



Crucial Conversations.  
FOR MASTERING DIALOGUE



# COSTLY CONVERSATIONS

**WHY EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION  
WRECKS YOUR BOTTOM LINE**



## STOP US IF THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR . . .

In your organization there's an employee who is just getting by with minimal effort. A supervisor is aware but doesn't like confrontation and stays silent. Other employees must pick up the slack and begin to feel bitter, losing respect for both the employee and the supervisor.

Or perhaps you've seen a coworker—maybe even a supervisor—who is disrespectful and rude. They think your view on vaccines is absurd and say things that are thoughtless at best and sexist at worst. Others avoid interacting with them, even if it means tasks take longer or problems go unsolved.

Situations like these aren't just annoyances: they're the invisible line items you don't see on an expense report that are silently sabotaging your bottom line.

New research from Crucial Learning shows that conversation failures in the work-place are both rampant and costly.

## HOW COSTLY?

**Forty-three percent of respondents estimate they waste two weeks or more** ruminating about an unresolved problem at work.

And an astounding **one in three employees estimate their inability to speak up in a crucial moment has cost their organization at least \$25,000 in time and resources**—a painful new meaning to the term “hush money.”



# DISAGREEMENTS HAPPEN IN ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS, BUT SOME ARE MORE CRUCIAL THAN OTHERS.

At work, the top Crucial Conversations people admitted to avoiding were:

68%

When someone  
is not pulling his  
or her weight

66%

When someone  
performs below  
expectations

57%

When someone  
shows disrespect  
towards another  
in the workplace

53%

When someone  
doesn't follow  
proper processes  
or protocol

53%

When there is  
confusion on  
who owns a  
decision

When asked which conversation failures were the very costliest to their organizations, top answers included:



When someone shows  
disrespect toward another



When someone performs  
below expectations



When someone  
abuses their power

*Even in our present day, when people are hyper aware of, and sensitive to, injustice and inequalities in the workplace, we still opt to say nothing when we observe issues of disrespect.*



# INSTEAD OF SPEAKING UP, WE FIND ALTERNATE WAYS OF RELEASING OUR FRUSTRATION

These replacement behaviors usually aren't helpful or constructive. Have you found yourself resorting to any of these options?



Complaining to others  
(77 percent)



Ruminating about  
the problem (57 percent)



Doing extra or unnecessary  
work (63 percent)



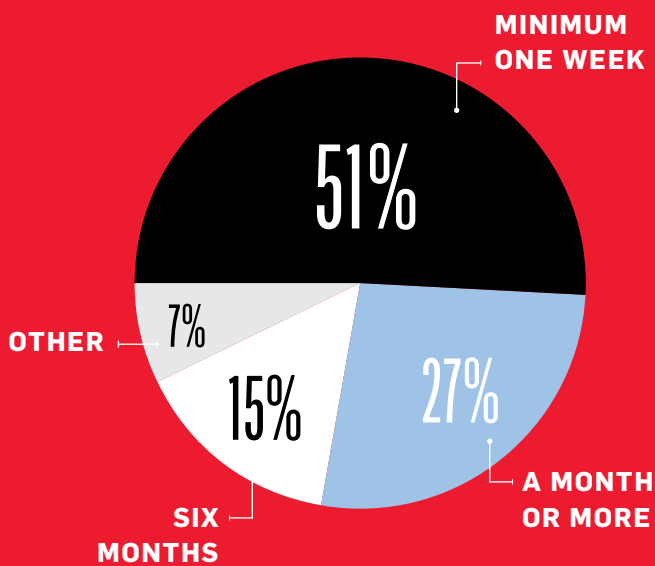
Getting angry  
(49 percent)





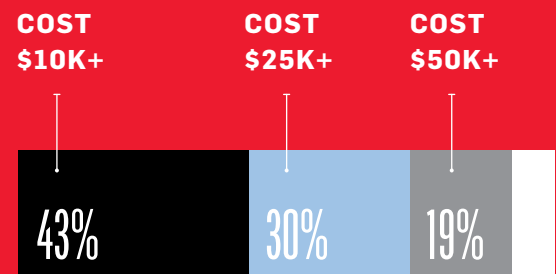
# TIME AND MONEY

We also asked respondents to estimate the cost of these avoidance behaviors to their organizations. Suffice it to say, it's not just a day late and a dollar short:



Fifty-one percent estimate the time wasted on these less-than-helpful activities like complaining and doing extra work at a minimum of one week. Twenty-seven percent tag it at a month or more and an ugly 15 percent say it costs six months of wasted time.

As a result, 43 percent of respondents say their silence has cost the organization more than \$10,000, while 30 percent tabbed the amount at more than \$25,000 and a troubling 19 percent admitted their reluctance cost at least \$50,000.

