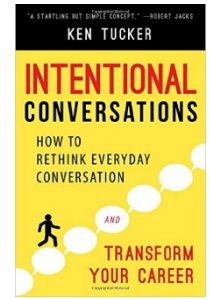


## Intentional Conversations

*Feedback and observations*



Intentional Conversation is defined as a spoken exchange of thoughts, ideas, and information *with collaborative and mutually-productive intent*. Well said. Of course, “spoken” can be either verbal or non-verbal.

The emphasis on being intentional in conversation, especially crucial conversations, is excellent. I enjoy the usage of the idea that I have “SECRET Opportunities” in conversations.

SECRET is very useful because the pattern that flows from a baseline to a goal which, in a sense, doesn’t end as it then forms a trajectory for even greater improvement in conversations.

**Suspend Status:** to communicate in a way that values and esteems the other person as equal to or higher than yourself.

To suspend status is not only a sign of common sense humility, it is also a reflection of the Christ principle of “humbling himself” to take the form of a servant. It’s the right thing to do, the good thing, and the smart thing. Yet, both in the church, educational institutions, and in the military I have personally witnessed the negative effects of leaders who use passive/aggressive use of power as well as brash lordship over others. I have witnessed the opposite, as well, that is leaders who sincerely cared for and related to subordinates. In order to suspend status, whether up or down, I wonder what kind of questions a person needs to ask himself or statements he needs to think in order to yield his or her status and to be on equal footing?

**Empower Each Person:** to serve the other person during conversation in a way that validates you have his or her interests and well-being in mind.

Three important essentials: personal mission, heartitude (sincere appetite to serve others), confidence in others (believing in them). In parenting, this is called, “Keep the emotional door open,” in Covey-speak these are the deposits into the emotional bank.

**Cultivate Connection:** to (invest the time, energy, and risk needed) create an environment of mutual giving and receiving in order to forge a deeper relationship. Be honest about the WIIFM, but be focused on the WIIFU.

**Reframe Reaction:** to manage our responses during the conversation in a way that ensures that the conversation moves forward.

Additional thoughts:

Reaction versus response. I realize that this is semantics, yet, it helps me to think of a response as positive and a reaction as negative. The medical world uses the terms this way, “She is responding well” or “he is having a bad reaction” to the medicine.

Considerations not addressed in the book – as it was not within its parameters of purpose – include knowing the id and culture of the person with whom you are having the conversation, the context of the conversation, etc.

Our reaction is based on intuitive criteria: the value of the exchange to us, the importance of the subject to us, the time we are willing to give to the exchange, the depth of relationship we have or wish to have with the person, the lasting potential impact of the exchange.

When in crisis, people can and need to reframe their reaction. The role of the first responder in a crisis is to quickly create an environment of safety and stability, to reestablish order and predictability.

**Enforce Engagement:** to insist that your ideas, thoughts, and information are received and acted upon; insist that critical and important issues get the focused attention and action that we desire; being heard and getting a validated.

Give permission to each other to *interrupt, question, and push back* during the conversation. Requires us to be assertive and mindful, for it is at that point when we make crucial and critical decisions that can affect us for the rest of our lives.

**Triage Takeaways:** to prune and select what really matters from the clutter of ideas, thoughts, and pieces of information that make up the deluge of everyday conversations.

Fierce Conversations: “little or no attention is paid to the power of each conversation to move us toward or away from our stated business and life goals.”

We do not act then and there during the conversation because we had had modeled for us to wait our turn, speak within the confines of our status, not risk offending, and go along to get along.

Interrogate each conversation for what is crucial and pertinent. A triage way of thinking positions us to look for the problem, opportunity, or reason for the conversation; leads to generate options for solving the problem; ensures that action is taken based upon the option selected.

Is the, most assertive of the steps, to the point of interrupting or redirecting the conversation.

Leads to transformation. Just ask one-worded question—why?

### **The Secret of SECRET: CHANGE YOUR CONVERSATION BEHAVIOR!**

Humility is seeking permission to serve; assertiveness is taking persistent, intentional action

Humility: Suspend Status, Empower Each Person, Cultivate Connection

Assertiveness: Reframe Reaction, Enforce Engagement, Triage Takeaways

The exercises at the end of the book are excellent in that they demonstrate clearly the need to practice conversations. It is a skill and art to flawlessly and effortlessly exercise humility and apply assertiveness

Additional thoughts:

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