



Nevada Association of Counties

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Piper's Opera House - Virginia City - Storey County

▶ The Top 3

**Scientifically Validated Secrets
for getting the Best Results Possible
in Your Most Challenging
Communication Encounters**

***or How to Learn to Love
the Toughest Part of
Your Work & Your Life***



When talking turns tough

Crucial Conversations

- **Opinions Vary / Difference of Opinion**
- **Emotions Run Strong**
- **Stakes are High**



When talking turns tough

Crucial Conversations

These are some of the most important and consequential conversations of our lives.

They have a huge impact on our relationships & our lives.



What Behavioral Science tells us about this

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- Strong relationships, strong careers, strong organizations, and strong communities **all draw from the same source of power . . .**
... the ability to talk openly about high-stakes, emotional, controversial topics.
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What Behavioral Science tells us about this

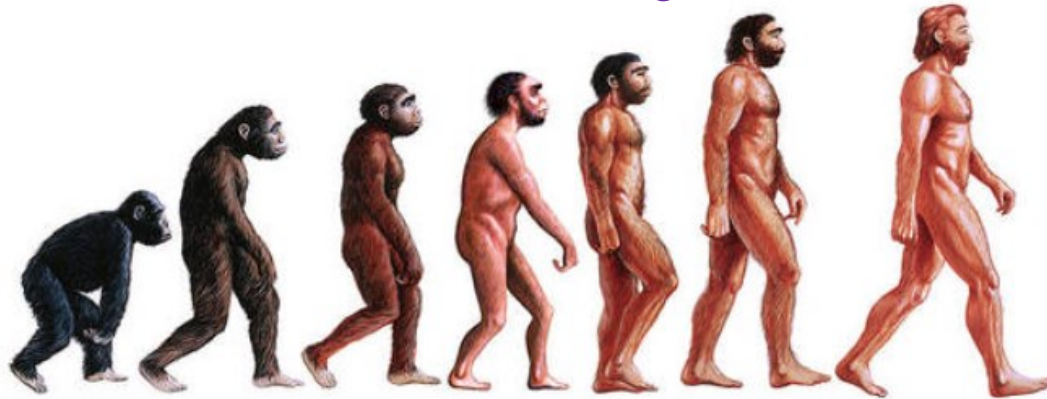
. . . and yet, we often behave at our
worst at the most critical moments
BECAUSE . . .

WE'RE BUILT WRONG!



Human Evolution and our Responses to Stress & Threat

We've been genetically programmed to respond to threats by fighting or running. And we often respond to emotional threats the same way we were genetically programmed to respond to threats from a saber-tooth tiger.





Attack or Avoid

Crucial conversations can easily be **perceived as threatening, unsafe**. Our natural tendencies when we feel threatened is **“fight or flight,”** not **“listen and speak.”**

- The **Adrenaline Surge & the Avoidance Urge**
 - > Losing access to the higher-level thinking power of your brain.
- We've become **masters at avoiding tough conversations.**



The Damaging Impact of **LAG TIME**

- **You can actually measure the health – and productivity – of Relationships, Teams, and Organizations by measuring the LAG TIME between when problems are identified, and when they are resolved.**
- **The determining factor between success and failure is the amount of time that passes between when the problem arises and when those involved find a way to honestly and respectfully resolve it.**



#1 Make DIALOGUE feel SAFE

Those who are skilled at Crucial Conversations find a way to get all relevant information, from themselves and others, out into the open.

That's it.

They create the conditions for DIALOGUE, where people openly and honestly express their opinions, share their feelings, and even articulate their theories.



Remove the FOOL's CHOICE

In virtually all organizations & relationships people are faced with what is called **the FOOL's CHOICE**.

They often believe they have to **make a choice between two bad alternatives**.

Option 1: They speak up in a crucial conversation, telling the truth about a real problem. And risk their job or their position or an important relationship.

Option 2: They stay silent, and allow a decision to take place that they know is really bad for the company or the relationship.



Removing the FOOL's CHOICE

The key to removing the FOOL's CHOICE is to ask yourself, **“How can I be 100 percent honest, and at the same time 100 Percent respectful?”**

Learning to be totally truthful about the outcome you want to accomplish, and also totally respectful of the other person or persons, will allow you to avoid the Fool's Choice, AND actually strengthen the relationships with the people you've been afraid of sharing truth with.



#1 Make DIALOGUE feel SAFE

The prerequisite for healthy dialogue is SAFETY.

For people to feel safe in speaking their minds, there are two requirements:

1: Mutual Purpose. Open Agreement on what we are trying to accomplish.

2: Mutual Respect. Each person's view & feelings are being authentically respected.

Encourage, listen to, and understand other's views.

Start with an attitude of curiosity and patience.

People want to be heard. Listen to understand them.



#2 Pay attention to SAFETY and use Contrasting if necessary

Look for signs of people exhibiting behavior or cues that they are not feeling completely safe in the Dialogue. **Contrasting is a “don’t want to / do want to” statement.**

EXAMPLE: “**I don’t want to** suggest that this problem is yours. I think it’s ours. And **I don’t want to** put the burden on you.

What **I do want to do** is be able to talk so we understand each other better.”

This is an effective way to repair & maintain Safety. And Safety is the key to entry & continuance of Dialogue.



#3 Start Dialogue with Your Heart

Starting with Your Heart is the Foundation of Dialogue

The first step is to honestly examine your motive.
And then get clear on what you really want.

> **What is the outcome you want to accomplish?**

In refusing the Fool's Choice, and committing to Dialogue, the most effective communicators, expand this question of their heart, into three questions . . .