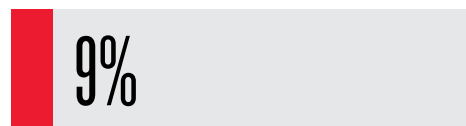




Unfortunately, employees don't believe they have the ability or support to address bad behavior and cut the lost costs that ensue. Almost half stated they and others in their organization are not at all skilled or only a bit skilled at having these work-related Crucial Conversations. On the other hand, only 9 percent claim to be very or extremely skilled.



**NOT SKILLED/A BIT SKILLED AT CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS**



**EXTREMELY SKILLED AT CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS**



**FEEL EXTREMELY SUPPORTED**



**FEEL MODERATELY SUPPORTED**



**DO NOT FEEL SUPPORTED**

Many also feel their corporate cultures are failing them. When asked if their culture supports holding important dialogue, less than one in five (18 percent) say they feel extremely supported. More than half (58 percent) say they feel only moderately supported, and an alarming 1 in 4 don't feel at all supported by their organizational culture.





# HOW TO GET STARTED

Joseph Grenny, bestselling author of *Crucial Conversations*, now in its third edition, advises organizations interested in curbing the costs of failed conversations to train their employees how to voice their concerns quickly and effectively. He shares four tips to get started.

## *Number 1*

### REVERSE YOUR THINKING

Most of us decide whether or not to speak up by considering the risks of doing so. Those who are best at Crucial Conversations don't think first about the risks of speaking up, they think first about the risks of not speaking up.

## *Number 2*

### CHANGE YOUR EMOTIONS

The reason our Crucial Conversations go poorly is because we are irritated, angry, or disgusted. Others react to these emotions more than our words. So, before opening your mouth, open your mind. Try to see others as reasonable, rational, and decent human beings—a practice that softens strong emotions and ensures you come across more agreeably.





### *Number 3*

## MAKE OTHERS FEEL SAFE

The unskilled conversationalists believe certain topics are destined to make others defensive. Skilled conversationalists realize people don't become defensive until they feel unsafe. Start a high-stakes conversation by assuring the other person of your positive intentions and your respect for them. When others feel respected and trust your motives, they feel safe, let their guard down and begin to listen—even if the topic is unpleasant.

### *Number 4*

## INVITE DIALOGUE

After you create an environment of safety, express your concerns, and then invite dialogue. Encourage the other person to disagree with you. Those who are best at Crucial Conversations don't just come to make their point; they come to learn.





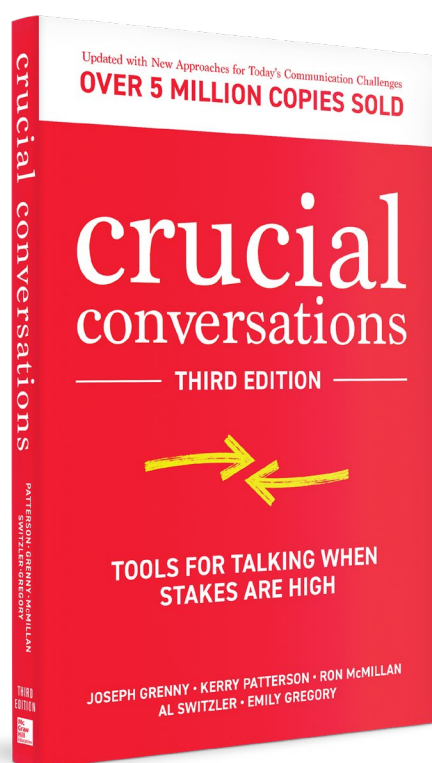
# CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS DON'T HAVE TO BECOME COSTLY CONVERSATIONS

Don't pay through the nose when you can work through issues by opening your mouth, using these skills and others taught in our Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue course. These skills can give you more confidence to speak up and improve your life and organization.

*“One of the costliest barriers to organizational performance is unresolved Crucial Conversations. If you can't communicate with your leaders and colleagues, you can't develop the relationships that are necessary to combat the hard times we're seeing today. The ability to engage in dialogue is key to successfully leading through and beyond the pandemic.”*

**JOSEPH GRENNY**





## Cut The Cost of Dialogue Failure

The tips above come from the bestselling *Crucial Conversations* and related award-winning course.

The Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue course teaches people how to achieve alignment and agreement when stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong. With skills to speak their minds honestly and respectfully, people collaborate better, make better decisions, and foster workplace cultures of trust, safety, respect, and responsibility.

## Get Started

To bring Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue skills to your organization for increased productivity and performance, contact us to learn more.

Call **1-800-449-5989** or visit us at **CrucialLearning.com**.





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## ABOUT CRUCIAL LEARNING

*Crucial Learning improves the world by helping people improve themselves. We offer courses in the areas of communication, performance, and leadership, focusing on behaviors that have a disproportionate impact on outcomes, called crucial skills. Our award-winning courses and accompanying bestselling books include Crucial Conversations®, Crucial Accountability®, Influencer, The Power of Habit™, and Getting Things Done®.*

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