



# Candid Conversations that Drive Results

Most conflicts are not about one person being right and one person being wrong. Even the nicest, most reasonable people engage in conflict. Conflict is a natural byproduct of people having different needs, interests and goals.

Throughout “*Candid Conversations that Drive Results*,” you will learn a six-step process to enhance both your thinking & talking skills so that you can more effectively share tough messages in a way that maximizes candor and minimizes defensiveness.

The six-step process involves:

1. Identify your purpose for having the conversation, before you engage in it.
2. Consider the timing and location for the conversation.
3. Start with an opening statement that invites dialogue.
4. Communicate the facts, your interpretation and how you feel about the situation.
5. Encourage the other person to share his/her thoughts and feelings.
6. Keep your emotions in control.

Following is a “Candid Conversations Preparation Guide” to help you effectively plan and prepare for an upcoming candid conversation that you need to engage in.

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*As a speaker, author & entrepreneur, Tracy Butz empowers others to create the life they want to live.*

## Review of Strategy #6: Keep Your Emotions in Control

When a discussion heats up and we become emotionally engaged, we often revert to:

- Using harsh, damaging words
- Sending strong, non-verbal messages through body language or subtle actions

If we know we've just behaved poorly, and/or the person we are talking to becomes upset, quickly, courageously and sincerely:

- a. Apologize
- b. Correct the misunderstanding, focusing on your intent  
(Avoid using the word "but." Use the words: *instead, rather, however* or pause.)

### *Example:*

You're talking with a co-worker about the fact that she shared a private matter of yours (*ill parent*) with another mutual friend, when you asked her not to tell anyone. As soon as you bring up the issue, she clearly becomes defensive and says, "I don't know why it's such a huge secret anyway! When my Dad had a stroke, I told both of you right away!"

In this example, the person is not understanding why you shared the private information...was your intent malicious or caring and heart-felt?

### Recommended Approach:

Apologize and correct the misunderstanding (*focusing on intent*).

- "I am so sorry for sharing private information about your parent with Sally."  
(apologize)
- "I wasn't intending to break confidence with you, *rather* I was feeling helpless and wanted to see if Sally had any ideas of how we could help you through this."  
(correct misunderstanding)

"Difficulties mastered are opportunities won."  
~ Benjamin Franklin

## Optional Post-Session Activity: Practicing Strategy #6

### *Instructions:*

Read each scenario and determine the words you would say to apologize and correct the misunderstanding, practicing strategy #6. The answers, including one recommended approach for handling each scenario, are noted on the following pages.

### **Case Study A - Gossip/Negativity in the Workplace:**

Bob's workstation, located next to yours, tends to be the social gathering spot. Bob has been with the company for 8 years and everyone wants to know what Bob thinks about things. The problem is that the conversations are usually negative and often times they contain gossip about certain individuals. This has been bothering you for awhile, but you are not sure what you can do to stop this. After all, you have only been here for a year, and Bob is a senior technician. Lately you feel like maybe you should apply for another position/opening in the company to get away from all the negativity in your unit. Instead, you decide to confront the situation.

### **Case Study B - New Purchase on Limited Budget:**

Money has been really tight lately in your household for you and your spouse. You are barely able to make the bill payments, with little money left over. You went in the home office to look for the checkbook to pay yet another bill, and noticed an I-pod you've never seen before, under a stack of papers.

### **Case Study C – Boss Doesn't Share Your Views:**

You have been with this organization for about a year now and everything is going great. However, lately the company has talked about doing an imaging project and you really want the opportunity as you feel that you have a lot to offer. After all, your last company implemented imaging while you were there and you know you can add value. You had one conversation with your boss, however she basically said, you need to learn your job first and "pay your dues", before you get to work on a project.

### **Case Study D – Work/Life Balance Issue:**

You have been with this organization for about 5 years and really enjoy your job. One of your colleagues has recently left the organization and you have been asked to absorb the workload in the interim, until someone new is hired. You understand and are ready and willing to be a team player.

*It is now 6 months later* and the toll has started to take effect. You are tired of the long hours and feel your work quality is suffering as you don't have time to get everything done the way you would like. Your home life is also taking a toll. You just had your mid-year performance review where your boss tells you how appreciative he is for all the extra hours you have been putting in and has even said what a "work horse" you are. According to him, the job search continues but he is waiting to find the right person.

**ANSWERS:** Noted below is one recommended approach for handling each of the four scenarios.

**Case Study A - Gossip/Negativity in the Workplace:**

Bob's workstation, located next to yours, tends to be the social gathering spot. Bob has been with the company for 8 years and everyone wants to know what Bob thinks about things. The problem is that the conversations are usually negative and often times they contain gossip about certain individuals. This has been bothering you for awhile, but you are not sure what you can do to stop this. After all, you have only been here for a year, and Bob is a senior technician. Lately you feel like maybe you should apply for another position/opening in the company to get away from all the negativity in your unit. Instead, you decide to confront the situation.

***One Recommended Approach:***

"Bob, I am wondering if I could talk with you please about something that has been on my mind for awhile. I truly respect your tenure and the degree of influence you have here, and I would like to get your thoughts. Would you have time to meet, perhaps later this afternoon sometime?" When you meet, the conversation quickly begins to elevate and you can tell from Bob's body language that he is beginning to become angry.

