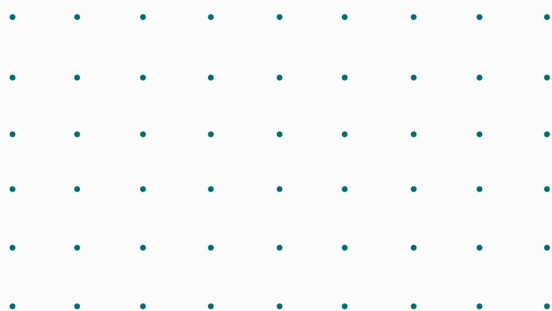


Crucial Conversations

**Small
Groups**

Be Known





What is a crucial conversation?

A crucial conversation is a discussion between two or more people where: the stakes are high, opinions vary and emotions run strong.

Why bother?

1. To live out our calling
2. To uphold Unity
3. To encourage Maturity

“The role of authority is to release destiny”

Andrew McNeil

Leadership is about assuming responsibility. We exercise authority for the benefit of others; never for seeking position or self-gain.

A crucial conversation is a moment to interact – to speak life to someone. What you see and God sees in someone they may not see in themselves. We are committed to people’s future and God’s purpose in their lives, and as leaders we can often see the big picture.

You could be ONE crucial conversation away from greater health, a breakthrough moment or development, greater effectiveness and stepping into destiny.

Our words shape culture; the right words in the right moment can be powerful and transformative. We also uphold unity and protect the church by addressing conflict, confronting sin and clarifying theology in a way that is full of grace and truth.

What does the Bible say?

To live out our calling

“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.” **Colossians 1:28**

To uphold unity

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” **Ephesians 4:14-15**

To encourage maturity

"... so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." **Colossians 1:28**

"... we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ."
Ephesians 4:15

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness *so that* the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." **2 Timothy 3:16**

Why are crucial conversations hard?

1. Not everyone has signed up for the journey
2. Tapping into someone else's history
3. Tapping into our own history

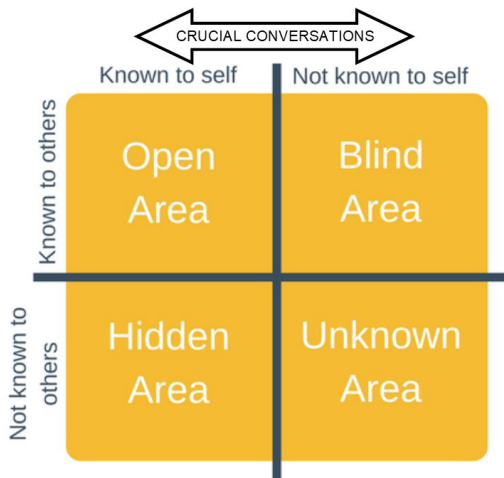
As leaders, we cast vision for what community, growth and love looks like, so that people increasingly want to join us on a journey towards maturity. Crucial conversations tend to go better where we have earned the right to speak into people's lives; if they know us and trust our leadership then we can discuss difficult things with them.

“The extent to which the person on the receiving end is utterly convinced you are for them...If they know that, you’ll probably have a good outcome.”

John Wimber

The Johari Window

Growing in self-awareness and emotional maturity is a lifelong journey with Jesus. All of us have parts of ourselves which are kept hidden from others, and even parts which we are not yet aware of. The same is true for those we have crucial conversations with. Crucial conversations done well help people to move from the open areas of the self-awareness to their blind spots, and can be an opportunity for significant growth.



What is the emotional climate around you and your leadership?

Our character and interpersonal skills matter..

- Can we assume responsibility and apologise if necessary?
- Can we allow those we lead to give feedback which may require us to grow and change ourselves?
- Are we acting with integrity, taking responsibility, acting with forgiveness and compassion?

We are all on a journey of growth...

Receiving feedback from those we lead communicates humility, respect, passion for excellence and confidence all in one go. It also creates a culture where people see their leaders unafraid to grow and learn from mistakes.

It is not possible for Christians to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature."

Peter Scazzero - Emotionally Healthy Leader

Our history matters...

What are the places where our own history may make it difficult for us to lead well and have crucial conversations?

Often it's helpful to think about how conflict was dealt with in your family growing up; what have you seen modelled to you? What kind of leaders did you learn under?

Often when we enter a crucial conversation our own "buttons can be pushed" because of places of past pain we haven't experienced healing in yet.

In order to love people well, we need to be open to Jesus, allowing Him to gently reveal areas in our lives where He longs for us to experience healing and restoration. It might be that as we notice things coming to the surface, we need to be willing to embrace vulnerability and share this with someone else who can support us in this journey.

