The purpose of this comparison is to clearly outline differences and similarities in course content between *Crucial Conversations* and *REAL TALK®: Creating REAL Conversations for Results®*.

Given the subject matter, there are understandably certain similarities between the two courses, but the REAL TALK course includes several topics that are not addressed in the Crucial Conversations course: Fundamentally, REAL TALK presents and reinforces a framework (Initiate, Discover, Connect, and Build), which is a complete model for holding any difficult conversation. REAL TALK contains a lengthy section on Listening and Attending that has no parallel in the Crucial Conversations course, and REAL TALK includes a variety of skills for examining one’s own thinking—Recognizing and Suspending—that Crucial Conversations does not address. The REAL TALK course also provides content that exposes participants to emotional intelligence and the role that brain function plays in effective communication, and REAL TALK teaches the unique EASE model for increasing understanding and defusing defensiveness; there is no equivalent for either of these elements in Crucial Conversations. Finally, the REAL TALK course has an entire section on dealing with people who have different communication styles, while Crucial Conversations ignores this concept.

Crucial Conversations includes content on different types of decisions that one can make. This is not explicitly mentioned in REAL TALK, but the REAL TALK material does emphasize the necessity of identifying desired outcomes, consequences, and behaviors that must be dealt with to ensure increased accountability. Crucial Conversations identifies three specific kinds of stories that people tell themselves which keep them stuck; the concept of “stories” is not part of the REAL WORKS course content.

As one would expect, the content of the two courses cannot be easily compared in a consecutive item-by-item summary; we have chosen to present the Crucial Conversations content in the left column and the comparable REAL TALK content in the right column, annotated with relevant section citations. Content which is not covered in one program, but is covered in the other will be addressed in the respective column.

The REAL TALK course is organized into eight sections, following the communication skills and principles which are essential for any conversation to be effective. Crucial Conversations also covers eight principles. We have chosen to organize this side-by-side according to the order in which it appears in the Crucial Conversations material for ease of comparison.

We hope you will find this material helpful and informative. Please feel free to contact us at (801) 491-5010 or by email at info@dialogueworks.com with any questions or comments you may have. We appreciate your consideration of the REAL TALK course material and look forward to discussing it with you.
**REAL TALK® A Content Comparison to Crucial Conversations**

### Get Unstuck! [Principle 1]
- Asks participants to identify where they are stuck within the context of helping participants identify something to work on during the workshop.
- Discusses what makes a crucial conversation, the Silence to Violence Continuum, and the Crucial Conversations Model

**Skill #1: Identify Where You are Stuck**

**Skill #2: Unbundle with CPR**
- Asks participants to identify the content, pattern, and relationship in the conversation that doesn’t work.

### What Keeps You Up at Night? [Introduction]
- Identifies the Effectiveness model to help individuals recognize that results cannot be improved without improving respect and relationships.
- Introduces the notion of “fake talk” versus REAL TALK.

**Skill #1: Make Deliberate Plans**
- Participants identify a person or situation to improve results, respect, and relationship.

### Start with Heart [Principle 2]
- Introduces “Heart Problems.”
- Participants build a “Left-hand” Column case to understand their underlying motives in conversation.

**Skill #1: “What am I behaving like I want?” Identify Motive.**

**Skill #2: “What do I really want?”**

**Skill #3: “How would I behave if I really did?”**

This entire section explores individual motives.

### The Awareness Principle: Choose to be Conscious [Principle 1]
- Focuses on the necessity of Awareness in being able to manage the dynamics of any conversation.

**Skill #1: Personal Awareness: Identify Your Undiscussables**
- Participants complete a “left-hand” column case to understand their motives.

**Skill #2: Recognize Conversational Direction**
- Participants learn to recognize downward and upward spirals in conversation.

**Skill #3: Use Questions to Lift the Conversation**
- Participants learn to lift the conversation above the line to increase conversational effectiveness.
Introduces the definition of dialogue (REAL Conversation) and the REAL Skills necessary to hold any difficult conversation. Provides a self-assessment for participants to assess their skills in this area.

- Helps individuals identify a variety of “fight or flight” behaviors that create Fake Talk and take any conversation below the line.

Skill #1: Learn the REAL Conversation Skills:

Skill #2: Use the REAL Conversation Framework.
- Participants learn the process for holding any difficult conversation.

Skill #3: Recognize Fight or Flight Behaviors
**Master My Stories**  
*Principle 3*

- Deals with how individuals create the stories they tell themselves to explain their results. Introduces the “Path to Action” to explain this process.

**Skill #1: Separate FACTS from Stories**
- Facts are visible and stories are the conclusions we draw from the facts.

**Skill #2: Watch for Three Clever Stories**
- People tell three kinds of stories:
  - Victim Stories
  - Villain Stories
  - Helpless Stories

- People should recognize the stories they tell.

