


# *You Said What?!* Effective Communication Tools in Critical Conversations

IASFAA Conference  
Boise, Idaho  
October 15, 2019

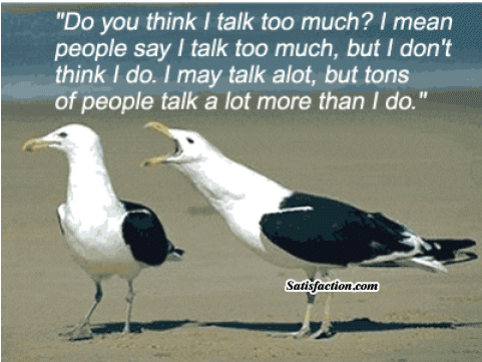


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WASFAA TRAINING COMMITTEE

## Today's Topics



- ▶ **Assertiveness** – the ability to speak up appropriately
- ▶ **Critical Conversations** – tools for communicating in difficult situations
- ▶ **Role of Perception and Emotion** – becoming aware how our views, beliefs and feelings come into play
- ▶ **Negotiating for Mutual Wins** – looking for the best possible outcome for all involved
- ▶ **From Conversation to Action** – making decisions and producing results



*"Do you think I talk too much? I mean people say I talk too much, but I don't think I do. I may talk alot, but tons of people talk a lot more than I do."*

Satisfaction.com



## Have you ever...

Received consistent unreasonable requests from a student?

Had to question whether a decision from your boss was in compliance?



Been yelled at by an unhappy parent?

Needed to talk to a co-worker about their job performance?

Felt like you're having the same conversation over and over again?

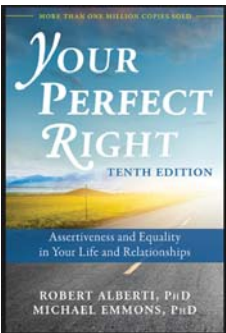


“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion it has taken place.”

