Get Unstuck
How to Spot the Conversations That Are Keeping You from What You Want

THE LAW OF CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Skill #1: Identify where you’re stuck.
Skill #2: Unbundle with CPR.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THIS: IF YOU DON’T TALK IT OUT, YOU WILL ACT IT OUT.

Joseph Grenny
WORK ON ME FIRST

The first step to change starts with a change in heart—which begins when you admit that you’re the person you should be trying to improve.

The Skill: Focus on what you *really* want.

1. “What am I behaving like I want?”
2. “What results do I really want—
   • for myself?”
   • for others?”
   • for the relationship?”
   • for the organization?”
3. “How would I behave if I really did?”

THE REASON OTHERS GET DEFENSIVE WITH US IS NOT BECAUSE WE LACK THE RIGHT SKILLS, BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE THE WRONG MOTIVES. CHANGE WHAT YOU WANT AND YOU’LL CHANGE HOW YOU ACT.

Ron McMillan
Skill #1: Separate fact from story.

Skill #2: Watch for three clever stories. Victim, Villain, and Helpless Stories propel our emotions and help us justify our behavior.

Skill #3: Tell the rest of the story. Ask:

- “What am I pretending not to notice about my role in the problem?”
- “Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?”
- “What should I do right now to move toward what I really want?”

THE CENTRAL SKILL FOR TAKING CONTROL OF THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE AND THE QUALITY OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS IS THE ABILITY TO MASTER YOUR STORIES.

Joseph Grenny
To express your views in a way that makes it safe for others to hear them (and even disagree), share your path the way you experienced it—from observations to actions. If you start with the facts and are tentative in encouraging others’ points of view, you can be both totally candid and totally respectful.

**The Skill: STATE My Path.**

- Share your facts
- Tell your story
- Ask for others’ paths
- Talk tentatively
- Encourage testing

YOU CAN ARGUE AS STRONGLY AS YOU WANT FOR YOUR OPINION AS LONG AS YOU ARE EQUALLY VIGOROUS IN ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO DISAGREE.

Ron McMillan
Learn to Look
How to Notice When Safety Is at Risk

Watch for the signs that a conversation is turning crucial. When people feel unsafe, they typically move to silence or violence. Those who are best at dialogue interpret silence or violence as evidence that others are feeling unsafe and then do what it takes to make it safe.

Remember, the sooner you catch problems, the sooner you can return to dialogue, and the less severe the damage.

**Skill #1:** Learn to look for when a conversation becomes crucial.

**Skill #2:** Learn to look for silence and violence in yourself and others.

WE GO TO SILENCE BECAUSE WE DREAD CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS. WE GO TO VIOLENCE BECAUSE WE’RE UNSKILLED AT HOLDING CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS.

Al Switzler
The two conditions of safety are Mutual Purpose and Mutual Respect. Are people at cross-purposes, offended, or both?

**Restore safety.** Tools include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mutual Respect</th>
<th>Clear Problem</th>
<th>Mutual Purpose</th>
<th>Misunderstanding</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apologize</td>
<td></td>
<td>Create Mutual Purpose (see Cue Card 7)</td>
<td>Contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contrast</td>
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**THE LIMITING FACTOR OF ALL COMMUNICATION IS NOT THE RISKINESS OF THE MESSAGE YOU WANT TO SHARE, BUT HOW SAFE YOU CAN HELP OTHERS FEEL HEARING THAT MESSAGE.**

*Kerry Patterson*
The Skill: Create Mutual Purpose.

• **Commit to seek Mutual Purpose.**
  Commit to search for a goal that will benefit both of you.

• **Recognize the purpose behind the strategy.**
  What you want and what you’re asking for are often two different things. One is your purpose; the other is your strategy for achieving it. Recognize the difference.

• **Invent a Mutual Purpose.**
  Don’t settle for a compromise. Move to different (often more creative) or higher and more encompassing goals.

• **Brainstorm new strategies.**
  Once you’ve found a Mutual Purpose, brainstorm mutually satisfactory strategies.

**When others feel respected and trust your motives, they let their guard down and begin to listen.**

*Al Switzler*
When others move to silence or violence, we need to encourage them to retrace their Path to Action to its source. When others are sharing feelings or acting inappropriately, it’s our job to make it safe for them to share their facts.

**The Skill:** Use AMPP to explore others’ paths.

- **A**sk to get things rolling
- **M**irror to confirm feelings
- **P**araphrase to acknowledge the story
- **P**rime when you’re getting nowhere

THE BEST PREDICTOR OF YOUR ABILITY TO GET TO DIALOGUE IS THE AMOUNT OF CURIOUSITY YOU BRING TO THE CONVERSATION.

Joseph Grenny
The Skill: Document WWWF.

It’s easy to let assignments fall through the cracks. When ending a discussion, document the following:

- **Who** does **What**
- by **When**
- and how we will **Follow up**

THE KEY TO REAL CHANGE IS NOT JUST TO BUILD A GREAT PROCESS—IT’S FOR PEOPLE TO HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE TO USE THE PROCESS. AND THAT REQUIRES CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS.

Ron McMillan