

# CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS



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# CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS

## INTRODUCTION

If you are feeling jammed whether it is in: a relationship, in your career, at home etc chances are that a **Critical Discussion** is keeping you there.

Relationships are the priority of life, and discussions help us care for our relationships with talking and listening. The quality of your life comes out of the quality of your dialogues and conversations. **Critical Discussions** helps you think about what you really want to say.

**"Dialogue"** is the free flow of meaning between two or more people. Each of us enters a discussion with our own opinions, feelings, theories and experiences about the topic at hand. This unique combination of thoughts and feelings makes up our personal pool of meaning. This pool not only informs us but also propels our every action.

When two or more of us enter **Critical Discussions**, by definition we don't share the same pool. Our opinions differ.

A **Critical Discussion** is a dialogue between two or more people where risks are high, opinions differ and emotions run strong. The effects of discussions gone bad can be both devastating and far reaching. Research has shown that strong relationships, careers, organizations and communities all draw from the same source of power: the ability to talk openly about high-risks, emotional, controversial topics.

### Dialogue Is Not Decision Making

The two riskiest times in **Critical Discussions** tend to be at the beginning and at the end. The beginning is risky because you have to find a way to create safety or else things go twisted. The end is risky because if you aren't careful about how you clarify the conclusion and decisions flowing from your Pool of Shared Meaning, you can run into violated

expectations later on. This can happen in two ways. **First**, people may not understand how decisions are going to be made. The **second** problem with decision-making occurs when no decision gets made. Decisions drag on forever. Both of these problems are solved if, before making a decision, the people involved decide how to decide.

Dialogue is a process for getting all relevant meaning into a shared pool. That process, of course, involves everyone. However, simply because everyone is encouraged to share their meaning; doesn't mean they are guaranteed to take part in all decision making. To avoid violated expectations, separate dialogue from decision making. Make it clear how decisions will be made, who will be involved and why.

With critical discussion skills, you'll be able to:

- - Prepare for high-risk situations with a plan in mind;
- - Transform anger and hurt feelings into powerful dialogues;
- - Make it safe to talk about almost anything;
- - Be Persuasive, Not Abrasive;
- - Improve nearly every professional and personal relationship;
- - Generate major professional improvements in areas like productivity, quality, safety, and diversity.

**Goal of this seminar:** is to help you handle critical discussions, discussions that occur when the risks are high, emotions run strong, and opinions differ.

**This seminar is recommended for:** managers, team leaders, directors, project managers, supervisors and staff in general across all industries and anyone who has influence over the decision making process where critical discussions take place.

