

From the authors of the *New York Times* Bestseller  
**crucial conversations**

# Influencer



**The  
Power  
To Change  
Anything**

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# Authors' Note

For more than two decades we've felt an obligation to write this book. But the thought of capturing the strategies of influence masters world-wide was a daunting task, so we did what many authors have done under similar circumstances. We put off writing as long as we could.

Then three experiences convinced us that we had to write the book. The first took place in 1997 when we were practically knocked over by the results of an influence project we'd been working on for the previous eighteen months at the Fort Worth Tactical Aircraft Division of Lockheed Martin—home of the F-16 fighter jet. Not only had the intervention been successful, but it had been *remarkably* successful. We had assisted leaders in attempts to influence a handful of key behaviors and, sure enough, the behaviors had improved substantially. More importantly, so had key outcomes ranging from productivity, to costs, to quality, and employee satisfaction.

With the completion of this successful change project, we had now demonstrated on over two dozen separate projects that when leaders apply sound influence theory to vexing organizational problems, they can dramatically improve results. By 1997 over a quarter of a million employees from these two dozen companies had been touched in ways that improved not only their organizations, but also their personal lives.

We received a second nudge to write a book about influence when we initiated a study to uncover every intervention we could find that had successfully influenced behavior change

in organizations. As we pored over the rather massive body of literature we learned there were embarrassingly few examples of leaders who had been successful at influencing employees to act in new ways. Most of the influence books and articles we found sounded as if they had been penned by prophets of doom rather than professors of change.

But this didn't make any sense. It wasn't as if behavior change was a new topic. For more than five decades social scientists and skilled practitioners had amassed an impressive literature that demonstrated that influence efforts, when based on sound theory and implemented by a knowing practitioner, had routinely led to lasting improvements. Perhaps it was time we located these individuals and shared their methods.

When we eventually tracked down the best of the seasoned influencers, we received our third and final nudge to write this book. Their work was simply too intriguing not to share. The journey to find them took us far beyond our corporate roots to points scattered all over the world, but the trip was well worth it. From Bangkok to Boston, we found quiet but tenacious influencers who had solved world-sized problems in world-class ways—solely by influencing how people behave.

We were ultimately compelled to write this book when it became clear that the influence strategies every one of these impressive change agents employed were based on the same set of theories and principles we had been applying in organizations for over twenty years. These are ideas we learned at the feet of renowned scholars and that we now introduce as a unified theory of influence.

We apologize for our procrastination. At long last, meet the influencers.

# The Power to Change Anything

If you're like most people, you face several influence challenges that have you stumped. For instance, at work you're fighting an uphill battle. You've given your heart and soul to a quality-improvement program, but your best efforts to make quality part of the everyday culture have yielded no improvements whatsoever. None.

At the personal level you're fighting a weight problem that has gone on for years. Actually you have a *metabolism* problem. It turns out your body doesn't burn 6,000 calories a day. Talk about bad luck.

At the family level, your oldest son just turned 13, and he hangs out with a pretty frightening-looking crowd that appears to have lost all interest in civility, decency, and hair care. You've tried reasoning and bribing and even a well-timed threat, but when you talk to him, there's no one home. It's as if the day he turned 13 your ability to influence him expired.

At the community level, you have a neighbor who allows three vicious, three-foot-tall pit bulls to wander his backyard with impunity. The problem is his four-foot fence. It's just a matter of time until the dogs break out and run wild, but the local animal control people won't do a thing about it. According to them, someone has to suffer before they can take action. To cap the whole thing off, your region of the country is going through a five-year drought because apparently the world is heating up like a meatball in a microwave.

And you can't fix any of this.

Fortunately you've learned to follow the words of a well-known prayer: Every day you ask for the *serenity* to accept the things you cannot change, the *courage* to change the things you can, and the *wisdom* to know the difference. Somehow that gets you through.

## THE SERENITY TRAP

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And that's the problem. It's everyone's problem. We've come to believe that when we face enormous challenges that can be solved only by influencing intractable behaviors, we might attempt a couple of change strategies. When they fail miserably, we surrender. It's time to quit and move on. We tell ourselves that we're not influencers, and that it's time to turn our attention to things that are in our control. We seek serenity.

