

Crucial Conversations Chapter 10: Yeah, But

Advice for Tough Cases

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“Yeah, but my situation’s more difficult than that!”

SEXUAL OR OTHER HARASSMENT

It’s not like anyone is blatantly harassing me, but I don’t like the way I am being treated. How can I bring this up without making enemies?

- It’s easy to think that the offender has all the power, playing the victim/villain scenario.
- Master your story – don’t let it go so long that your emotions get out of control.
- STATE your path; Be respectful, private, and firm.

MY OVERLY SENSITIVE SPOUSE

I try to give my spouse some constructive feedback, but she reacts so negatively I go to silence.

- Because it doesn’t feel safe to speak, they live in silence until the issue is huge.
- When something bothers you, catch it early & Use contrasting – “I’m not trying to say...”

FAILURE TO LIVE UP TO AGREEMENTS

People say what they are going to do, but they don’t follow through.

- It is dangerous when teams expect the boss to handle all accountability
- The person who recognized the issue has the courage to speak, to ask a question.
- The goal in an organization is a culture where “anyone can talk to anyone about anything.”

DEFERENCE TO AUTHORITY

People filter what they say based upon what they think those in power are willing to hear.

- Problems with Misdiagnosis – Often leaders cause the fear by denying it –OR they are living in the shadow of a former leader.
- Command it away – you can’t just make people stop deferring. You have to make it safe

FAILED TRUST

This person let me down before, and I don’t know if I can afford to take a risk on him again.

- Trust is topic specific and relies on motive and ability - Deal with trust around issues, not person
- Don’t use mistrust as a club to punish others

WON’T TALK ABOUT ANYTHING SERIOUS

Any time I try to bring up something serious, she either changes the topic or makes a joke.

- There is a reason people won’t talk – usually because they feel unsafe or unskilled
- Work on me first. Get better at crucial conversations. Make it safe. Don’t nag.

VAGUE BUT ANNOYING

“Clarifying the facts is the homework required for crucial conversations.”

- Retrace your Path to Action to determine exactly what behavior bothers you.
- If their behavior is worth discussing then Make it Safe and STATE your Path

SHOWS NO INITIATIVE

Some people only do the bare minimum to get by.

- It is easier to talk about the presence of bad behavior than the absence of good.
- Establish new and higher expectations for everyone – and build in the system of accountability (Ch9)

SHOWS A PATTERN

- STATE your path by focusing on the pattern

I NEED TO CALM DOWN!

- It is ok to ask for a “time out”. Communicate that you want/need this and commit to return to dialogue.

ENDLESS EXCUSES

- Focus on the pattern, not just the most recent incident. Remain calm. Focus on facts.

INSUBORDINATION (OR OVER-THE-LINE DISRESPECT)

- Zero tolerance for insubordination.

REGRETTING SAYING SOMETHING HORRIBLE

- Apologize! Then return to your path

TOUCHY AND PERSONAL

- Use contrasting to clarify what you do and don’t mean. Talk tentatively. Be specific.

WORD GAMES

- Focus on pattern over instance. Use STATE to clarify, then hold accountability.

NO WARNING

- Clarify the “no surprises” rule. Establish mutual agreement and use accountability.

DEALING WITH SOMEONE WHO BREAKS ALL THE RULES

- (1) What bothers you most? (2) What might be the easiest to work on? (3) Affirm something!