"Emotionally healthy leaders understand how their past affects their present ability to love Christ and others. "

Peter Scazzero - Emotionally Healthy Leader

Self-Reflection

- Where are you reluctant to enter crucial conversations?
- What excites you about crucial conversations?
- What parts of your history could make it easy or difficult for you to have crucial conversations?

Speaking the truth in love

The best kind of Crucial Conversation...

Ephesians 4:5 “Instead speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him, that is, Christ.”

Crucial conversations play a vital role in our journey of spiritual maturity.

High Honesty / [Truth]	2	4
Low Honesty / Candour [Truth]	1	3
	Low Concern / [Love]	High Concern / [Love]

1. Low Truth/Low Love - Not having the conversation, indifferent – suggests we are not concerned about the person or the situation.

2. High Truth/Low love – Can be very harmful when feedback is given without grace or care. Doesn't accomplish the desired end result and often alienates people who may feel attacked.

3. Low Truth/High love - Avoidance of the issue as don't want to upset people. Often seems 'kinder' in the short term but causes pain in the long term as harmful patterns may go unchallenged.

Each of these responses damage people. Often our reasons for reacting like this as leaders come from our own history; learned responses which may have been shaped by our family of origin or our own experiences. As disciples of Jesus, we're invited to grow in both truth and love and learn how to extend that to others.

We are aiming for...

4. High Truth/High love - Communicating unconditional love to the person, and also calling them to growth in a particular area. This is what Ephesians 4:5 is talking about.

"God sees us as we are, loves us as we are, and accepts us as we are. But by his grace he does not leave us as we are"

Tim Keller

The HOW TO of Crucial Conversations

Right time/Right location

Often people try to begin crucial conversations when they are reacting to something which has just happened.

Pause before you engage;

1. Is the conversation mine or someone else's?

2. If it's mine, is now the best time/space?

- We want to give people our best attention and care
- We want to talk in an environment where it's safe to talk freely, maybe where we won't be overheard by lots of people
- We want to have enough time to properly deal with emotional issues which may emerge

Schedule in a conversation with the person. Because we love people, we want to give the necessary time and space to their issue.

"The first act of love is always the giving of attention"

Dallas Willard

Preparation

All of us come to leadership bringing stuff from our own lives; the stresses/frustrations/hopes/fears that we all carry. Before we engage with crucial conversations it's important that we have space to pause before Jesus, and let him lift off our burdens.

Take some time to prepare yourself;

1. Get your heart right

- You may be angry/hurt – spend some time with Jesus and ask for his heart of love for the person.

2. Prepare a game plan

- What's the goal of the conversation? Is this a matter of morality, wisdom, or opinion?

3. Get thoughts in mind

- Reflect on specific situations and evidence so you can hold an accurate mirror up to someone's life.

4. Go in love

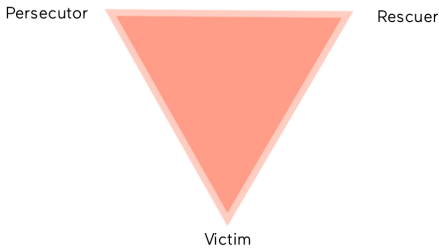
- This makes the biggest difference; if the person knows they are loved and you are committed to them it's more likely to have a positive outcome.

5. Consider taking notes

- If so, explain beforehand

Dynamics in the conversation

THE DRAMA TRIANGLE



Think about what role you might take in conversations and why that might be. Be aware that the person you are speaking with will also have a normal way that they deal with conflict and these dynamics will be operating in the room.

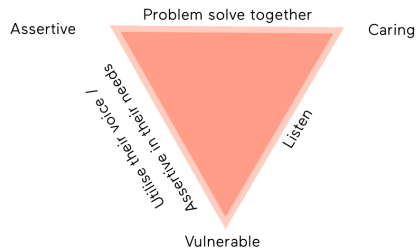
Victim – “Poor me”. Feels hurt, oppressed, powerless, can’t make decisions or solve problems. Struggles to take responsibility.

Rescuer – Classic enabler. Feels guilty if they don’t rescue, but this often keeps the other person passive and dependent.

Persecutor – “It’s all your fault”. Controlling, angry, blaming, and critical. Avoids responsibility and feels superior

Jesus calls us to bring our whole-hearted selves to love and serve people, so increasingly we want to step out of these roles, and instead go to listen, love, serve and lead.

