

Message From A First Time Trainer

crucial
conversations®



CERTIFIED
TRAINER

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I had a great experience during Trainer Certification, and yet, at the end of the session, I just didn't get the whole Crucial Conversations® concept. My problem was that I didn't believe I needed to have any crucial conversations in my own life. I struggled to know how I could help others when I wasn't convinced myself.

Now, one year later, I am totally convinced of the skills in Crucial Conversations and the classes I facilitate are enormously successful (more due to the content than the skill of the facilitator). I want to share some personal experiences and things I wish I'd known at the beginning.

Prep, Prep, Prep!

There is a wealth of materials to help the facilitator prepare. I found the best tool was the Audio Companion. Hearing the authors talk about real life examples gave me a level of understanding I could not get from any other source. My Trainer Guide is full of my notes from listening to the audio CDs.

Chapters Are Not Steps

Perhaps due to my logical IT background, I first viewed the chapters in the Trainer Guide as steps for completing a crucial conversation. I was so wrong. At the start of each class, I explain that the class covers many different tools, skills, approaches, and techniques. There is no set order for when they appear in the dialogue. They occur throughout a conversation and you may find yourself going back to several tools at different times. The skill is identifying when to use a particular tool or approach.

I'm No Master of Dialogue

I preach and practice the skills all of the time and I mean all of the time. Remember that a crucial conversation can entail strong emotions. When I have strong emotions I am not always my usual, calm, and collected self – I'm often the opposite. What Crucial Conversations has taught me, however, is how to spot this. Sometimes I still get caught up in my emotions or convinced that I'm in the right, but now I'm able to catch myself if I'm not engaging in dialogue.

I share this with every class and I say that no-one is expecting them to walk away a master of dialogue. But if they can just begin to use the skills, they can start to make a difference.

This Time it's Personal

I share my own personal stories to relate the material to the class. I talk about my relationship with my wife, whom I love dearly, and of my relationships with my sisters and close friends. I don't turn the class into an episode of Oprah, but I do use my personal experiences to show how Crucial Conversations has helped or where I should've/could've used the skills.

With a combination of your own, personal examples and the help of the VitalSmarts training tools, I believe that Crucial Conversations Training can be a successful experience for any individual!

VitalSmarts™

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