



Crucial Conversations.
FOR MASTERING DIALOGUE



Strength Deployment Inventory.

How do Crucial Conversations and the SDI work together to improve results for teams and organizations?

Let's take a look.

Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue is a course that teaches skills for engaging in productive and respectful dialogue when the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong. These skills are powerful prescriptions that help people handle emotionally risky situations, navigate disagreement, and achieve dialogue about important decisions.

The Strength Deployment Inventory is a personality assessment that describes how different aspects of personality work together. The assessment provides insights about people's motives, strengths, and how they experience conflict to illuminate why they do what they do and how they relate to others. These insights can help people develop a more stable sense of self and generous view of others, which foster increased trust in teams and more productive relationships.



The Relationship between Personality, Perception, and Speaking-Up Behavior

Open and respectful dialogue contribute to better workplace culture and performance. But how does personality play a role? And what about perception? Does our perception of self and others affect how we apply behavioral skills?

We surveyed 754 people to see whether a stable sense of self (SSS) and a generous view of others (GVO)—which the SDI can help foster—were associated with speaking up in crucial moments, social capital, and organizational health. Here’s what we found.

Those who reported a high SSS/GVO in their organization:

- Were 5 times more likely to report that people in their organization speak up when it matters compared with those who reported low SSS/GVO.
- Were 10 times more likely to report their organization has strong social capital compared with those who reported low SSS/GVO. (Social capital refers to discretionary effort and commitment to the organization’s mission, values, and purpose.)

We also saw correlations between SSS/GVO and organizational health (Organizational health refers to consistent execution and innovation):

- 70% of those who reported low organizational health also reported low SSS/GVO.
- 80% of those who reported high organizational health also reported high SSS/GVO.

Based on our experience and the correlations we observed here, we believe that a stable sense of self and a generous view of others can significantly improve people’s motivation and ability to use effective dialogue skills and can greatly improve workplace culture and performance. We also have a rich history of client surveys and testimonials of people reporting greater regard for themselves and others and more productive relationships following the SDI.

Improving Relationships and Results with Crucial Conversations Skills and the SDI

Here are just a few ways the SDI supports the material taught in Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue and Crucial Conversations for Accountability.

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS SKILL	THE SDI CONNECTION
Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue teaches skills for achieving respectful and productive dialogue in crucial moments.	The SDI assessment leads to insights about one’s motives, conflict sequence, and strengths—fresh perspectives of self and others.
MASTER YOUR STORIES A “story” is our rationale for what’s going on and our own interpretation of facts. To Master Your Stories means to take control of your stories, so they don’t take control of you. It is the key to preventing strong emotions from doing harm in a Crucial Conversation.	Our motives act as a filter through which we see ourselves and others, influencing the stories we tell. Knowing this helps us challenge those stories. When we review other’s MVS, we understand that they see the world through their own unique lens (people, process, or performance) and we start to unlock the power of asking, “Why might a reasonable, rational, and decent person do this?”



CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS SKILL	THE SDI CONNECTION
START WITH HEART The first thing that degrades in a Crucial Conversation isn't our behavior but our intent. We can quickly go from wanting to learn and understand to wanting to win, be right, and defend ourselves—and usually we don't even notice it. Get your intentions right—your heart—and better dialogue will follow.	Insights from the SDI can help people consciously evaluate and then express their motives in ways that are productive and authentic while also making space for the other person's motive. For example, a person with a Hub (flexible-cohering) personality type might say to someone with a Green (analyze-autonomize) personality type: "What I really want is the flexibility to adjust this project as needed. I also want there to be a process for change that you feel comfortable with."
SEEK MUTUAL PURPOSE Dialogue depends on mutual purpose—a shared reason for communicating. Parties in a Crucial Conversation need to believe everyone is working toward a common outcome and cares about each other's goals and interests.	The SDI provides insights about people's core motives—or Motivational Value System—and this can help people connect to each other's purposes. For example, a person with a Red MVS may want to move quickly, while one with a Green MVS may want to be more cautious. Knowing this can help them discuss where their motives differ while respecting that each other's motive is valuable and productive.
MAKE IT SAFE People will not engage in a Crucial Conversation if they don't feel safe. And when conversations turn crucial, a sense of safety is the first thing to go. This is why we often resort to silence or verbal violence when faced with a Crucial Conversation.	Understanding personality can help us know what people need when they feel unsafe. While someone with a Blue MVS wants to know that it is safe to talk about feelings and emotions, a Green MVS wants to know that it is safe to get into the details and to challenge assumptions. A Red MVS wants to know that it is safe to take risk—to try something just to see if it works. Unfortunately, the safety needs of one person can feel like a lack of safety to another. The SDI can help us recognize and respect the productive motives each person brings to the relationship.
CONTRASTING Contrasting is a don't/do statement. When someone becomes defensive or starts to feel unsafe, you can reestablish safety by temporarily pausing the conversation and clearly explaining what you don't intend for the conversation and then clarify what you do intend for the conversation.	When we know our core motives and the motives of our peers, we can make a contrasting statement that honors both. We can say what we want in our heart, and we can express that we are not trying to trigger conflict for the other person. For example, a person with a Red MVS (assertive-directing) might say to a person with a Hub MVS, "I am not trying to force a pre-determined conclusion, nor am I trying to lock you in or restrict your options. I am trying to find the most efficient and effective strategy."

When you combine the deep personal and interpersonal insights of the SDI with the proven, repeatable dialogue skills of Crucial Conversations, you can build a speak-up culture, productive relationships, and healthy and high-performing organizations.

You can download the complete white paper about our [research here](#).

Take the Next Step

If you'd like to learn more about the SDI and Crucial Conversations, please contact us at 1.800.449.5989 or at [CrucialLearning.com](#).