

Using Contrasting to Make Crucial Conversations Safe

Contrasting consists of a simple don't/do statement, and is used to avoid or correct misunderstandings during a crucial conversation.

1. State what you don't want or intend.

(To formulate your don't statement, ask yourself, "How might my intentions be misunderstood? What can I say to avoid that misunderstanding from occurring?")

2. Resist the urge to say "but."

(Remember, "but" is the big eraser.)

3. State what you do intend.

(To formulate your do statement, ask yourself, "What are my real motivations? How can I make that clear?")

Example: *"I don't want you to think that I'm saying you're not concerned with helping this family. I believe that you have everyone's best interest at heart. I do want to talk about how you are communicating with the parents."*

Adapted from:

Grenny, J., McMillan, R., Patterson, K., Switzler, A. (2002), *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High*, McGraw-Hill, New York.