

Crucial Conversations Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Crucial Conversations* will teach you how to avoid conflict and come to a positive solution in high-stakes conversations so you can be effective in your personal and professional life.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Every day, we engage in many conversations. Some are with our mother or our spouse, while others are with coworkers or our boss. They can range from informal to formal, but whatever the dialogue may be, things can get heated. I know I've had experiences where discussions have quickly taken a quick turn for the worst, and both me and the person I was talking to end up hurt or frustrated.

The authors define a crucial conversation as "A discussion between two or more people where the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong." While these tense situations may be unavoidable, *Crucial Conversations* will help them be less painful for everyone involved.

The five authors of *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High* studied successful communicators for an impressive 25 years and came to the conclusion that what made them so great was their ability handle crucial conversations effectively. These people have the skills to handle any hard discussion, regardless of the person.

Now, you can learn exactly how you can become a similarly powerful communicator too. This book teaches countless valuable tools on how to handle these high-stakes discussions so they can become positive, safe, and goal-oriented.

Here are the 3 most crucial principles I've learned:

1. When communicating, stay focused on your goals to avoid reacting emotionally.
2. Create safe conversations by showing the other person you value their opinions.
3. Use the STATE method to resolve conflict when it arises.

Are you ready to start having positive and constructive conversations when it really counts?
Let's get going!

Lesson 1: Stick to your goals during the discussion so you don't get overly emotional.

When emotions run high in a conversation and we no longer feel safe, there are two ways it can go: silence or violence. Neither of these options provides a solution. In a crucial conversation, we need a solution or we will be stuck. How do we avoid this? We remember our goal.

We've all been in a position where we need to settle something important with someone. Things get heated, and someone says something offensive. We may be tempted to turn to silence or violence, but if we really need a solution, neither of these help. This is when we need to remember our goals. To prevent yourself from getting angry, ask yourself, "What is my purpose in this conversation" and "What information do I want to get across clearly to this person?"

The thing is, once we realize what we do want, we'll realize what we don't want. Just stopping to think about the goal, which should be to not walk away without a solution, can be a great way to keep yourself from getting angry. If you need to tell someone something that might upset them, ask yourself things like "What do I want to avoid?" or "what do I really want here?" The more you can keep both parties calm, the better the conversation will turn out.

Lesson 2: Listen to the other person's opinions to help them feel safe in the conversation.

Have you ever noticed that even the most seemingly harmless of conversations sometimes get heated? The authors explain that this usually stems from the fact that someone feels unsafe. Biologically, our bodies respond to a threat by either a drive for fight or flight. This response can happen in a tense conversation. Once people start feeling mistreated, they will shut themselves off.

The key to helping people feel safe is to listen to what they have to say. This will make them feel that their opinions are valued, and they are respected. **Don't just listen, make it genuine.** As they talk, there are four ways for powerful listening, summarized in the acronym AMPP: Ask, mirror, paraphrase, and prime.

Ask (to get the ball rolling) Start by saying things like "I would love to hear your opinion about..."

Mirror (to confirm feelings) This is saying things like "You look unsure..." Explain to them what you sense from the situation, in a calm and understanding tone.

Paraphrase (to acknowledge their story) This will be "So if I understand you correctly..." Use this to understand how they feel.

Prime (if you are getting nowhere) If someone clams up, we might need to encourage them to speak by suggesting what we think they might be feeling. "I guess you must think I'm being unfair..."

Much like in Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, we must "seek first to understand, then be understood." This will make your conversational partner feel safe enough to open up in the conversation. Then you can move forward.

Lesson 3: Use the STATE acronym to resolve a conflict.

Crucial conversations are highly charged on both ends. But they don't have to end in silence or violence. If you want to resolve conflict before it gets worse, you can use the STATE method.

Share the facts. When you begin the conversation, make sure you give the facts, and not your story.

Tell your story. Next, you can tell your story and share the assumptions you made.

Ask for the other's paths. Let them tell their story.

Talk tentatively. Remind yourself that your assumptions are not facts.

Encourage testing. Encourage the other person to tell their viewpoint, even if it is opposite from yours.

After you calm the conflict, work toward a solution. This can happen in a variety of ways, like setting boundaries, having a vote, letting one person make a decision, brainstorming a solution together, or ending the relationship entirely if best for both parties. The important

thing is if you want to be effective in the crucial conversations of life, you need to work to a real solution, whatever it may be.

Crucial Conversations Review

I feel like I could only scratch the surface on this one because there is just so much to learn from *Crucial Conversations*. This book will help you deal with high-stakes situations not only at work or other formal settings but also in your personal life. If you use the methods, you will be able to have more healthy and fruitful conversations, which everyone could use. I would recommend this as a great read for anyone since conversation is such a significant part of all of our lives every day.

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Who would I recommend the **Crucial Conversations** summary to?

The 43-year-old mother who is struggling to connect with her teenage daughter, a 51-year-old boss who needs to know how to give constructive criticism to his employees, and anyone who struggles to get through tough conversations.