

Crucial Conversation Reflection
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I work at a very small school and hold many responsibilities. I have always been willing to take on more, but this year is different. Adjusting to the graduate program has decreased the bandwidth that I have had in the past to volunteer my help on school requirements outside of my roles. I quickly learned that this is not just an adjustment for me, but my administrator as well. I knew I had to hold a crucial conversation with her when she assumed I would take on the responsibility of a coworker. I scheduled a time to meet and hoped that I could convey my message with grace.

I walked into my administrator's office, heart beating fast and nervous, but more passionate about the topic. It did not feel good to me to appear that I had not held my responsibilities when they did not belong to me. As I began to express my concern, I recognized my style under stress, violence, was evident. I wanted to tell her all of the reasons why this was not fair to me, but I had to consider her perspective. I proceeded by using STATE to state my path. I wanted to do well in all of the roles that I was assigned and I wanted to everyone to be clear about what assignments I had so that they knew what to expect from me. The story that I shared was that my coworker was incapable of the position she was assigned, so I was given the responsibility while she kept the title. I listened to the principal explain how she felt. She informed me that there is absolutely no one in the building able to do this job but me. She proceeded to take on responsibilities herself and say that she would run the meetings. I felt that she heard me and came to the best conclusion in consideration of my desires. At that point, I contrasted, letting her know that I am not asking her to take on a responsibility of a teacher, nor am I refusing to help. I did, however, want her to understand that I do not have the ability to run

the meetings and the documentation for the teacher with the position. We ended the conversation after I offered help to review the meeting agendas and materials.

I learned a lot from the crucial conversation. I would have thought I would shy away from saying what I really felt I needed to say because of my nervousness. The more I said, the more I wanted to say, and that is when I had to refrain and regroup. I wish I would have given my principal more of an opportunity to speak while I listened. I was so focused on getting my point across, that while I received my request, I now have way less information on how I can help in the future. I would have this information if I gave her the opportunity to state her story. This would have also given me a chance to ask, mirror, paraphrase, and prime. Listening as much or more than I speak in crucial conversations is certainly an area of improvement.