This would be a good tactic were it not for the fact that the problems we've listed—along with everything from changing the culture of an organization to eliminating HIV/AIDS transmission to reducing drug addiction to limiting divorce—can and have been resolved by someone somewhere. That's right. There are actual people out there who—instead of continually seeking the “wisdom to know the difference”—have sought the wisdom to *make* a difference. And they've found it. They've discovered that when it comes to changing the world, what most of us lack is not the *courage* to change things, but the *skill* to do so.

The promise of this book is that almost all the profound, pervasive, and persistent problems we face in our lives, our companies, and our world can be solved. They can be solved because these problems don't require solutions that defy the laws of nature; they require people to act differently. And while it's true that most of us aren't all that skilled at getting ourselves and others to behave differently, there are experts out there who do it all the time.

In fact, one of the best-kept secrets in the world is that over the past half century a handful of behavioral science theorists

and practitioners have discovered the power to change just about anything. So instead of pleading for the wisdom to know when to give up, we should be demanding the names and addresses of the influencers who have found solutions to the problems we face every day. We should be seeking to expand the list of things we can change so that we don't need to seek serenity so often.

Not everyone will become influencers with a capital "I," but everyone can learn and apply the methods and strategies the world's best influencers use every day. In fact, that's the purpose of this book—to share the principles and skills routinely employed by a handful of brilliant and powerful change agents so that readers can expand their set of influence tools and bring about important changes in their personal lives, their families, their companies, and even their communities.

Unlike most books on the topic, we don't draw upon the traditional way of thinking about how to exert influence by suggesting that the best way to help propel others to change is through the power of verbal persuasion. Wouldn't it be great if you could encourage others to stop their bad behavior with just the right combination of words? We've certainly tried. Legions of leaders have attempted to turn around their latest acquisition by preaching to the need to "do what's best for the larger good." Unfortunately, it's a rare leader who has seen this verbal volley alone change behavior in any noticeable way. Influence requires a lot more than the right combination of words.

For example, as you bite into a burger the size of a toaster, wouldn't it be nice if one more reminder from your spouse about how you're digging your grave with your teeth would actually inspire you to swear off fast food forever? But it's not going to happen.

Instead of merely drawing on the power of persuasion, we explore the full array of strategies successful influencers use every day (often in combination) to change lifelong habits and



bring about improvements. That means we don't offer influence methods that apply only to specific problems such as: "How to potty-train your Chihuahua" or "Six ways to motivate left-handed coal miners." Instead we look for high-leverage strategies and skills that can be applied across the vast array of human challenges.

For example, consider the following ongoing tragedy. Every year over 3,000 Americans drown—many of them in public pools. This ugly statistic remained unchanged until a team of tenacious leaders from the YMCA and Redwoods Insurance decided to abandon serenity and search for a workable change strategy. It wasn't long before they reduced fatal accidents at YMCA pools by two-thirds simply by employing a few of the influence strategies we're about to study.

To reduce the senseless loss of lives, the team found a way to encourage YMCA lifeguards to alter how they performed their job. Now that's no easy challenge because it requires the ability to exert influence over hundreds of teenage employees across the organization. However, when it came to guarding, the team discovered that one vital behavior—something they called "10/10 scanning"—was a key to saving lives. By using a few of the principles we cover in this book, they were able to zero in on and change a key behavior.

It turns out that traditional lifeguards spend much of their time greeting members, adjusting swim lanes, picking up kickboards, or testing pool chemicals. However, when lifeguards stand in a specific spot and scan their section of the pool every 10 seconds and then offer assistance to anyone in trouble within 10 seconds, drowning rates drop by two-thirds.<sup>1</sup> To date, scores of communities have been spared the devastating loss of a life because a handful of clever influencers looked for a way to change behavior rather than accepting the existing reality.

And while we're talking about saving lives, let's take a look at an influence effort that has saved—and created—tens of thousands of *jobs*. In 2006 alone (during the writing of this

book), the chronic influence failures of the leaders of Detroit auto companies resulted in the cumulative dismissal of nearly tens of thousands of career employees.<sup>2</sup> Yet at the same time, Toyota added thousands of jobs not just in Japan, but in *North America*.<sup>3</sup> Toyota has grown consistently while U.S. auto companies have declined because Toyota's leaders have perfected a system of influence that engages all employees in continuous improvement.

