

A Facilitator's Guide | 2020

THE CRITICAL MOMENT DIALOGUE



Personal Leadership

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The Critical Moment Dialogue

Overview

The Critical Moment Dialogue is at the heart of the Personal Leadership practice of intercultural competence. The process is designed to lead us through deep reflection to a stronger understanding, which will in turn help us bridge more effectively across difference.

Many self-reflective processes use hindsight to build self-awareness by understanding a past situation. The Critical Moment Dialogue—which we call the CMD—works differently. It allows us to bring self-reflection and self-awareness into the present moment, and to appropriately adapt our behaviors in real time.

Thus, for those of us practicing PL, using the CMD allows us to respond wisely, creatively, and even immediately to the unique circumstances of the specific situation.

What follows is a relatively simple and classic approach for facilitating a CMD learning experience. There are numerous potential variations, the most popular of which are presented at the end of this Guide. Any one or more of these variations can be used by a skilled facilitator to supplement the classic approach.

Objectives

As a result of the activity outlined in the following pages, participants will be able to:

- Better identify when they fall into reactivity.
- Better recognize their “Something’s Up” experiences.
- Use the CMD to good effect when they experience a Something’s Up.
- Appreciate the potential of a consistent PL practice, with the CMD as an essential ingredient.
- Understand that consistent CMD practice helps us reach the core of any situation with skill, and discern our right action with confidence.



The Critical Moment Dialogue

Appropriate Audiences

The CMD is designed for anyone willing both to examine themselves and to be open to discerning right action rather than relying on habit.

While the CMD was initially designed for intercultural interactions, people of all walks of life successfully use the CMD for the differences they encounter in everyday life.

Level of Challenge to Participants

The level of challenge for this facilitation is determined largely by participants themselves: they choose the situations to which they apply the CMD and the depth to which they take their inquiry. Because the CMD is a process that requires introspection and being honest with oneself, some participants may find it unfamiliar and thus initially somewhat uncomfortable. Ultimately, the value of the CMD comes through regular application to real-life events.

Level of Challenge to Facilitators

Facilitators need to be able and ready to support participants who encounter strong emotion, and to help them find the learning opportunity in whatever it is that they are experiencing.

Although you will be encouraging your participants to choose the topic for their CMD carefully, it is certainly possible for them to choose something that ends up being more intense than what they had anticipated. Therefore, if you are not comfortable with strong emotions, you should not facilitate the CMD.

Time Required

- 2.5 hours when using the CMD in a partnered CMD
- 1 hour when not partnered

