

Guide for Navigating Crucial Conversations



BEFORE

Work on Me First

- Focus on healthy goals and avoid the sucker's choice



DURING

Goal: Get to good dialogue

- Keep it safe
- Watch for SILENCE and VIOLENCE (in yourself and others)
- Build mutual purpose and respect



AFTER

Decide

- Meet conditions needed to get decisions

Remember: Listen...Spotlight on the other person...Keep public values in mind...
Decide up front how the community should be involved.

BEFORE

As much as we'd love to fix everyone else, we need to work on ourselves first.

Techniques

(Before, work on me.)

Use two tools:

1. **Ask what do I really want?**
(Is that healthy or unhealthy?)
Focus on healthy goals.

Healthy Goals:

- Learn
- Find the truth
- Produce results
- Strengthen relationships

Unhealthy Goals (AVOID):

- Be right
- Look good/save face
- Keep the peace
- Win
- Punish, Blame
- Avoid Contact

2. **Avoid the sucker's choice!**
"Either/or" thinking when in fact we face several choices, and some of them good

DURING

A dialogue can not begin until mutual purpose and mutual respect exist.

Techniques to make people feel safe in conversations

1. **Step out of the content.**
2. **Rebuild safety** – You care about their best interests and goals (mutual purpose), You care about them (mutual respect).
3. **Then step back in.**

Remember:

- If you observe silence or violence step in... make it safe
- With good intentions you can talk candidly
- Ask for permission to raise 'unsafe' issues
- Contrast to fix misunderstandings, Use Do/Don't statements
- Invent a larger mutual purpose if needed
- Clarify what you want to achieve/avoid using AND. How can we achieve...and avoid...
- Remember the difference between purpose and strategy

AFTER

Decide how to decide.

A. "Vote – all have a voice, but the majority rules."

B. "Consensus – everyone must agree."

Conditions needed for making decisions:

1. How it relates to our vision and values
2. Clear understanding of ordinances – staff informs us what we're bound to
3. Community input – Advisory board input
4. Consideration of unintended consequences – including impact on other decisions, budget, and impact on all parties
5. Alternatives
6. Taking time to check in with each other, proactive, don't wait
7. Understand the problem we are trying to solve
8. Information that is accurate, relevant, and data driven