## **CHOOSING INFLUENCE**

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The reason most of us pray for serenity rather than doggedly seeking a new solution to what ails us is that, left to our own devices, we don't come up with the big ideas that solve the problems that have us stumped. We fall into the serenity trap every time we seek solace when we should be seeking a solution. To bring this problem to its knees, we first have to see ourselves as influencers. This revised self-image calls for a deviation from the existing norm. Rarely do people say that they currently are, or that one day they will be, an influencer.

"When I grow up, I'm going to move to New York City, where I plan on being a professional influencer!"

"Who me? I work for IBM. I'm the chief influence officer."

"Yes, I'm married with two children, so I guess I'm working pretty much full time as an influencer."

We typically don't think of ourselves as influencers because we fail to see that the common thread running through most of the triumphs and tragedies of our lives is our ability to exert influence. If we did, we'd invest enormous energy in looking for new and better ways to enhance our influence repertoire. For instance, every time we tried to exert influence over others with a few well-chosen words and nothing happened, we'd stop talking and try something new. Every time we tried an incentive and it failed, we'd try something

new. We wouldn't move from talking to carping and from offering incentives to making threats. Instead, we'd try something new.

The fact that many of us don't realize that it's our duty to become good at exerting influence causes us a great deal of grief. Instead of owning up to our responsibility of becoming effective agents of change and then going about the task of improving our influence repertoire (much like an athlete running laps or a chess player learning moves), we grumble, threaten, ridicule, and, more often than not, find ways to cope.

## **WE'RE BETTER AT COPING THAN AT EXERTING INFLUENCE**

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People tend to be better copers than influencers. In fact, we're wonderful at inventing ways to cope. For instance, at work we abandon our quality-control program and install full-time inspectors. Nobody will listen. Instead of fixing lousy schools, we complain to our friends and then backfill by tutoring our children. It's the best we can do. And when it comes to diet and exercise, we own two or three different-sized wardrobes. It's impossible to stick to a diet.

Consider the following international example of coping. Not long ago the world celebrated the birthday of one of the smallest yet most successful organisms on the planet—a terrifying organism called HIV. A review of the proceedings of its birthday party in Toronto—the 16th International AIDS Conference—demonstrates our universal lack of confidence that we can actually change what people do. Of the speeches, classes, and activities that took place at that conference, over 90 percent dealt with how to cope with the effects of AIDS.

Of course, helping AIDS sufferers is essential. We *should* spend time talking about how to reduce discrimination against sufferers and how to dramatically increase access to medicines. But it's indicative of our collective sense of powerlessness that

less than 10 percent of the speeches at the international AIDS conference even speculated on how to change the behavior that drives the disease in the first place. Here we have a disease that would never infect another human being if people simply thought and behaved differently, and yet the central forum for discussing the pandemic hardly touched on the topic of human behavior.

To cite an often-spoken metaphor that helps us understand what's happening with this ongoing tragedy, it's as if a steady stream of automobiles is hurtling toward a cliff and then plunging to destruction. A community leader catches sight of the devastating carnage and springs into action. However, instead of rushing to the top of the cliff and finding a way to prevent drivers from speeding toward disaster, the bureaucrat parks a fleet of ambulances at the bottom of the cliff. When the vast majority of our efforts go to after-the-fact treatment rather than avoidance of AIDS, we've quietly announced that we don't know how to influence thoughts and behavior, so we've given up.

You can see evidence of coping everywhere. What's the solution to, say, a gambling addiction? Current efforts are aimed at developing an antiaddiction pill. IT department isn't performing? Outsource it. Spouse giving you fits? Legislate an easy off-ramp to no-fault divorce. Are recently released convicts leaping too quickly back into crime? Don't free them so soon. Build bigger penitentiaries, and put in a revolving door. Then pray for serenity.

## **THE WISDOM TO *MAKE A DIFFERENCE***

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Over the last year U.S. airlines lost over \$10 billion and shed tens of thousands of jobs. At the same time, Southwest Airlines racked up its 14th straight year of profits and double-digit growth. What do Southwest's leaders do that others haven't figured out? They engage everyone in doing more with less. They

turn planes faster at the gates. They treat customers better. And they get a higher percentage of bags and passengers to arrive at the same location. In other words, they've perfected an influence strategy that produces the behaviors that drive stellar results across their entire company.