**Skill #3: Tell the Rest of the Story**
- In order to tell the rest of the story, people should create a new story by doing the following:
  - **Tell the rest of the story** to break away from emotion.
  - **Add valuable information** to assess your role, humanize others, and turn yourself into able.
  - Turn yourself from a victim to a contributor.

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**The Perception Principle:**  
*Principle 5*

**Recognize and Suspend to Uncover**

- Introduces the “Process of Perception” to illustrate the way people think and process information and the impact that thinking has on communication.

**Skill #1: Identify How Mental Models or Assumptions Create Your Results**
- Explores the origins and creation of mental models and paradigms. Provides experiential opportunity for participants to begin to experience their own mental models. Participants begin to recognize how our mental models or views of the world influence interactions and communication with others.

- Explores how our brain function complicates our thinking. Participants learn that the brain literally has a mind of its own which, of its own accord, tends to act more out of self-preservation than out of rationality.

**Skill #2: Recognize and Suspend Your Emotion**
- Teaches participants to distinguish between data (verifiable facts) and interpretation (the meaning we assign to the facts). This distinction allows us to clarify our thinking.

- Teaches participants to challenge their thinking and defuse their emotional reactions by using the “S.O.S. Skill”:
  - **State the Emotion** – Acknowledges emotion.
  - **Observe Your Thinking** – Brings the underlying causes for emotion to the surface, making it visible.
  - **Select the Positive** – Gives the other person the benefit of the doubt. When we engage in “negative thought detection, positive thought selection,” we answer the question, “What would explain this behavior in a positive light?” This forces us to think differently about the person we may have already judged negatively.
- Teaches that the SOS process has the effect of increasing our awareness of our own thinking while simultaneously defusing our emotions.

**Skill #3: Assess the Accuracy of Your Thinking**
- Teaches participants to distinguish between data (verifiable facts) and interpretation (the meaning we assign to the facts). This distinction allows us to clarify our thinking.
- Participants learn to challenge their own interpretations, judgments, and opinions as well as those of others to assess accuracy.

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**STATE My Path**

- The STATE Model helps participants share any tough issue.

**Skill #1: STATE My Path**
- **S**hare your facts
- **T**ell your story
- **A**sk for others’ paths

**“What” skills**
- Talk tentatively
- Encourage testing

**Skill #2: Identify Your Intent**
- Participants identify their purpose for holding the conversation. They also consider the other person’s possible goals and needs in order to identify a shared purpose for holding the conversation.

**Skill #3: Create the Conversation**
- Uses the REAL Conversation Framework (Initiate-Discover-Connect-Build) to craft the conversation participants need to hold.

**Skill #4: Use an Attention Check**
- Participants learn to engage the listener’s attention by clarifying the intent for holding the conversation and asking for permission to proceed.

**Skill #5: Ask the Understanding Question**
- Teaches participants to craft an interpretation that will not create defensiveness.
- Participants learn to craft a respectful story.

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**The Preparation Principle:**

- This section encompasses everything one needs to know to prepare to hold any difficult conversation.

**Skill #1: Clarify Your Assumptions**
- Participants identify what they are assuming about the person and situation in the conversation.

**Skill #2: Identify Your Intent**
- Participants identify their purpose for holding the conversation. They also consider the other person’s possible goals and needs in order to identify a shared purpose for holding the conversation.

**Skill #3: Create the Conversation**
- Uses the REAL Conversation Framework (Initiate-Discover-Connect-Build) to craft the conversation participants need to hold.
### Skills for Effective Communication

**Skill #1: Manage Your Mindset**
- Distinguishes between “Me” and “We” mindsets to teach participants to speak in a way that promotes more effective brainstorming and contribution of ideas.

**Skill #2: Manage the Music of Your Message**
- Focuses on the use of tone, tempo, volume, and pauses in delivering a message.

**Skill #3: Manage Your Words**
- Identifies certain words and phrases that are more effective and easier to hear than others.

**Skill #4: Increase Contribution by Ending with a Question**
- Creates engagement and improves dialogue by inviting individuals to respond to the Speaker’s perspective.

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### The Awareness and Knowledge Principles

**Skill #1: Learn to Look when a conversation becomes crucial**
- This section returns to a review of the Crucial Conversations Model and emphasizes the importance of noticing when people are returning to silence or violence behaviors.

**Skill #2: Learn to Look for signs of silence and violence in yourself and others.**

**In the Awareness Principle,** participants learn to notice when a conversation is going above or below the line and learn how to lift the conversation above the line.

**In the Knowledge Principle,** participants complete an assessment to help them identify when and how they have resorted to fight or flight behaviors in the past.

**Various forms of fight or flight are identified to help participants recognize disrespectful and thus unproductive behaviors as they emerge.**
These two sections deal with repairing mutual purpose and mutual respect.

