Critical Conversations:
Building Trust to
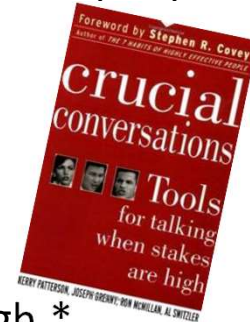## *Resolve Differences*

Joe Stelliga

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Agenda

- Critical Conversation Defined
- Collaboration
- Critical Conversation Model and Theory
- Behavior Choices
- Dealing with Anger
- Johari Window
- Learning vs. Judging

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Critical Conversations

A discussion between two or more people where:

- the stakes are high,

- opinions vary, and

- emotions are likely to run high.*

Adapted from Crucial Conversations by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzer
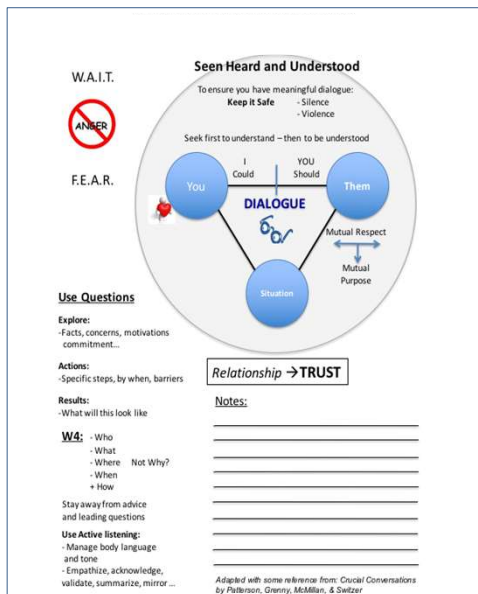
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Examples of Critical Conversations

- Difference of Opinion
- Mistake made on site
- Performance feedback
- You disagree with Spv.
- Safety rules
- Missed commitments
- Inappropriate behavior
- Standing up for yourself
- Apologizing
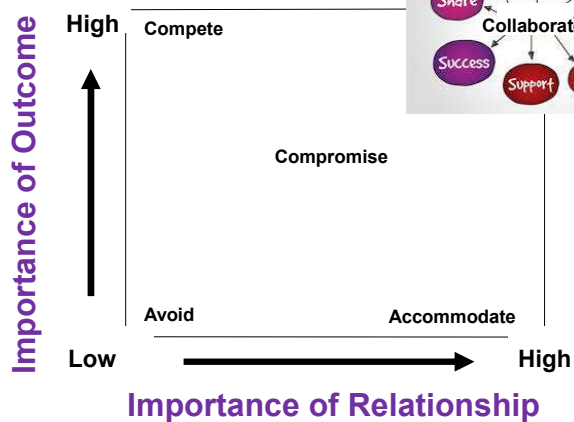- Recognizing efforts
- …….

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Session Handout

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Collaboration

Collaborating: This behaviour is **both assertive and cooperative**, attempting to **achieve the goals and interests of both parties.** Its is a **Win/Win scenario** when both parties **trust each other**, **listen to each other** and **express their needs and expectations.**	• The **objective** is **to learn** • You need a **long-term** solution • The **goals require teamwork** • **Creative solutions** are **needed** • **The relationship is important**

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Collaboration?

- The **goal of collaboration** is results **not collaboration but greater than that.** To be **disciplined about collaboration** is to **know when to collaborate** and **when not to** and **to know you cannot do it without having/building trust.**

- Research shows that **four barriers block collaboration.**
  - **Not-invented-here:** People are not willing to seek input from others outside their unit.
  - **Hoarding:** People are not willing to provide information and help others when asked.
  - **Search problems**: People are not able to find information & people easily.
  - **Transfer problems:** People are not able to transfer complicated knowledge from one unit to another.