While this has been going on in the business world, another influence genius in Dhaka, Bangladesh, helped over 4 million of the Developing World's poor to emerge from poverty.

Likewise, thousands of previously overweight Americans declared victory in the battle of their bulges by developing sustainable influence strategies over their own unhealthy behaviors.

And finally, in Thailand alone, over 5 million people avoided contracting HIV because of a remarkably effective influence strategy developed by a quiet but enormously effective influence genius who has a lot to teach us all.

So there is hope. In a world filled with those content with seeking serenity, there are people who know exactly what it takes to exert influence over human behavior—and change the world in a good way. We (the authors) know because we've tracked them down. We've traveled to Addis Ababa, Mexico City, Johannesburg, Bangkok, Boston, Burkina Faso, Denver, Dhaka, and other rather exotic-sounding places, and we've studied what they've done.

And what has this rather comprehensive search revealed? Every time we interview these influencers, we're both awed and humbled. Carefully, systematically, and with no fanfare whatsoever, a small group of tenacious gurus has been able to achieve everything from eradicating diseases to eliminating gender discrimination to turning around companies. One of the wizards we discovered influences hardened criminals and drug addicts to eventually become productive citizens—every single day.

And here's what qualifies these remarkable individuals as master change agents rather than as merely lucky. They have all successfully applied their influence strategies to problems that others haven't been able to solve for years—often centuries. None has succeeded through serendipity, nor have any of their results been idiosyncratic. Through years of careful research and studied practice, they've developed a handful of powerful influence principles and strategies that they themselves can and do replicate and that others can and do learn.

This book shares their combined knowledge. By sharing the principles and strategies of a handful of brilliant influencers, we (the authors) hope to help you expand your own sphere of influence—and thus change your own life for good.

In this book you'll meet a few of the influencers who are changing the world.

# 1

## You're an Influencer

*I wanted the influence. In the end I wasn't very good at being a [university] president. I looked out of the window and thought that the man cutting the lawn actually seemed to have more control over what he was doing.*

—Warren Bennis

To get a glimpse of what it takes to exert profound influence, to literally change anything, we first travel to San Francisco and look in on influence master Dr. Mimi Silbert. Consider what Silbert has been able to do by applying the best of today's influence strategies to one of today's most noxious problems. She is the founder of the Delancey Street Foundation, a one-of-a-kind organization with headquarters at an upscale address on San Francisco's Embarcadero. Silbert's company is part corporate conglomerate and part residential therapy. It consists of several dozen businesses, all headed by Silbert.

What's unique about the institution is the employee population. In Silbert's words, "They're nasty, racist, violent, and greedy. They're thieves, prostitutes, robbers, and murderers." Then she adds: "When we started 30 years ago, most were gang members. Today many are third-generation gang members." According to Silbert, "These guys get letters from Grandma saying, 'Get back here—the gang needs you!'"

Dr. Silbert's typical new hires have had four felony convictions. They've been homeless for years, and most are lifetime drug addicts. Within hours of joining Delancey, they are working in a restaurant, moving company, car repair shop, or one of the many Delancey companies. And other than Silbert herself, these felons and addicts make up the entire population at Delancey. No therapists. No professional staff. No donations, no grants, no guards—just a remarkable influence strategy that has profoundly changed the lives of 14,000 employees over the past 30 years. Of those who join Delancey, over 90 percent never go back to drugs or crime. Instead they earn degrees, become professionals, and change their lives. Forever.

## MEET JAMES

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One of the employees we met is a well-scrubbed, affable but steely-eyed fellow we'll call James. James's story is typical of Silbert's staff. Like many of the 500 residents living on the San Francisco campus, James was a career criminal and drug addict before coming to Delancey. And like most, he started young. After four years as a regular runaway, criminal, and drug abuser, James turned 10. By that time Illinois was fed up with his shenanigans and had tracked down James's father—who abandoned him at age one. State justice authorities wished James good luck as they stood at a gate at the O'Hare airport while making sure he understood that he was no longer welcome in Chicago.