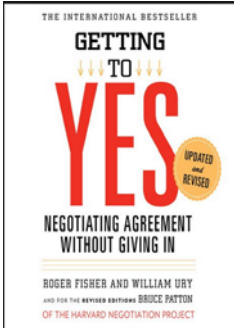
► George Bernard Shaw



# Resources



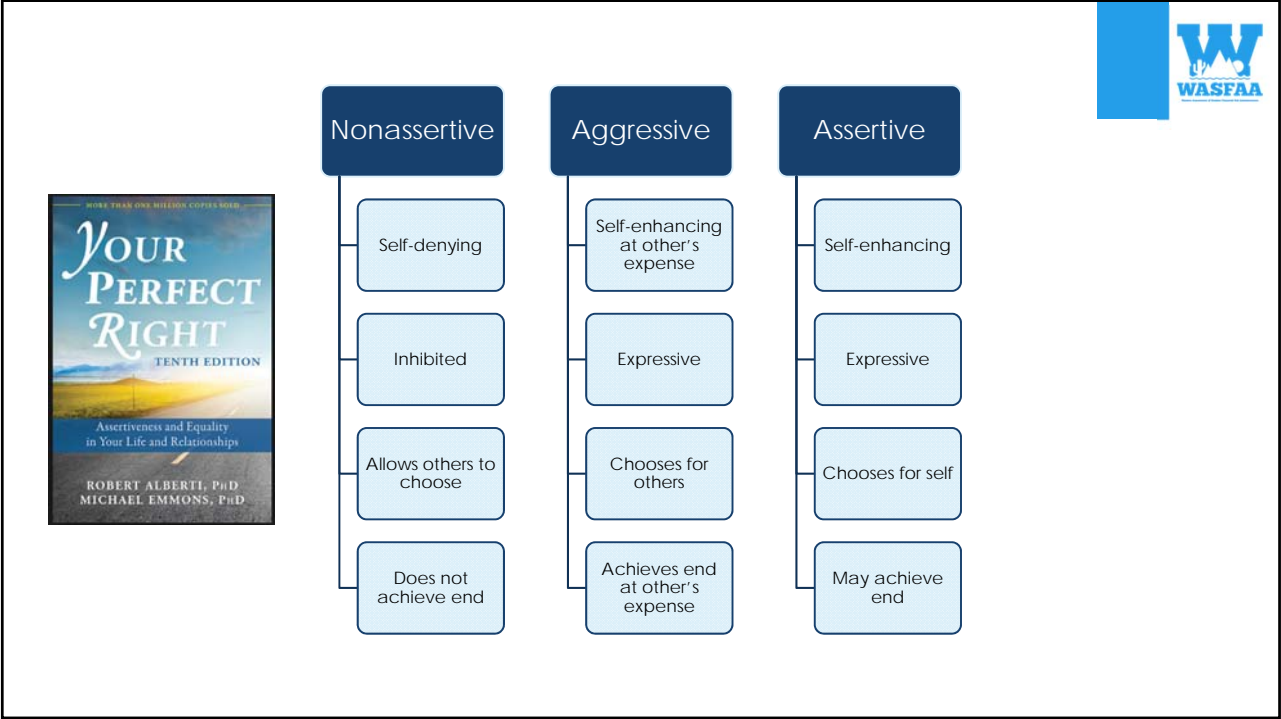
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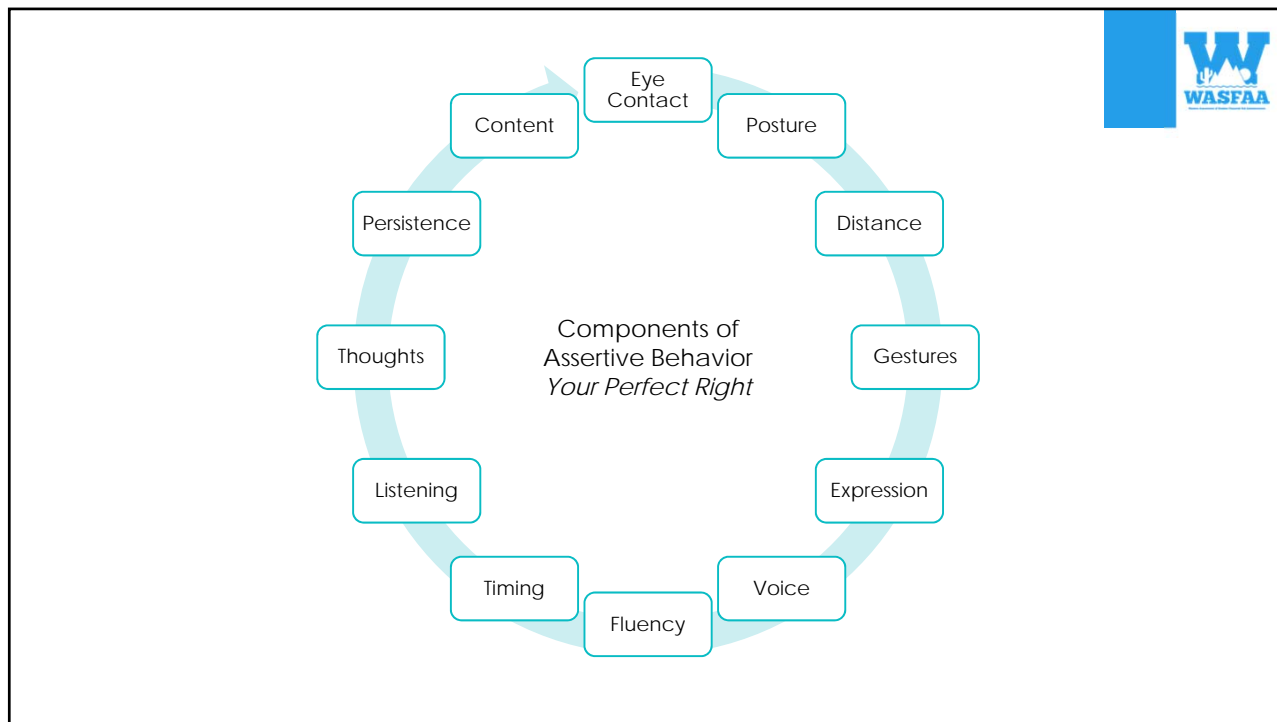


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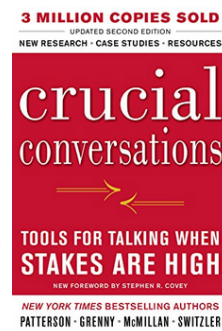
## Crucial Conversations

***A discussion where stakes are high, opinions vary and emotions run strong***

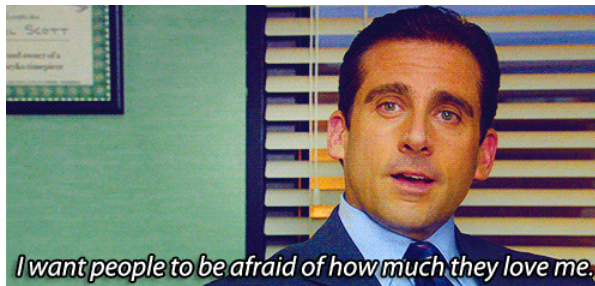
When we face crucial conversations we can do one of three things:

- Nonassertive ▶ We can avoid them.
- Aggressive ▶ We can face them and handle them poorly.
- Assertive ▶ We can face them and handle them well.