THE HEALTHY TRIANGLE

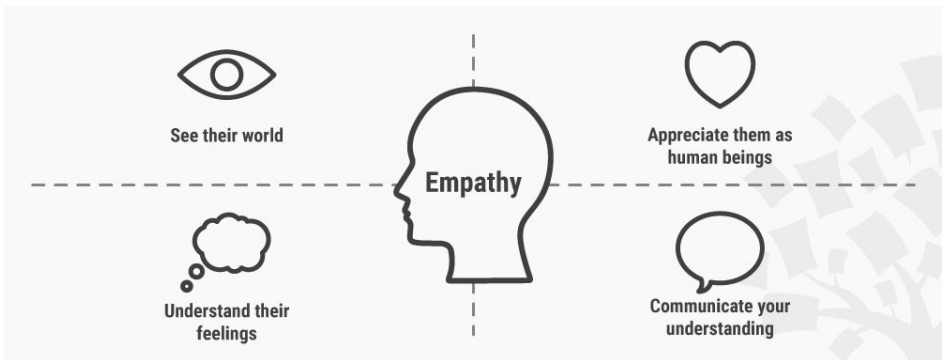


During the conversation

We want to communicate well so the person leaves feeling as if they have been heard and understood

- **Frame the conversation.** Explain why you're having the chat. (Eg. "Because I care about you and I am for you, and I think you might be getting stuck, it's important we talk about this")
- **Clarify with them what they have heard you say.** As we raise potentially emotional issues often people begin reacting inwardly, or even outwardly, and they may not fully hear us. Ask them "What have you heard me say?", so you can address misunderstandings.
- **Pay attention to what they say.** Give eye contact, listen, don't simply prepare the next bit of the conversation. Empathise with the pain "I can understand why it seemed like that. It sounds like this has been very difficult for you"
- **Reflect back what you have heard them say.** "Have I heard you right? Have I missed anything?"

We prioritise really listening to the person and communicating love – that is the best context for growth and it is how Jesus interacts with us.



Ask questions to help them process

- Do you feel this is right for you?
- How do you think this is going?
- I noticed your response; how might that change if we re-ran it?
- What impact do you think that had on those in your team?
- What might change if I apologise?

We want to use thoughtful questions to leverage a moment; to help someone move from being okay to being really great, or a ministry from being mediocre to really effective.

What's next?

It might be that the person needs to step down, have more training or move to a different role.

An apology might be necessary; what might need to happen to regain harmony and restore relationship? ('5 Languages of Apology' by Gary Chapman)

It's not about policing people, but inviting them on a journey to maturity.

What are their next steps on this journey and how can we support them in a way that loves and cares for them, and the wider church family?

Self-Reflection

Crucial conversations are not just about what we do but are about what God wants to do in us. We carry God's divine image and over time he wants to transform us more and more into his likeness. There are always invitations to personal growth.

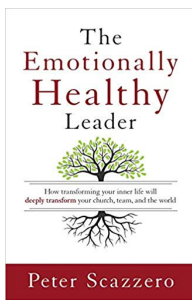
- What is Jesus highlighting in you as you reflect on the topic of 'Crucial Conversations'?
- Do you have rhythms in your life where you are still enough to reflect and hear when God might want to speak into your own heart?
- Can you remember an experience of a crucial conversation that has gone well or one that didn't go so well or that you've avoided in the past?
- Think about a crucial conversation you are facing or avoiding in the next month or so...
- What are your biggest fears and greatest hopes for the conversation?
- How might you apply what you have learned?

Recommended Books



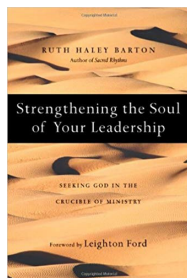
Crucial Conversations

Kerry Patterson et al.



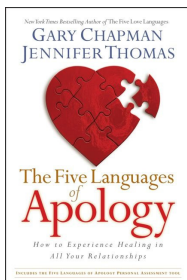
Emotionally Healthy Leader

Peter Scazzero



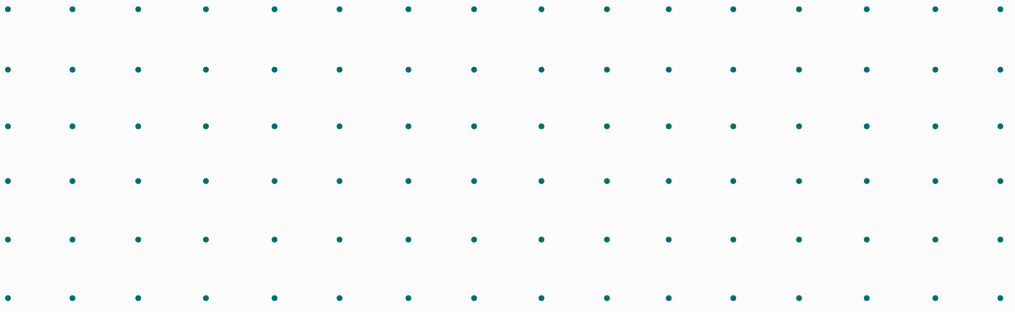
Strengthening the Soul of your Leadership

Ruth Haley-Barton



5 Languages of Apology

Gary Chapman & Jennifer Thomas



Trent
Vineyard

Trentv.org