James flew to Oakland, California, where he took up residence with his father near the docks. The first lesson his dear old dad taught him was how to shoot heroin. The next 25 years consisted of an uninterrupted period of violent crime, drug abuse, and prison time. Six years ago he was convicted of yet another violent offense and sentenced to 18 years with no hope of parole for 16 years. That's when he asked to join Delancey rather than serve his full sentence.



James changed in ways that are hard to imagine. When we first visited Delancey, he was professionally dressed and had not used drugs or alcohol in two years. To learn how Dr. Silbert influences this kind of change, we touch base with her work throughout this book. She draws from the principles and practices of every one of the influence geniuses we've studied to date.

Combining principles learned in Tanzania, practices honed in Mexico City, and theories developed in Palo Alto helps us understand how Ralph Heath in Marietta, Georgia, was able to influence the behavior of 4,500 engineers and craftsmen to move a stalled product from design to production, resulting in billions of dollars in needed sales; why Mike Miller was able to change the culture of a massive IT group in order to dramatically improve performance; and what makes it possible for an individual who has struggled to lose weight for years to finally turn the corner. But most importantly, these proven concepts, principles, and theories will help you, your family, your company, and your community develop an influence repertoire of enormous power.

## **SOME AMAZING CASES**

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Leaving San Francisco for warmer climes and more far-reaching methods, we head to Mexico City to visit TV producer Miguel Sabido. He has created a method for influencing hundreds of thousands of people at a time.

Sabido has perfected strategies for changing how people think and behave by producing life-changing soap operas—of all things. At one point, when Sabido aimed his popular TV show *Ven Conmigo* (“Come with Me”) at improving literacy (a problem that had remained intractable for decades), his TV characters propelled over a quarter of a million viewers into the streets of Mexico City—all in search of free literacy booklets that were shown on the program. Sabido's work in entertainment education has now been replicated in dozens of countries with remarkable success. A careful review of his work helps

us understand how to use one of the world's best tools for helping others *willingly* change their minds.

Switching our attention to Ithaca, New York, we see Brian Wansink explore how the physical world can either help or hinder people in their quest to shed unwanted pounds. By learning how Wansink and others enlist the “curious power of propinquity,” we are able to apply the same methods to, say, propel your kids to read more books, or encourage coworkers to collaborate.

To learn how to develop one of the most important of all influence methods, we travel to Atlanta, Georgia, and meet Dr. Donald Hopkins and his staff at The Carter Center. Their work across Africa and Asia teaches us how to identify a handful of vital behaviors that help change the habits of millions of people. In this case, he and his colleagues help change the dangerous water-drinking habits of millions of remote villagers. Hopkins's work on applying principles of “positive deviance” helps us all understand what it takes to discover a handful of high-leverage behaviors that drive virtually every change effort we'll ever undertake.

Try this for a challenge. Since 1986, Dr. Hopkins and his team at The Carter Center in Atlanta have focused on the eradication of the Guinea worm disease. The Guinea worm is one of the largest human parasites (it can grow to three feet long), and it has caused incalculable pain and suffering in millions of people. When West Asian and sub-Saharan villagers drink stagnant and unfiltered water, they take in the larvae of Guinea worms, which then burrow into abdominal tissues and slowly grow into enormous worms.

Eventually the worms begin to excrete an acidlike substance that helps carve a path out of the host human's body. Once the worm approaches the skin's surface, the acid causes painful blisters. To ease the horrific pain, victims rush to the local water source and plunge their worm-infected limbs into the pond for cooling relief. This gives the worm what it

wanted—access to water in which to lay hundreds of thousands of eggs, thus continuing the tragic cycle.

Sufferers cannot work their crops for many weeks. When parents are afflicted, their children may drop out of school to help out with chores. Crops cannot be cultivated. The harvest is lost. Starvation ensues. The cycle of illiteracy and poverty consumes the next generation. Often, secondary infections caused by the worm can kill. Consequently, for over 3,500 years the Guinea worm has been a major barrier to economic and social progress in dozens of nations.

In 1986 Dr. Hopkins and his colleagues declared war on the worm. Hopkins was interested in this particular disease because he knew that if 120 million people in 23,000 villages would change just a few vital behaviors for just one year, there would never be another case of the infection. Ever. But imagine the audacity of intending to influence such a scattered population in so many countries—frequently faced with corrupt or nonexistent health systems or fragile political stability.