### Make It Safe I [Principle 6]
**Skill #1: Apologize When Appropriate**
- Talks about what makes a good apology.

**Skill #2: Contrast to Address Misunderstandings**
- Introduces “contrasting” as a skill to clarify intent.

### Make It Safe II [Principle 7]
**Skill #1: Create Mutual Purpose**
- Teaches four steps to create mutual purpose:
  - Commit to seek mutual purpose
  - Recognize the purpose behind the strategy
  - Invent a mutual purpose
  - Brainstorm new strategies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Preparation Principle:</th>
<th>Prepare or Beware</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill #2: Identify Your Intent</td>
<td>[Principle 3]</td>
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<td>- This skill deals with identifying the mutual purpose for yourself and the other person.</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Expression Principle:</th>
<th>Express Your Intention</th>
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<tr>
<td>Skill #3: Empathize with Others to Defuse Defensiveness</td>
<td>[Principle 6]</td>
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<td>- Teaches that awareness is the key to managing the dynamics of any communication. The EASE Model provides a framework for defusing emotion and getting to the meat of another person’s story. Participants learn to really listen to people in order to identify their AIM or Intention—what they wanted and didn’t get.</td>
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<td>- Teaches participants to identify their listener’s values that may have been challenged or violated.</td>
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<td>- Introduces using the EASE Model to defuse emotion and increase understanding while creating respect and identifying mutual purpose.</td>
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<td>- Teaches participants that violated values underlie “hot” or negative emotional reactions. Participants learn how to defuse emotion and gain understanding to resolve conflict.</td>
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- **Note:** Each participant receives a copy of the book *Overcoming Fake Talk*, which identifies an important skill for repairing damaged respect:

  **ABC Skill**
  - Apologize
  - Build Ego
  - Clarify Respect
Explore Others’ Paths [Principle 8]
- Teaches to explore other individuals’ Path to Action by using the acronym AMPP:
  - Ask to get things rolling
  - Mirror to confirm feelings
  - Paraphrase to acknowledge the story
  - Prime when you’re getting nowhere
- Teaches “active listening” from the perspective of watching the listener to determine the degree of safety they are experiencing and then deciding what skill to use based on that observation.

The Discovery Principle: [Principle 7] Ask to Reveal
- Deals with asking questions to create mutual respect and to invite collaboration and contribution.

Skill #1: Use Positive Questions to Initiate Thinking and Learning
- Teaches questions that move people forward

Skill #2: Springboard to Deepen Understanding
- Teaches how to ask questions that gain more understanding

Skill #3: Increase Engagement and Openness
- Teaches four skills which increase safety:
  1. Question to Know - Ask the journalistic questions (who, what, why, where, when, which, and how).
  2. Request to Gain Access – Create engagement by making requests: “Give me an example.” or “I’d really like to understand your views.”
  3. Reflect to Connect – Use a verbal mirror to acknowledge a person’s emotion in order to defuse that emotion: “I can see you’re upset.”
  4. Guess to Confess – Attempt to identify what is really going on with an individual who may be hesitant to share: “So what you mean is…” or “I’m guessing that…”

The Connection Principle: [Principle 8] Listen & Attend to Connect

Skill #1: Listen & Attend for the Details
- Reinforces the necessity of listening for data versus interpretation to avoid misunderstanding.

Skill #2: Manage Your Thoughts
- Introduces the notion of “headspeak” and discusses how our thoughts derail our conversations.

Skill #3: Empathize with Others to Defuse Defensiveness
- Teaches methods for reducing emotional reaction and identifying the values of others in order to establish mutual purpose.

Skill #4: Clarify EASE
- Creates mutual respect by identifying what is important to the listener.
Identifies the “Interaction Styles” of others. Helps participants understand that every individual has a different style of communicating and how those styles can sometimes cause friction, creating offense where none was intended.

Skill #1: Recognize and “Match” the Styles of Others
- Teaches the different styles and how to “match” those styles in order to increase engagement and create personal connection.

Move to Action

Skill #1: Document Who Does What by When and Follow-Up
- Addresses the need to be specific about assignments after dialogue has been completed.

Progression

- Applies the REAL Conversation Framework to problem-solving. Teaches techniques for exploring issues before making decisions.
- Teaches participants to explore relevant issues thoroughly using the dialogue behaviors of Recognizing & Suspending, Expressing, Asking, and Listening & Attending.
- Focuses on using the REAL Conversation Framework to “Create Shared Problem Solving”; teaches and practices using the fields of Initiate, Discover, Connect, and Build.
- Recommends a number of actions participants can employ as they create their own individualized action plan:
  - Be patient
  - Be persistent
  - Be prepared
  - Be proactive
  - Be in practice