The book cover features the title "crucial conversations" in a large, serif font, with "TOOLS FOR TALKING WHEN STAKES ARE HIGH" in a smaller, bold font below it. It also includes the authors' names and a quote from the New York Times.



## What do I really want?



**Start with the heart – begin the conversation with the right motive and stay focused.**

1. What do I really want for myself? The other person? The relationship?
2. How would I behave if I really did want that?



## Avoiding the Fools choice



- ▶ 1. What do I really want for myself?
- ▶ 2. What don't I really want? What am I afraid of happening?
- ▶ 3. Combine the two and present your brain with a more complex problem



## Make it Safe



- ▶ The problem may not be the content of the message, it's that one party doesn't feel safe.
- ▶ Watch for Signs
- ▶ Recognize Silence or Violence



## Signs Someone is Feeling Unsafe



### ▶ Silence

- ▶ Any act to purposefully withhold information
- ▶ Means of avoiding potential problems
- ▶ Three common forms
  - ▶ Masking
  - ▶ Avoiding
  - ▶ Withdrawing



### ▶ Violence

- ▶ Any verbal strategy that attempts to convince, control or compel others to your point of view
- ▶ Violates safety of others
- ▶ Three common forms
  - ▶ Controlling
  - ▶ Labeling
  - ▶ Attacking



## Safety: Two Conditions of Risk

### ▶ Mutual Purpose

- ▶ Working toward a common outcome
- ▶ You care about their:
  - ▶ Goals
  - ▶ Interests
  - ▶ Values
- ▶ Ask yourself:
  - ▶ Do others believe I care about their goals?
  - ▶ Do they trust my motives?
- ▶ If our goal is to manipulate others, safety will be lost and we will return to silence or violence



### ▶ Mutual Respect

- ▶ Invisible until it is lacking, then conversation turns to defending dignity
- ▶ Telltale signs:
  - ▶ Charged emotions
  - ▶ Fear turns to anger
  - ▶ Name-calling, yelling, threatening
- ▶ Ask yourself:
  - ▶ Do others believe I respect them?
- ▶ Recognizing we all have weaknesses makes it easier to find a way to respect others

## Building Safety



- ▶ **Apologize when appropriate**
  - ▶ When you've clearly violated respect, apologize
- ▶ **Contrast to Fix Misunderstanding**
  - ▶ A "Don't/Do" statement that:
    - ▶ Addresses others' concerns that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose (Don't)
    - ▶ Confirms your respect or clarifies your purpose (Do)
- ▶ **Create Mutual Purpose (CRIB)**
  - ▶ Commit to seek Mutual Purpose
  - ▶ Recognize the purpose behind the strategy
  - ▶ Invent a Mutual Purpose
  - ▶ Brainstorm New Strategies

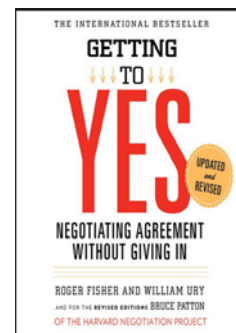






“Understanding the other side’s thinking is not simply a useful activity that will help you solve your problem. Their thinking *is* the problem. Whether you are making a deal or settling a dispute, differences are defined by the difference between your thinking and theirs...conflict lies not in objective reality, but in people’s heads”

- Getting to Yes, p. 24



## Separate the **People** from the **Problem**



Humans are prone to human reactions

- Dealing with people, not abstract “other”
- Sensitivity to perception, misunderstanding, prejudice, irrational beliefs

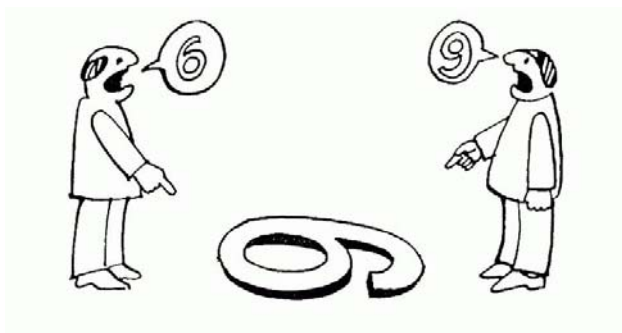
Relationships tend to become entangled with the problem

- Perception
- Emotion
- Communication





## Perception



- Put yourself in their shoes
- Discuss each other's perceptions

“To keep ourselves from feeling nervous while exploring others’ paths—no matter how different or wrong they seem—remember we’re trying to understand their point of view, not necessarily agree with it or support it”  
- Crucial Conversations p. 167