And yet this is exactly what Hopkins's team has done. Soon he and his colleagues will have laid claim to something never before accomplished in human history. They will have eradicated a global disease without finding a cure. Despite this enormous disadvantage, Hopkins and his small band of intrepid change agents will have beaten the disease with nothing more than the ability to influence human thought and action.

The implications of Hopkins's work for individuals, businesses, and communities are enormous. Everyone has a version of a Guinea worm disease: some self-defeating behaviors that, if changed, could unlock a whole new level of performance. Hopkins teaches us first how to find success where others have failed, and second, how to locate a handful of key actions that, if routinely enacted, will guarantee our own success.

Who can't benefit from learning how to locate strategies that routinely succeed in the face of widespread failure?

## STUDY WITH THE BEST SCHOLARS

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Hopkins, Silbert, Sabido—in fact, virtually all the influencers we studied—draw on the same sources: a handful of brilliant social scientists you’ll meet in this book. For now, let’s meet the one almost all cited as the scholar of scholars: Albert Bandura. He’s a genius whom influence masters routinely study. When we first entered the offices of the practitioners we studied, most displayed Dr. Bandura’s works on their bookshelves. His name leaped out at us because our history with him goes back over 30 years.

We first encountered Bandura in the mid-1970s in his modest office at Stanford University. There we met a mild-mannered and brilliant man who was already legendary as the father of social learning theory. When we reconnected with him three decades later, at an energetic 83, Dr. Bandura was still up to his neck in influence research that continues to tilt the world. He can still lay claim to the fact that he’s the most cited psychologist alive.

Here’s how Bandura’s work fits into the world of influence and can be of enormous help to all of us. In his early years, Dr. Bandura generated a remarkable body of knowledge that led to rapid changes in behaviors that other theorists had dawdled over for years. Phobics who’d spent years on a couch were freed in hours. Addicts who had used drugs for decades became clean in weeks and were well on their way to making the transformative changes in their lives that would keep them clean. Individuals struggling with obesity for a lifetime developed new habits in months.

One of Bandura’s classic studies demonstrated, for example, how powerfully our behavior is shaped by observing others. This came at a time when most psychologists believed that behavior was solely influenced by the direct rewards and punishments people experienced. This was the age of strict behaviorism. And yet Bandura’s intense curiosity about how to change human behavior made him impatient with such sim-

plistic explanations. So he took a daring swing at the established dogma and began an exodus toward a much more powerful theory.

Seeing a rise in violence corresponding with the diffusion of television, Bandura thought it worthwhile to examine whether juveniles were learning violent behaviors by watching TV characters smack, kick, and shoot one another. To explore the effects of TV violence, Bandura and a team of graduate students watched closely as nursery school children played in a small room packed with toys—dolls, tiny stoves, balls, and so forth. Among this tempting array of playthings was a “Bobo doll”—a large plastic blow-up doll with a weight in the bottom. If you punch the doll in the nose, it bounces right back so you can punch it again.

Left to their own devices, children played with several of the toys, moving from one to the next—occasionally giving Bobo a punch or two. But what if researchers demonstrated novel aggressive behavior for the children? Would kids learn through simple observation? To answer this question, Bandura showed a different group of children a short movie of a woman modeling novel aggressive behavior. She pummeled the Bobo doll with a mallet. She flung the plastic toy into the air, kicked it repeatedly, and eventually sat on it and beat it. That seemed novel enough.

The children who watched the film were then released one at a time into the toy room. Would simple modeling influence their behavior? You only have to watch the black-and-white film segments taken of the experiment for a few seconds to answer the question. A little girl wearing a dress—complete with a 50s-style poofy petticoat—enters the room, digs through the toys until she finds the mallet, and starts whaling on Bobo. She and the dozens of other nursery school kids who followed her demonstrate all the aggressive behavior they had seen modeled—including inventive new forms of aggression such as beating the doll with a cap gun. In Bandura’s own words,

“They added creative embellishments. One girl actually transforms a *doll* into a weapon of assault.” There she is—that cute little girl in the frilly outfit—smacking Bobo with Raggedy Ann.

