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# Crucial Confrontations: Tools For Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, And Bad Behavior



## Synopsis

The authors of the New York Times bestseller *Crucial Conversations* show you how to achieve personal, team, and organizational success by healing broken promises, resolving violated expectations, and influencing good behavior. Discover skills to resolve touchy, controversial, and complex issues at work and at home--now available in this follow-up to the internationally popular *Crucial Conversations*. Behind the problems that routinely plague organizations and families, you'll find individuals who are either unwilling or unable to deal with failed promises. Others have broken rules, missed deadlines, failed to live up to commitments, or just plain behaved badly--and nobody steps up to the issue. Or they do, but do a lousy job and create a whole new set of problems. Accountability suffers and new problems spring up. New research demonstrates that these disappointments aren't just irritating, they're costly--sapping organizational performance by twenty to fifty percent and accounting for up to ninety percent of divorces. *Crucial Confrontations* teaches skills drawn from 10,000 hours of real-life observations to increase confidence in facing issues like: An employee speaks to you in an insulting tone that crosses the line between sarcasm and insubordination. Now what? Your boss just committed you to a deadline you know you can't meet--and not-so-subtly hinted he doesn't want to hear complaints about it. Your son walks through the door sporting colorful new body art that raises your blood pressure by forty points. Speak now, pay later. An accountant wonders how to step up to a client who is violating the law. Can you spell unemployment? Family members fret over how to tell granddad that he should no longer drive his car. This is going to get ugly. A nurse worries about what to say to an abusive physician. She quickly remembers "how things work around here" and decides not to say anything. Everyone knows how to run for cover, or if adequately provoked, step up to these confrontations in a way that causes a real ruckus. That we have down pat. *Crucial Confrontations* teaches you how to deal with violated expectations in a way that solves the problem at hand, and doesn't harm the relationship--and in fact, even strengthens it. *Crucial Confrontations* borrows from twenty years of research involving two groups. More than 25,000 people helped the authors identify those who were most influential during crucial confrontations. They spent 10,000 hours watching these people, documented what they saw, and then trained and tested with more than 300,000 people. Second, they measured the impact of crucial confrontations improvements on organizational and team performance--the results were immediate and sustainable: twenty to fifty percent improvements in measurable performance.

## Book Information

Paperback: 284 pages

Publisher: McGraw-Hill; 1st edition (August 26, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0071446524

ISBN-13: 978-0071446525

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (139 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #40,132 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in [Books > Business & Money > Human Resources > Conflict Resolution & Mediation](#) #237 in [Books > Business & Money > Skills > Communications](#) #4909 in [Books > Self-Help](#)

## Customer Reviews

I surprised myself by reading almost the entire book during a two-week trip to Thailand w. The authors do a great job of showing how NOT stepping up has allowed catastrophic consequences to result. For example, the co-pilot who chose not to speak up when the pilot was preparing to take off in freezing weather with ice building up on the wings. All that survived was the cockpit tape that has the copilot hinting at the danger and not taking a powerful stand with the pilot. Our circumstances are not likely to be that drastic, but it is really very serious business. I like that the book recognizes that speaking up can be risky and talks about how to make reasonably sure that you won't hurt your career or relationship when you choose to speak up. The keys to managing the conversation so you don't get off in the weeds and get a valuable result begin with stepping back for a moment and remembering how you got to your reaction. The authors say we start by seeing or hearing something, draw some conclusions, react and then take action. If you review what exactly are the facts you started with and what are the interpretations or conclusions you came to, you are free to share it as a story the other person can understand. If you speak as if your conclusions are facts, you can lose the rapport you need to have a good outcome. I like the question the authors suggest asking yourself to get to how to start a conversation that doesn't amount to an attack: "What would cause a reasonable, rational and decent person to act like this?" Answering that question puts me in a frame of mind to begin with an attitude of mutual respect.

As I read this exceptionally informative book, I was again reminded of the fact that the Chinese word for "crisis" has two meanings: peril and opportunity. Since posting the review, a reader's comment

(please see below) identifies an essay that brings into doubt the common belief in the dual meaning to which I referred. However, I remain convinced, linguistic issues aside, that every crisis does pose both peril or opportunity and that how we respond is for us to determine. \* \* \*As those who have been or are now involved in process simplification initiatives already know, every problem encountered offers a valuable learning opportunity. The same is also true when encountering "broken promises, violated expectations, and bad behavior" either within or beyond the workplace. The authors of this volume address questions such as these:What's a "crucial confrontation"?What to do before one occurs?How to know when -- and when NOT -- to initiate one?How to "get your head right before opening your mouth"?How to begin a crucial confrontation?How to involve and engage others to take appropriate action?How to make keeping commitments (almost) painless?What to do when others "get sidetracked, scream, or sulk"?What to do after a crucial confrontation?How to gain commitment and move to action?How to solve "big, sticky, complicated problems"?How to deal with the truly tough? (i.e. the twelve "yeh buts")The authors also provide four appendices: A self-assessment for measuring confrontation skills, "The Six-Source Model," "When Things Go Right," and discussion questions for reading groups.

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