*"Bob, I apologize if I have said something that is frustrating or hurtful to you. That was not my intent at all and if my words have come across that way, I am sorry. My intent of talking to you today, was to share my concern and see how we could possibly work together to solve it and help maintain the great culture here."*

**Case Study B - New Purchase on Limited Budget:**

Money has been really tight lately in your household for you and your spouse. You are barely able to make the bill payments, with little money left over. You went in the home office to look for the checkbook to pay yet another bill, and noticed an I-pod you've never seen before, under a stack of papers.

You decide to bring up the issue with your spouse and he begins to get upset and asks in a harsh tone, "What exactly are you implying?"

***One Recommended Approach:***

*"I apologize if my tone is appearing accusatory. Please know my intent is not to accuse you, rather, it is simply trying to understand who this I-pod belongs to because I haven't seen it before."*

**Case Study C – Boss Doesn’t Share Your Views:**

You have been with this organization for about a year now and everything is going great. However, lately the company has talked about doing an imaging project and you really want the opportunity as you feel that you have a lot to offer. After all, your last company implemented imaging while you were there and you know you can add value. You had one conversation with your boss, however she basically said, you need to learn your job first and “pay your dues”, before you get to work on a project.

***One Recommended Approach:***

*“I am wondering if I could talk with you again about the imaging project. Please know that my intent for expressing an interest in the imaging project wasn’t to have it replace my core responsibilities, rather, it was to simply let you know that I have some experience with imaging from my former employer, and there may be some areas where I could add value if the opportunity presented itself.”*

**Case Study D – Work/Life Balance Issue:**

You have been with this organization for about 5 years and really enjoy your job. One of your colleagues has recently left the organization and you have been asked to absorb the workload in the interim, until someone new is hired. You understand and are ready and willing to be a team player.

*It is now 6 months later* and the toll has started to take effect. You are tired of the long hours and feel your work quality is suffering as you don’t have time to get everything done the way you would like. Your home life is also taking a toll. You just had your mid-year performance review where your boss tells you how appreciative he is for all the extra hours you have been putting in and has even said what a “work horse” you are. According to him, the job search continues but he is waiting to find the right person.

***One Recommended Approach:***

*“I really do appreciate the opportunity you have given me to help the team continue to move forward when „x” person left. However, I have been finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the quality of my work due to the continued workload needs.” The boss becomes upset and says, “What do you want? I am doing the best I can to get someone hired. It will be worse for both you and me if I don’t hire the right person and start the search process all over again!”*

*“I am very sorry, Ben, I wasn’t trying to imply that just anyone should be hired. I realize it is very difficult to find the right person for this role. My intent for bringing this up today is that I am trying my absolute best to maintain the quality of work that we both expect, and I was wondering if we could talk about some thoughts I had to potentially shift two projects to another team so that I could free up a little more time to dedicate more energy to the core responsibilities until another individual is hired.”*



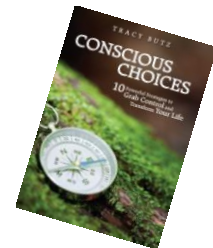
*Speaker Biography*

Tracy Butz is a devoted wife, an energetic mom of three adventurous young men, a successful entrepreneur, a captivating author and a true inspiration to many. Whether it is for an audience of Choice who has inspired thousands of individuals to “Create the Life You Want to Live.” As a highly sought-after speaker, Tracy has delivered powerful, life-changing messages, encouraging her audiences to identify what is most important to them and focusing their decisions in that direction, creating a positive difference in their work, families and communities.



Tracy has 17 years of experience actively engaging both large and small size audiences, from a wide range of industries, including the US Army, McCain Foods Ltd, Miles Kimball, Kimberly-Clark, Dermatology Associates, Future Business Leaders of America, Head Start, Chamber of Commerce, and the American Staffing Association, just to name a few. She is best known for her authenticity and empowering audiences to become architects of their own lives. She delivers engaging, unforgettable keynote presentations to corporations, professional organizations, universities, and women’s groups across the country. She is well known for her captivating and dynamic delivery, often sharing real life stories in her presentations. Audiences can be found sitting on the edge of their seats, laughing aloud and brushing away tears as she masterfully recounts each story, aligned with a key point, an impactful meaning and an enduring message.

Tracy is the proud author of her new book entitled, *Conscious Choices: 10 Powerful Strategies to Grab Control and Transform Your Life*. It includes actionable ideas and strategies to transform your life by creating the life you want to live, rather than reacting to what life gives you. Tracy’s approach to living an engaged life will help you to realize how to overcome obstacles, decrease stress, enhance productivity, rediscover happiness and revitalize your appreciation for life and work through changing the way you think.



Tracy’s genuine personality combined with her busy family and work lives, provides her with more than ample astounding or laugh out loud moments to pass on to her audiences. She is a person that lives presently in the moment and enjoys those opportunities when ideal material for her keynotes lands perfectly in her hands.

Tracy loves life and is continually challenging herself to share her message and inspiration with others. She delivers the tools for today’s world, propelling her audiences to live more productive, passionate and purposeful lives.

*Inspiring. Dynamic. Impactful.*