In addition to demonstrating that humans are influenced by watching the behavior of others, Bandura was able to prove that the violence pumped out by the television networks was likely to exact a terrible toll on viewers. Dr. Bandura caps his review of his classic study by stating with a twinkle: “This research didn’t get me onto the Christmas-card list of the broadcast industry.” But it did put him smack dab in the center of influence research.

This work, when combined with hundreds of other Bandura studies that have been aimed at fixing an ailing world, teaches us the very first thing we need to know about influence. Influence strategies can indeed be studied, tested, and mastered. Bandura also taught us where *not* to waste our time. For instance, if you want others to change, you don’t have to put them on a couch for 10 years to learn about their critical childhood moments. You also need not trouble yourself by laying a trail of Reese’s Pieces in front of others to propel them through a maze. Humans aren’t simple-minded pawns who can be readily manipulated to do whatever you like—even if you have the right amount of candy.

In fact, Bandura found humans to be quite complicated. It turns out that they *think*. Humans observe, cogitate, draw conclusions, and then act. All this is important to know because if you want to change the world, you eventually have to change how people behave. And if you want to change how they behave, you have to first change how they think.

## WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU

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There’s good news in all of this. Since our ineffectiveness at influencing others stems from a simple inability rather than a character flaw or lack of motivation, the solution lies in con-

tinued learning. We can become powerful influencers. We don't have to wait for everyone else to miraculously change. We won't have to constantly seek serenity.

It also means that the changes we need to make won't be too intrusive. We don't need a lobotomy, a pep talk, or an infusion of tenacity. Instead, we simply need to expand our self-image by seeing ourselves as influencers; it's the one job that cuts across every domain of our life. In addition, like any dedicated person, we need to study the works of the influencers who are already good at the job. As we learn the strategies influence masters have been implementing for the past five decades, we'll be in far better shape to take on the profound and persistent problems that have been plaguing us for years.

Notice that we have used the word "strategies." We've chosen the plural because there is no one strategy—no silver bullet—for resolving profound, persistent, and resistant problems. When it comes to the problems that have us stymied, it takes an entire set of influence methods. We'll help you create your own set of tools by sharing the strategies used by every influencer we've studied.

These influence strategies, by the way, are value-neutral. They can be used either to break or to cause a heroin addiction. They can be used either to create or to destroy a customer-driven corporate culture. Naturally, the influencers we studied routinely aimed their strategies at deserving, even noble causes. But not everyone does or will. We knowingly share the powerful methods of the world's best influencers as a way of making them both accessible and transparent. To the degree that people understand new strategies, their ability to make their own life better grows exponentially. To the degree that people understand the forces that are already influencing their behavior, they are more empowered to choose their response.

Any one of the influence strategies we explore, combined with what you already know, could be enough to put you on

the road to creating lasting change. Put into play several methods, and your chances for improvement only grow. Find a way to combine all the methods, and you'll be able to create changes that most of us have only been able to imagine.

So join us as we do our best to answer: How can I learn to change *anything*?



## About the Authors

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This award-winning team of authors—now joined by leading researcher David Maxfield—previously produced the two *New York Times* bestsellers, *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High* (2002) and *Crucial Confrontations: Tools for Resolving Broken Promises, Violated Expectations, and Bad Behavior* (2005).

**KERRY PATTERSON** has authored award-winning training programs and led multiple long-term change efforts. He received the prestigious 2004 BYU Marriott School of Management Dyer Award for outstanding contribution in organizational behavior. He did doctoral work in organizational behavior at Stanford University.

**JOSEPH GRENNY** is an acclaimed keynote speaker and consultant who has designed and implemented major corporate change initiatives for the past 20 years. He is also a cofounder of Unitus, a non-profit organization that helps the world's poor achieve economic self-reliance.

**DAVID MAXFIELD** is a leading researcher and frequent conference speaker on topics ranging from dialogue skills to performance improvement. He did doctoral work in psychology at Stanford University, where he studied personality theory and interpersonal-skill development.

**RON McMILLAN** is a sought-after speaker and consultant. He co-founded the Covey Leadership Center, where he served as vice president of research and development. He has worked with leaders ranging from first-level managers to corporate executives on topics such as leadership and team development.