- 1. What do I really want for myself?**
- 2. What do I really want for the other(s)?**
- 3. What do I really want for the relationship?**



#4 Filling the Pool of Shared Meaning

We all enter conversations with our own thoughts and feelings about the topic at hand. Our thoughts and opinions will naturally differ from others

- > Those who are skilled at Dialogue do their best to **make it SAFE for everyone to add meaning to the Shared Pool.**
- > Sharing into the Pool develops real understanding. And once people are asked to contribute to the pool, their buy-in becomes genuine and valuable. And the relationships grow stronger.
- > The Shared Pool of Meaning & Information can seem like a concept. But it's not. It's real. And it's incredibly valuable.



Real Crucial Conversation Mastery

**Reengage the Higher Level
of Your Brain**

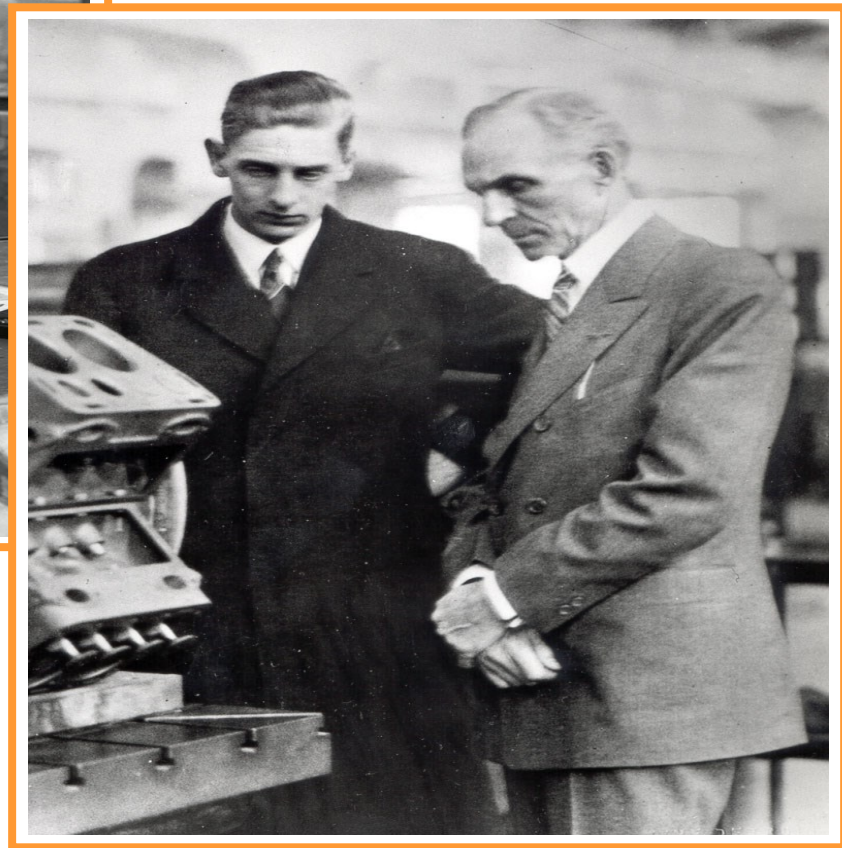
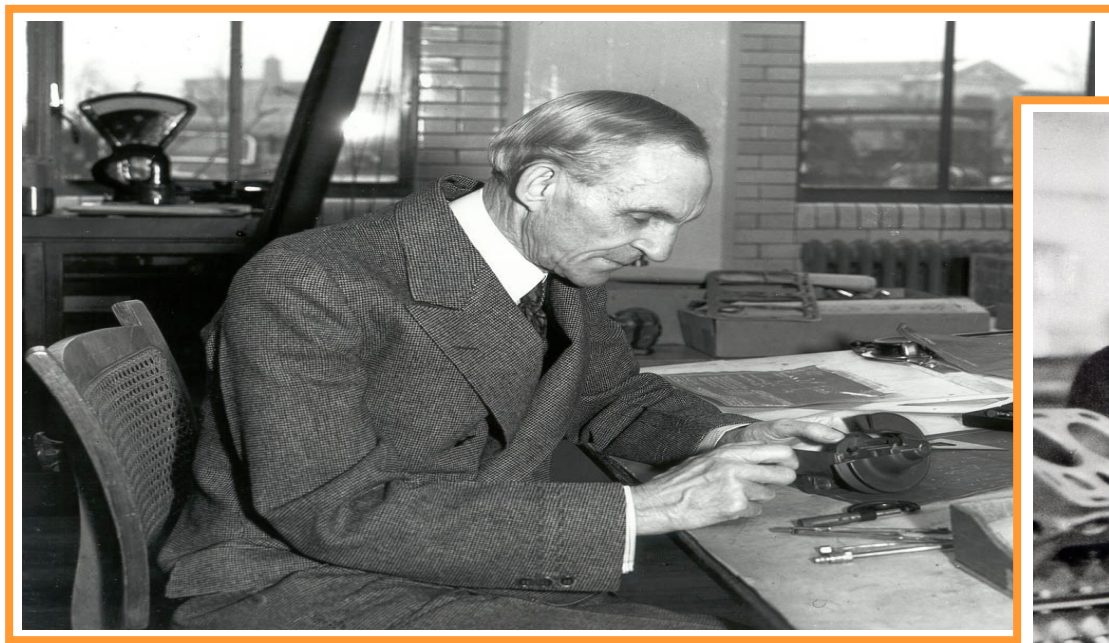


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- Boost Your Career
- Improve Your Health
- Improve Your Organization
- Improve All of Your Relationships
- Create Your Desired Results





**It's not what
the Vision is --**



**It's what
the Vision Does.**





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