

# Crucial Conversations Cheat Sheet

## What is a crucial conversation?

1. Opinions differ
2. Emotions are strong
3. The stakes are high

## Healthy Dialog

- The goal for a crucial conversation is to stay in a state of **healthy dialog**: information can freely flow between everyone involved.
- When we can maintain a state of healthy dialog, we can have conversations about even the most difficult topics.
- How can we stay in a state of healthy dialog when emotions are strong, opinions differ, and the stakes are high?
  - “The best way to work on us is to start with me.”

## Staying in Dialog: Self-Reflective Questions

1. What do I want for myself?
2. What do I want for others?
3. What do I want for the relationship?
4. How would I behave if I want these results?

## Safety

- **Safe conditions** in a conversation are those in which everyone can freely exchange information to add to the pool of shared meaning.
  - Content is less critical than conditions!
    - Do you trust others' motives? Do they have your best interests at heart?
    - Has the blood left your brain?
  - Withdrawal or attacking is a sign that someone no longer feels safe!
- How can we restore safety when someone withdraws or attacks, and avoid responding in kind?

## Restoring Safety

1. Express that you are working towards a common goal/mutual purpose.
2. Express empathy. Genuinely seek to understand and work from the other person's point of view.
3. Maintain and demonstrate respect. Lack of respect shifts the conversation from focusing on resolving the problem to focusing on retaining dignity.

## Break the Cycle of Escalation

1. Apologize when appropriate (must be genuine!).
2. Use contrasting statements (“I don't want to \_\_\_\_\_, I do want to \_\_\_\_\_”).
3. Commit to pursuing a common goal, and brainstorm solutions to meet that goal.

# Resolving Conflict and Managing Anger

## Homework

### Personal Reflection Assignment

*Think through the following questions and answer honestly. This is primarily for personal reflection, but you can share with your significant other if you would like (or maybe there's a crucial conversation you need to have with them?).*

1. What crucial conversations are you avoiding?
2. Is there a crucial conversation that needs to happen with your spouse?
  - a. About something from your past?
  - b. About something you are facing right now?
  - c. About your goals or plans for the future?
  - d. About your family or children?
3. What is preventing you from having that conversation, and how can you have it in a healthy way?

### Couples Assignment: Family of Origin

*Do the couples assignment on **page 47** in your book. Talk about how anger was managed in your family of origin and examine what Scripture has to say about this.*

### Couples Assignment: Areas of Conflict

*In class we looked at the common areas of conflict on **page 51**, and you each identified two that you thought were the most common in your relationship. Is there a crucial conversation you need to have about one of these topics?*

### Extra Credit

*Read the Crucial Conversations book. As we said in class, this book is really geared towards communication in the workplace, but so much of the content is relevant to us as couples too!*

Get the book (link takes you to Amazon):

[www.cwcmarriage.com/go/cc](http://www.cwcmarriage.com/go/cc)