  *The first two barriers are **motivational problems***
  - people don't want to collaborate.
  *The latter two barriers are **ability problems***
  - people are not able to collaborate

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Contractual vs Covenantal Relationship

Contractual	Covenantal
- You – Them	- Us
- Based on Distrust	- Based on Trust
- Either party can opt out under certain conditions	- It's about finding the strength to hold up your part of the promise
- One party can break the contract when the other party is not fulfilling their part of the deal.	- The party not getting their needs met supports the failing party to meet their obligations and project obligations
- Limited risk	- Unlimited risk

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TRUST

- **Systemic issues related to process** and **depending on trust** can sometimes create opportunities to **undermine trust**
  - **i.e. - Approval process for changes to plan**
    - **- VPM process**
- What **you** decide in the moment can make or break the trust – can you follow process and manage relationships?
- **Are you thinking contractual or covenantal?**

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Critical Conversation Model

What do you bring to the conversation?
We all want to be Seen, Heard and Understood
What's in your circle?

You — Them — Situation

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Work on You First!

The only person you can directly control in the conversation is yourself.

- Where am I in all of this?

- What can I control? Influence?

- What do I need to do NOW to be effective?

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Critical Conversation Model

What's in their circle?

You — Them

Situation

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Critical Conversation Model

You just saw a colleague do the opposite of what you agreed to at the morning meeting. You are pissed off This impacts the project budget, your trust and your desire to work with him!

What do you want to have a conversation about?

You — Them

Situation

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Start with Heart

What does my behaviour tell me about my motives?

– What do I really want for myself?
– What do I really want for other(s)?
– What do I really want for our relationship, our team?

How would I behave if I really wanted these results?

Find a way to get all of the relevant information out into the open.

Adapted from Crucial Conversations by Patterson, …

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Critical Conversation Model

Seen, Heard and Understood.

I Could

You

Them

Situation

YOU Should

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Your Role

Speak openly and honestly!

"At the core of every successful conversation lies the free flow of relevant information"

Dialogue:
"The free flow of meaning between two or more people"

• A pool of shared meaning composed of thoughts and feelings - ours' and theirs'

• Informs us and propels us into action

• Successful dialogue results when everyone feels safe

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Who will you have a conversation with?

- **Identify a real situation you would like to move into but haven't**

- **Choose a critical conversation with someone in the middle of continuum**

"Difficult individual"   *"Easy individual"*

Angry; Unable   *Agreeable, Capable*

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Critical Conversation Model

We all want to be <u>Seen, Heard and Understood</u>

To ensure you have **meaningful dialogue:**

Keep it Safe - Silence - Violence

Seek first to understand – then to be understood

I Could | YOU Should

You   **DIALOGUE**   **Them**

Situation

Circle of Safety
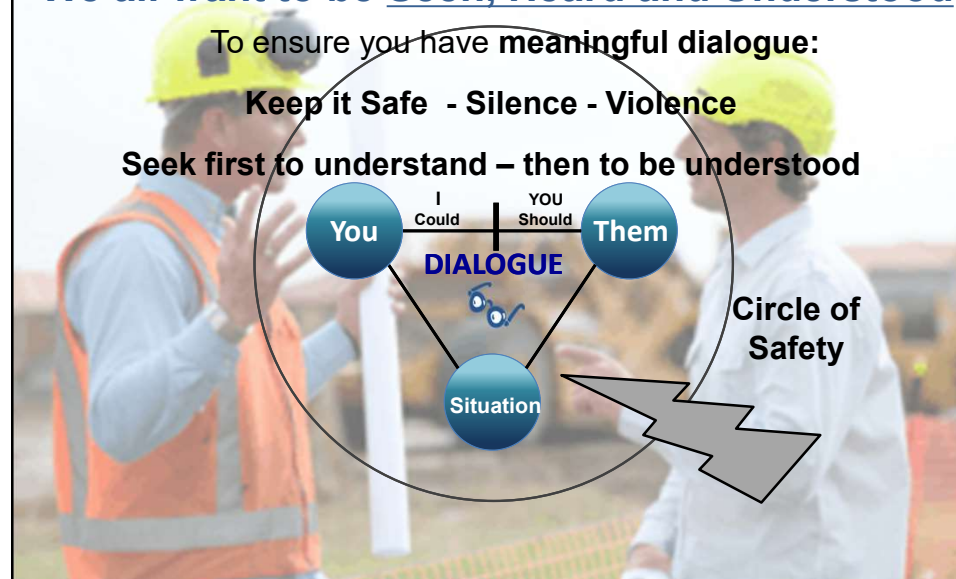
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Behavior Choices

