

# Crucial Conversations Chapter 9: Move to Action

## *How to turn Crucial Conversations into Action and Results*

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*“Having more meaning in the pool doesn’t guarantee that we all agree on what we’re going to do with the meaning....”*

### **DIALOGUE IS NOT DECISION MAKING**

*Dialogue is a process for getting all relevant meaning into a shared pool.*

1. How are decisions going to be made?
  - a. Agreeing “in principle” is not the same as agreeing on the specifics. It is not license for someone to forge ahead unilaterally with carrying out a decision.
2. Are we ever going to decide?
  - a. People can’t figure out what to do with their ideas
  - b. People are waiting for someone else to initiate

### **DECIDE HOW TO DECIDE**

*Make it clear how decisions will be made – who will be involved and why.*

1. *When the line of authority is clear* –
  - Parents and managers hold authority and responsibility – they can decide to delegate, but it still remains with them.
2. *When the line of authority isn’t clear* –
  - dialogue about the decision making process as well – what is each person’s view of how the decision should be made, by whom and when? Listen for Safety (Ch5)

### **THE FOUR METHODS OF DECISION MAKING**

Command; Consult; Vote; Consensus

1. **Command** – decisions are made externally – either because we don’t care enough to be involved or because we fully trust the decision maker. (*or because we feel powerless?*)
2. **Consult**– Decision makers invite others to influence them before making their choice: Gather ideas ~ evaluate options ~ make a choice ~ inform others
3. **Vote** - best where efficiency is the highest value and you are selecting from among several good choices. Only works when all team members feel that they can support either choice.
4. **Consensus** – Talk until everyone honestly agrees to one decision. Only use this when: (1) high-stakes and complex issues, or (2) issues where everyone absolutely must support the final choice.

## **HOW TO CHOOSE**

### *Four important questions*

1. **Who cares?** – Who genuinely want so be involved? Don't involve people who don't care.
2. **Who knows?** – Who has the expertise? Try not to include people who don't contribute.
3. **Who must agree?** – Whose cooperation do you need? Better to involve than surprise.
4. **How many people is it worth involving?** – Involve the fewest reasonable number.

**How about you?** – Think about critical decision making processes in your group (family, team, organization, business). List major recurring decisions and how they are currently made. Then work through the four questions as a group to decide how to make decisions in the future.

## **MAKE ASSIGNMENTS – PUT DECISIONS INTO ACTION**

*Now it is time to do something – what questions do you ask to get the action going?*

**“A goal without a plan is just a wish”**

1. **Who?** – Make an actual assignment to an actual person
2. **Does what?** – Clarify exact expectations – use contrasting (Ch5) to identify what you want and what you don't want, what will work and what won't, if anything. Set boundaries and parameters – in architecture its called “a program” – i.e. the client's wish list
3. **By when?** – deadlines further clarify expectations and provide for accountability
4. **How will you follow up?** – agree on how and how often and who initiates the contact – so people don't feel neglected or micromanaged. *“If you want people to feel accountable, you must give them an opportunity o account. Build an opportunity for follow-up into every assignment.”*

## **DOCUMENT YOUR WORK**

Don't leave your hard work to memory. Take notes and share them. Write down details of conclusions, decisions, and assignments. Hold people accountable, including yourself. Reviewing these notes at key times helps accountability to be a group experience.

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Practice this process with decisions you have to make regularly that cause confusion or conflict.

Register as a user at <https://old.vitalsmarts.com/myzone.aspx>

Other resources are available at: <http://kengcrawford.com/coaching/crucial-conversations/>