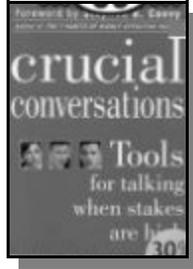




Book Corner ~ *Crucial Conversations*

by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler.



We engage in several conversations every day. What makes a conversation *crucial*? According to the authors of *Crucial Conversations*, one of three elements makes it so. They are:

1. varying opinions
2. high stakes
3. strong emotions

These are the types of conversations that can have a huge impact on the quality of your life.

This book is designed for personal skill building and it teaches how to master crucial conversations. It provides the tools for you to:

- prepare for high-stakes situations with a proven technique
- transform anger and hurt feelings into powerful dialogue
- make it safe to talk about almost anything
- be persuasive, not abrasive

Whether at home, at work or at play, this book will help you in your crucial conversations.



Job Security

Question:

In the uncertainty of today's work environment and job market, opportunities seem to be diminishing and often not even available. Do you have any advice for these rather volatile times?

Collaborations response: There are several aspects of your question we would like to address. First however, our unequivocal position is that the surest way to future job security is through past and present job performance.

During times of uncertainty, down sizing, right sizing, re-engineering, mergers, buyouts, etc. the most common human tendency in organizations is to become almost paralyzed waiting to see what will happen, and to whom. The rumor mill runs rampant. Everyone becomes obsessed with concern for their own jobs. These are possibly the least productive times that an organization can go through.

In truth, the vast majority of us have little or no control over the unfolding of such events. What you do have control over is how you do your job. In fact you always have

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"The surest way to future job security is through past and present job performance."

~ Dave Carey ~

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Job Security

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control over “how you do your job.” Rather than let the uncertainties over which you have little or no control consume you, we advocate always doing your job – and doing it very, very well.

We would argue that in every case the high performer will have more job security and “more opportunity” than those whose performance is at a lower level. One of the best ways to protect your employment, at present and for the future, is to maintain a high level of quality performance. You always have control over that! It certainly does not guarantee your employment, but then there are never any guarantees. Excellent performance is as close to a guarantee as you can get.

Excellent performance and hard work also form the basis for several other thoughts on “opportunity.”

‘Luck’ is sometimes defined as preparation meeting opportunity. The crucial ingredient is preparation. Many an opportunity is missed because one is not prepared to take advantage of it. And preparation is hard work!

For example, if in these often turbulent times you should find yourself unemployed, your “job” then becomes “finding a job.” And ‘finding a job’ is a full-time effort, 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week. It is not just a few hours a day a few days a week.

Shaping up your resume, sending it out over and over, following up with calls on the telephone -- that is hard work. Your readiness to give your “elevator” presentation – a 3 minute summary: who you are, what you do, and why someone should consider hiring or referring you is critical. Being ready to do that on a moment’s notice - that, too, is hard work.

Investing time in yourself; in thinking, planning and preparing - that is also very hard work. In truth, time invested in thinking and preparing is more valuable than money spent - especially if it is spent on poorly thought-out plans, shabbily prepared. Without dedicated preparation, time spent thinking, opportunities may present themselves and you will not be able to capitalize on them.

In fact, you may not even recognize them. The possibility that we do not recognize opportunities when they do present themselves is worth a little more discussion. In addition to missing opportunities because we are not prepared, opportunities are often missed because they do not present themselves in ways or forms that we expect. Which brings us back to the value of investing your time in the hard work of thinking.

If time has been spent thinking about what other possibilities there might be, what questions do I need to be prepared to ask; what similar related situations might I be ready to pursue, what talents do I have to offer, etc., then we have expanded our horizons and will be more prepared for opportunities in forms we might not otherwise expect.

The dictionary defines ‘opportunity’ as “1. a chance, especially one that offers some kind of advantage. 2. a combination of favorable circumstances or situations.”

Statistics are interesting but somewhat irrelevant. You only need one “opportunity.” For example, if you were selling your home, it doesn’t really matter if the market is up or down, you only need one buyer. Likewise, you only need one opportunity. When that ‘chance,’ that ‘combination of favorable circumstances,’ presents itself, will you have done the hard work? Will you be prepared? You’ve heard the saying, “people make their own luck.” Perhaps they do, and if they do, it is through preparation.



Thomas Jefferson:

*I'm a great believer
in luck and I find the
harder I work, the
more I have of it.*

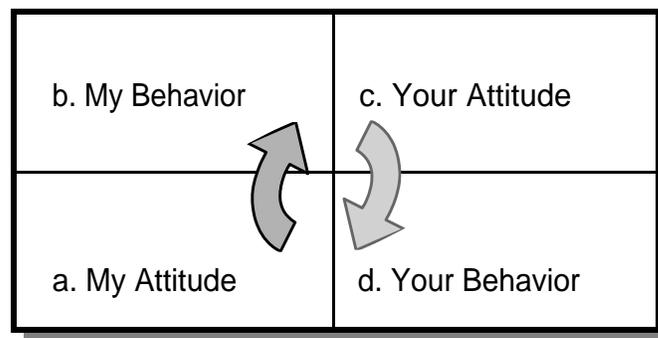
What's In An Attitude?

Frequently in our leadership workshops, we discuss “attitude.” Whether focusing on ourselves as a leader and considering how our behavior impacts other individuals, or focusing on the organization and how we impact the larger whole, this topic always generates interest.

Years ago, I learned a model that I find very useful in this discussion. It's called the Batari Box.



Your Attitude Determines Your Altitude



Starting in box a, the model reads:

- a. My attitude affects my behavior**
- b. My behavior affects your attitude**
- c. Your attitude affects your behavior**
- d. Your behavior affects my attitude.**

What this demonstrates is a couple of things: 1) We have a direct impact on others, and 2) if you keep going around the model continuously you will get a spiraling effect. For example, if my attitude is “positive,” the impact will be a positive one, and ultimately I will feel more positive and you will too. On the other hand, if my attitude is “negative,” we can get into a negative spiral and attitudes can become even more negative.

We all face situations in our lives that bring our attitude down. However, how long you let it stay there is your choice. There are many ways to shift your attitude. Here are a few:

- Take a deep breath
- Talk to someone who makes you laugh
- Look at a picture of your children or someone else you love
- Take a walk in the fresh air
- Tell yourself you feel good
- Count your blessings

As a leader you are always being watched and are a model for how others should behave. What's your attitude? And, who is being impacted by it?



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Meeting Tips

One of the most important tips for a successful meeting is to be sure the right people are in attendance. This is true whether the meeting is face-to-face, a conference call, a web-conference or video conference.

If key people are missing, you risk:

- making uninformed decisions
- repeating the conversation in a follow-up meeting
- delaying decisions
- lowering the odds of buy-in

If you have people who aren't necessary to the outcome, you are wasting their time and therefore the resources of the organization. We frequently hear people complain that they attend too many meetings. Yet, we rarely hear them talk about which meetings are important for them to attend and which are not.

Take a few minutes and analyze the meetings you attend. For each meeting, list the purpose, why you should attend, why you shouldn't attend and who should attend. If you and the other attendees of meetings will take a few minutes to consider these questions, you may find the clues to making the meetings better. For example, a meeting with multiple purposes may best be divided into multiple meetings, each with the appropriate attendees.

If you can get the right people in the meeting, you can increase the productivity of all.

We'd Like to Hear From You

If you'd like to contribute to Collaborations or if you have a question or topic for us, we'd love to hear from you. Send an e-mail to sgerke@sbcglobal.net with your ideas or questions. We can't include everything, but will respond based on topics of most interest.