"Conversation Killers"

We Can Fight	**We Can Flee**
"Violence"	"Silence"
• Attack	• Withdrawn
• Label	• Avoid
• Control	• Mask

Adapted from Crucial Conversations by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzer

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Critical Conversation Model

We all want to be seen, heard and understood.

Keep it Safe
Seek first to understand –
then to be understood

You — I Could — YOU Should — Them
DIALOGUE
Situation

Relationship -> TRUST

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Stages of Anger
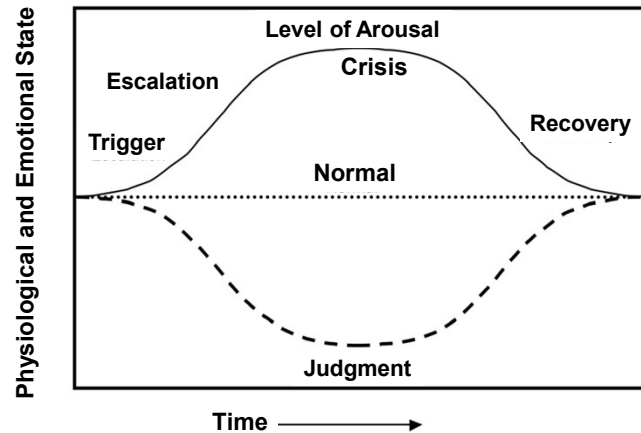
To have an effective Critical Conversation Anger must be addressed.

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Dealing with People who are Angry

Not losing control is usually easier than regaining control once it's lost. The following strategies may be considered in order to try to keep things on an even keel.

- **Ignore**
- **Acknowledge**
- **Validate**
- **Question**
- **Deflect**
- **Take Control**
- **Park it**
- **Take a Break**

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Asking Questions to Understand the Other

- **Exploration:**

    - **Facts, Concerns, Motivation, Commitment**

- **Action:**

    - **Specific steps, By when, Who else, Barriers?**

- **Results:**

    - **Based on the plan, results employee envisions achieving**

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Having the Right Questions

vs. Having the Right Answers

- Open Ended Questions?

- 4 W's – Who, What, Where, When, + How

- Stay away from Why?

W.A.I.T.

Use Active Listening

- Words – Summarize, Paraphrase, Use "I", Acknowledge, Validate, …

- Open and acknowledging Body Language

- Tone – Understanding, Empathy, Curiosity …

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Johari Window

Dialoguing to expand what is known by both parties in order to resolve the difference of opinion.

	Known to self (conscious)	Not known to self (unconscious)
Known to Others (Public)	OPEN	BLIND
Not Known to Others (Private)	HIDDEN	UNKNOWN
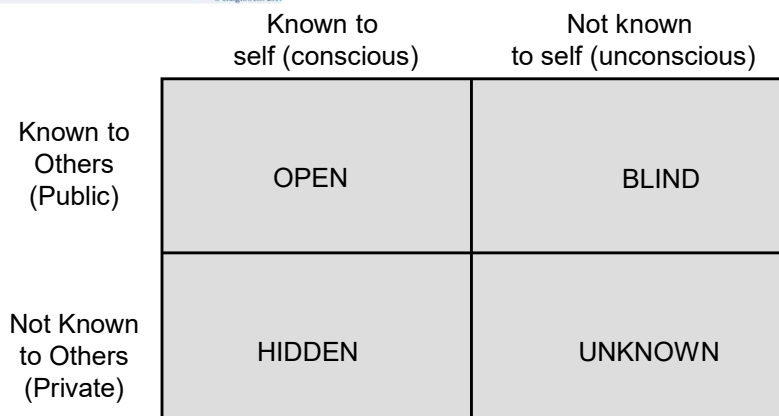
Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, 1955

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Johari Window

Dialoguing to expand what is known by both parties in order to resolve the difference of opinion.