## Implicit Biases



- ▶ Implicit (unconscious) biases are **pervasive**
- ▶ Implicit and explicit biases are **related but distinct**
- ▶ The implicit associations we hold **do not necessarily align with our declared belief**
- ▶ We generally tend to hold implicit biases that **favor our own ingroup**
- ▶ Implicit biases are **malleable**



Test yourself at:  
[implicit.harvard.edu](http://implicit.harvard.edu)



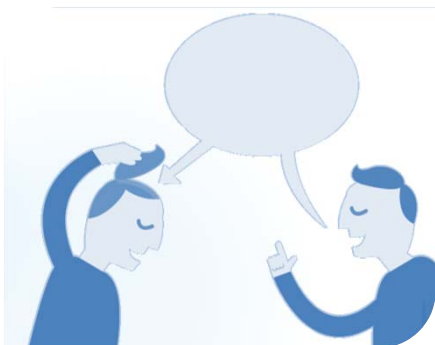
## Looking for Emotions at Play



- ▶ Recognize emotions, theirs and yours
- ▶ Pay attention to “core concerns” of autonomy, appreciation, affiliation, role and status
- ▶ Consider the role of identity
- ▶ Make emotions explicit and acknowledge them as legitimate
- ▶ Allow the other side to let off steam
- ▶ Don’t react to emotional outbursts
- ▶ Use symbolic gestures



## Communication



- ▶ Listen actively and acknowledge what is being said
- ▶ Speak to be understood
- ▶ Speak about yourself, not about them
- ▶ Speak for a purpose

## Interests vs. Positions



“Your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what caused you to decide”

Getting to Yes p 43

## Invent Options for Mutual Gain



- ▶ Separate the act of creating options from the act of judging them
  - ▶ Invent first, decide later
  - ▶ Brainstorming
- ▶ Broaden options rather than looking for a single answer
  - ▶ Key to wise decision making lies in selecting from a great number and variety of options
- ▶ Search for mutual gains
  - ▶ Identify shared interests
  - ▶ Dovetail differing interests



## Insist on Using **Objective Criteria**



- Allows negotiation on some basis other than the will of either side
- Fair standards
- Fair procedures



## Master Your Story



- You, and only you, create your emotions
- We tell ourselves a story
- Watch for victims, villains, and the helpless



*"Nothing in this world is good or bad, but thinking makes it so."*  
William Shakespeare



## Having the conversation



▶ **S**HARE YOUR FACTS

▶ **T**ELL YOUR STORY

▶ **A**SK FOR OTHERS PATHS

▶ **T**ALK TENTATIVELY

▶ **E**NCOURAGE TESTING



Crucial Conversations pp. 135-147



One of the best ways to persuade others  
is with your ears- by listening to them.

- Dean Rusk

## Encourage others to share



- ▶ **A**SK TO GET THINGS ROLLING
- ▶ **M**IRROR TO CONFIRM FEELINGS
- ▶ **P**ARAPHRASE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE STORY
- ▶ **P**RIME WHEN YOU'RE GETTING NOWHERE



Crucial Conversations pp. 162-166

## Handling Disagreements



Agree	Build	Compare
Acknowledge where you agree (or don't have a violent disagreement)	"When you agree with what has been said but the information is incomplete, build"	I think I see things differently

Crucial Conversations' ABCs pp 170 - 172

## From Conversations to Action



### Making a Decision

#### Four methods of deciding

- Command – consult – vote – consensus

#### How to choose/four questions

- Who cares? - Who knows? - Who must agree?
- How many people is it worth involving?

#### Make assignments

- Who does what by when and how to follow up
- Document your work

Crucial Conversations pp 177 - 187

## Review



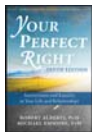
- ▶ Assertive self-expression is “Your Perfect Right”
- ▶ Identify “Crucial Conversations” you are having or avoiding
- ▶ What do I really want for me? For them? For us?
- ▶ Make it safe (apologize, contrast or CRIB)
- ▶ Separate the people from the problem
- ▶ Invent options for mutual gain by “Getting to Yes”
- ▶ Master your story
- ▶ Have the conversation, using STATE and AMPP tools
- ▶ Handle disagreements (ABC)
- ▶ Move from conversation to action







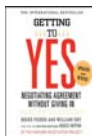
## Additional Resources



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- ▶ **Crucial Skills**  
<https://www.vitalsmarts.com/crucialskills/>
- ▶ **Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation**  
<https://www.pon.harvard.edu/category/resources/webcasts/>
- ▶ **Project Implicit:**  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- ▶ **Habits of Highly Effective Higher-Ed Professionals**  
<https://www.academicimpressions.com/habits-of-highly-effective-higher-ed-professionals/>

## Thank you for joining us!