**AL SWITZLER** is a renowned consultant and speaker who has directed training and management initiatives with dozens of Fortune 500 companies worldwide. He is on the faculty of the Executive Development Center at the University of Michigan.

## About VitalSmarts

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An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts helps teams and organizations achieve the results they care about most. With award-winning training products based on more than 30 years of ongoing research, VitalSmarts has helped more than 300 of the Fortune 500 realize significant results using a proven method for driving rapid, sustainable and measurable change in behaviors. VitalSmarts has been ranked twice by *Inc.* magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in America and has taught more than 2 million people worldwide.

VitalSmarts is home to multiple training offerings, including Crucial Conversations®, Crucial Confrontations™, and Influencer™. Each course improves key organizational outcomes by focusing on high-leverage skills and strategies. Along with *Influencer*, their latest book, the VitalSmarts authors have written two *New York Times* bestsellers, *Crucial Conversations* and *Crucial Confrontations*. VitalSmarts also offers on-site consulting, research, executive team development, and speaking engagements.

Visit [www.vitalsmarts.com](http://www.vitalsmarts.com) for more information.

# Award-Winning Training from VitalSmarts

VitalSmarts is home to multiple training offerings, including Crucial Conversations<sup>®</sup>, Crucial Confrontations<sup>™</sup>, and the brand new Influencer Training<sup>™</sup>.

Based on more than 30 years of ongoing research, VitalSmarts training helps people transform ideas into action and action into results. Each course improves key individual, team, and organizational outcomes by teaching high-leverage skills and strategies.

## **Crucial Conversations<sup>®</sup> Training**

Drive results by learning to speak with complete candor and complete respect, no matter the issues or the individuals involved. Create alignment, resolve disagreements, surface the best ideas, and make decisions with unity and conviction.

## **Crucial Confrontations<sup>™</sup> Training**

Ensure flawless execution with a step-by-step process for improving accountability and addressing performance gaps. Achieve the results you want by learning to motivate without using power and to enable without taking over.



## **NEW—Influencer Training<sup>™</sup>**

Diagnose the real reasons behind the problems most organizations face. Use eight powerful principles to create sustainable behavior change and overcome persistent problems.

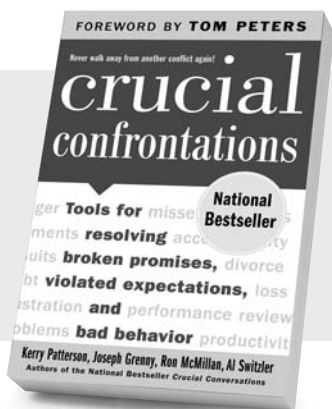
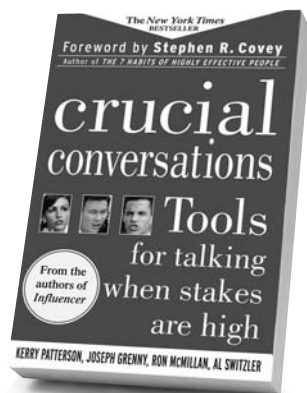
To receive more information on training from VitalSmarts, mail in the card found in the back of this book, call 1-800-449-5989, or go online to [www.vitalsmarts.com](http://www.vitalsmarts.com).

# FROM THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR TEAM

## Crucial Conversations

“This is a breakthrough book. I found myself being deeply influenced, motivated, and even inspired.”

—Stephen R. Covey, author of  
*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*



## Crucial Confrontations

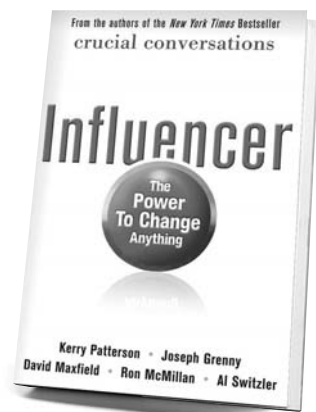
“If you read only one ‘management’ book this decade...I’d insist that it be *Crucial Confrontations*.”

—Tom Peters, author of *Re-Imagine!*

## Influencer

“Influencing human behavior is one of the most difficult challenges faced by leaders. This book provides powerful insight into how to make behavior change that will last.”

—Sidney Taurel, Chairman & CEO,  
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