceived on his or her own. In the presence of the gifted, instead of differences leading to battles, silos, and low morale, differences lead to alignment and synergy.
- **Provide a solution to today's problems.** It's little wonder that people who possess crucial conversations skills are so valued. Not only are they themselves effective, but they're the catalysts to everyone freely speaking their minds. They turn differences into synergy and synergy into corporate effectiveness. That makes them a perfect solution to many of today's pressing problems.



## Who Should Participate?

Crucial Conversations training is ideal for individuals who manage people or processes as well as those who have supervisory or cross-functional

management responsibilities. For true change to be achieved, involving teams and even entire organizations is essential. At a minimum, consider attending our public training events. Or bring our training faculty into your organization.

## Train-the-Trainer

We advocate leader-led training as the most effective approach for acquiring and retaining new skills. Or use our train-the-trainer program and resource kits which enable your trainers to offer the highest quality in-house training program available today.



## COURSE DESIGN

### A Step-by-Step Approach

Crucial Conversations training infuses fourteen hours of classroom time with over one hundred and twenty original video clips and examples of situations managed both poorly and well. Expert descriptions of key concepts round out the theoretical aspects of the course. Course pacing is active and engaging, with frequent role plays, intense class participation, personal reflection, planning, and commitment.

From this course participants acquire the skills that help them step up to and handle high-stakes issues.

### The Flow

Here's what we do to move training participants from mere familiarity with the subject to eventual mastery of each and every skill. Each training session starts with a

## Rich with Real-Life Video Clips



Crucial Conversations training delivers over one hundred and twenty video clips and examples of situations managed both poorly and well.



Participants are sure to leave training with the ability to spot bad behaviors and enact good behaviors—in personal and professional situations alike.



A proven approach, video-based training moves training participants from mere familiarity with the subject to eventual mastery of each and every skill.

principle, teaches one or more skills, and then provides participants with a chance to actually practice the skills in a controlled environment. Next, participants apply the skills to real issues they deal with every day—identifying what it means to them and how they're going to behave differently. Then they commit to implementing the skills back at work. Finally, participants implement the skills and report back on what happened.

The goal, of course, is not only to provide training, but to help people master the same high-leverage tools routinely used by top performers. Once again, the focus is on teaching the skills that lead to individual, team, and organizational effectiveness.

## The Delivery

Crucial Conversations training is not only powerful, relevant, and engaging, it's also easy to deliver. Your options include:

- Send individual contributors, leaders, or your in-house trainers to one of our regularly scheduled public courses. In this two-day course, learn from Master Certified Trainers while mixing with peers from other organizations.
- Certify your in-house trainers in our train-the-trainer program—which continues on days three and four of each of our public courses.
- Bring this training in-house with our certified trainers, your own trainers, or your internal leaders and managers. Our train-the-trainer program and resource kits enable your trainers to offer the highest quality in-house training program available today.
- In-house courses may be spaced over multiple training sessions or delivered back-to-back over two days.



The Crucial Conversations Leader's Resource Kit provides certified trainers with all they need to install the integrated presentation on a laptop computer, prepare to conduct a training course, brush up on Crucial Conversations skills, and successfully conduct a facilitated classroom training.

Our training design makes this course flexible and easy to deliver. Integrating the best of high-tech digital technology with high-touch group dynamics, course activities vary from watching and discussing video examples to developing personal plans, to participating in fast-paced group exercises, to actually practicing the skills. At the end of every session, participants walk away with important skills that they'll master. And once again, keeping our original goal in mind, they learn skills that make them more valuable to your organization.

## Award-Winning Technology

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Crucial Conversations training lies in a CD-ROM-based Instructional Layering™ technology that allows for maximum flexibility. Concepts, summaries, setups, and video examples are projected to a screen. How much is revealed, which exercises are used, even which video examples are displayed are within the control of the trainer. Newer trainers, for instance, often choose to reveal detailed instructions. Seasoned professionals, in contrast, will draw from their memories. Instructional layering includes:

- Video scenario branching that allows you to customize your presentation from the boardroom to the shop floor.
- Instructional drill downs that reveal multiple additional levels of detail.
- Video clips of author explanations to further illustrate important concepts.
- Branches that allow for both continuous and spaced learning.



Crucial Conversations won “Training Product of the Year” in 2004 from Human Resource Executive magazine.

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

### Teaching Best Practices

Crucial Conversations training began as a journey into organizational change with one goal in mind: to make companies more successful. Conducting three parallel research efforts (over the past twenty-five years), spending more than ten thousand hours examining influence masters, and carefully studying twenty-five thousand top influencers, we have confirmed our hypothesis: Enhance individual skills around crucial conversations, then spread these skills across organizations, and everything gets better.

Did this nontraditional strategy work? Did focusing on crucial skills rather than strategies or systems actually make a difference? Absolutely. To date, more than 300,000 people have benefited from our training. Contact your Crucial Conversations representative to learn for yourself.



Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Al Switzler, and Ron McMillan (L to R).

## Participant Materials

Course participants receive the following materials during the course to provide the best possible classroom experience and to ensure transference and retention of the skills being taught.

- *Crucial Conversations Participant Toolkit* (224-page training workbook)
- *Crucial Conversations Action Planner*
- Contract cards
- Model cards
- A copy of *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*
- Crucial Conversations Audio CD Companion (6-CD audio workout for strengthening Crucial Conversations skills)
- A subscription to the Crucial Skills Reminder, a weekly e-mail service
- A follow-up process that includes multiple Web resources (a self-scoring *Style Under Stress* self-assessment, video examples, downloadable samples, and more)
- Access to our complete line of books, audio companion CDs, and Web Seminars at [www.crucialskills.com](http://www.crucialskills.com)



T R A I N I N G

### More Crucial™ Skills

Interested in making a difference in your team or organization around accountability, performance, and execution? Then check out our most recent training course and book, *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior* (McGraw-Hill 2004), another *New York Times* bestseller and companion to *Crucial Conversations*.



"Hey, if you read only one 'management' book this decade, I'd insist that it be *Crucial Confrontations*."

– Tom Peters, author of *Re-Imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age*

"Revolutionary ideas . . . opportunities for breakthrough . . ."

– Stephen R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

"Unleash the true potential of a relationship or organization and move it to the next level."

–Ken Blanchard, coauthor of *The One Minute Manager*

"The most recommended and most effective resource in my library."

– Stacey Allerton Firth, Vice President Human Resources, Ford of Canada



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

VitalSmarts currently offers two Crucial Skills training initiatives: *Crucial Conversations*® and *Crucial Confrontations*™. Each delivers a powerful set of influence tools that builds teams, enriches relationships, and improves end results.

The founders of VitalSmarts have two *New York Times* bestselling books based on this research of the same titles, *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High* and *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior*.