Ask →

	Known to self (conscious)	Not known to self (unconscious)
Known to Others (Public)	OPEN	BLIND
Not Known to Others (Private)	HIDDEN	UNKNOWN

Feedback

Disclosure

Tell ↓
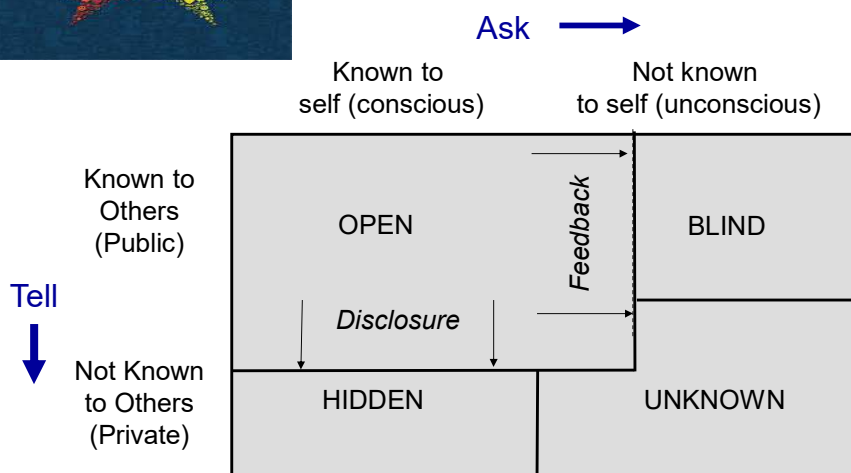
Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, 1955

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Practice Session – Asking Questions

As you leave the session find one other person:

- **Only ask them questions(3) to learn something about them** and **actively listen** to their responses
- Other person listens and **responds to questions**
- **Switch it up**

What is it that you do?

What are you enjoying about the day?

What do you wish we could do better on projects?

What do you think we do well?

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critical conversations
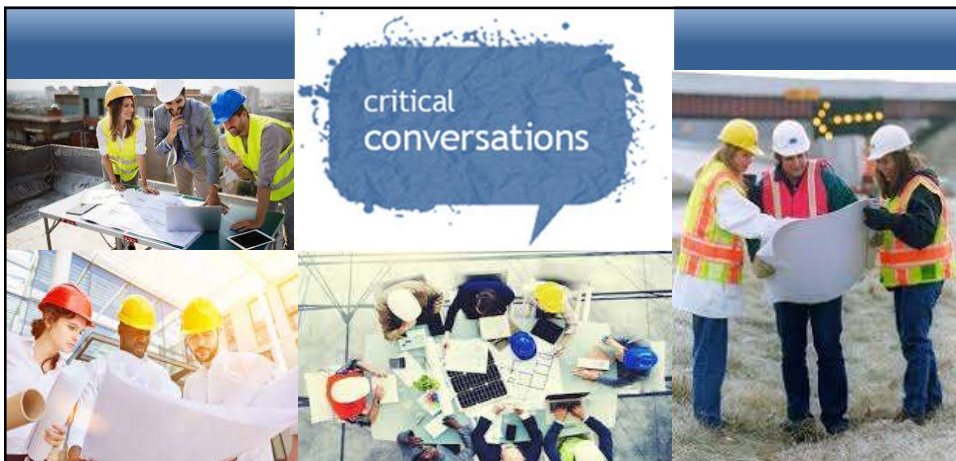
Thank You

for Your Participation!

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