



This Healing Dialogue model was developed by [Rich Wylor](#) for [Brothers Road](#), in consultation with professional counselors associated with our community. It is influenced significantly by the book [Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes Are High](#) and the work of its authors (see [YouTube videos](#) and [website](#)). It is also influenced by the principles of “nonviolent communication” (see the [book](#) and [website](#)). The principles from these books are drastically condensed here and paired with the language and format more familiar to the Brothers Road community.

## HEALING DIALOGUE: Working Toward Resolution

### Some Overall Principles:

1. We **work on ourselves *first*** to create the right conditions for dialogue like this. (This is where use of the Brothers Road “Clearing Model” can be quite effective: The Clearing Model is designed for self-awareness. It is not a communications model.)
2. As people perceive that others don’t respect them, the conversation immediately becomes **unsafe**—and dialogue comes to a screeching halt (Crucial Conversations, p. 79).
3. The instant people perceive **disrespect**, the interaction is no longer about the original purpose—it is now about defending dignity (Crucial Conversations, p. 79).
4. Note that **Mutual Purpose** is established **twice** in the following model—once regarding the purpose of this dialogue itself (why you’re even talking), as part of creating safety (step 2), and again regarding the overall issue.

When you are establishing Mutual Purpose for the overall issue, you are looking for something bigger than the proposed solution (or strategy). You are looking for the reason or motivation **BEHIND** the proposed solution that you’ll ultimately come up with. **Mutual Purpose is discovering what you both want most.**

Step	Example dialogue or questions
<b>1. INITIATE</b> a. <i>Respectfully</i> invite a dialogue on a potentially difficult subject b. Don’t ambush them! Agree on a time when you can both focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I’d like to talk with you to resolve an issue that’s bothered me. Is now a good time or could we agree on a time when we can both give it our full attention?”</li> </ul>
<b>2. Establish emotional SAFETY</b> a. Establish MUTUAL RESPECT b. Establish MUTUAL PURPOSE <i>for this particular dialogue</i> . (You’re looking for a win-win.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I’d really like to resolve this issue in a way that leaves us both feeling good about it and puts it behind us.” or</li> <li>• If appropriate and authentic: “I want to start by apologizing for my part in this misunderstanding. I said and did some things I wished I had done differently.”</li> </ul>
<b>3. Agree on the DATA</b> , to the extent possible a. DATA are observable facts: What happened. Not feelings or opinions or conclusions or blame. b. Stick exclusively to the current event. Don’t get derailed by bringing up past events or other issues. c. Without a video recording of the event, you won’t always agree on the facts. You may remember things differently. Don’t get caught up in whose data is “right.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What I saw happen was: _____”</li> <li>• “Was that your experience of the facts also?”</li> </ul>

Step	Example dialogue or questions
<p>4. <b>Share your “STORIES”</b> (<i>interpretations</i> of the data or <i>conclusions</i> from the facts).</p> <p>a. Ask if they would be willing to listen to the stories you told yourself based on the available information at the time.</p> <p>b. Ask them to try to just listen to understand, not to defend or rebut.</p> <p>c. Share how your “stories” affected your feelings and caused your reactions.</p> <p>d. State that you recognize there are possible alternative interpretations.</p> <p>e. State that you recognize that your past experiences, hurts, wounds, etc. may significantly affect how you interpreted the current event.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I concluded from the data that...” or “...I interpreted the facts to mean that...” or “The story I tell myself about this is...”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• “My stories cause me to feel ____ (emotion) and to react ____ (how).”</li> </ul>
<p>5. <b>Invite the other person to share THEIR “stories”</b> (their <i>interpretations</i> or <i>conclusions</i>)</p> <p>a. Ask how those stories affected them (their feelings, impulses, actions).</p> <p>b. Listen to understand, NOT to rebut or defend</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Would you be willing to share how you understood the situation?”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• “I’d really like to hear your side of things.”</li> </ul>

Can you both see—and respect—how **a reasonable person might tell themselves these stories** or arrive at these conclusions based on their experience of the data (and maybe their history with similar experiences)?

Make no attempt to agree on whose “stories” are “right.” **There is no “right.”** There is only each person’s experience and interpretations.

<p>6. <b>Establish MUTUAL PURPOSE</b> (overarching intent or goal) <u>regarding the main issue</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “If I understand correctly, one thing we can agree on is that we both want _____.”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• “I think our top priority here, for both of us, is to _____. Is that how you see it too?”</li> </ul>
<p>7. <b>Explore SOLUTIONS</b> (strategies, tactics)</p> <p>a. Ask for what you want. Recognize that you may not get everything you want. The other person may not be WILLING or ABLE to give them.</p> <p>b. Consider “third choices” or unexplored options.</p> <p>c. Thank them (if sincere) for whatever they are willing to give or to agree to.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What I really want is _____. Would you be willing (or able) to give me that?”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• In case of disagreement: “Are there other options we haven’t considered yet—choices that would give us both what we really want?”</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• “Thank you for hearing me and agreeing to _____. It really helps me _____ (ex: feel valued and respected).”</li> </ul>

Step	Example dialogue or questions
<p><b>8. Move to AGREEMENT or decision on next steps</b></p> <p>Either:</p> <p>a. Final decision or agreement is reached. Issue resolved.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>b. Decide on HOW to decide, and agree on next steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I understand if you need some time to think about this more. It’s important to me that we are both satisfied with the agreement we reach.”</i></li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>• <i>“Since we can’t reach an agreement right now, can we agree on HOW we’ll go about coming to agreement (the steps we’ll take)?”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Close with sign of MUTUAL RESPECT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handshake, hug, words of thanks or affirmation, as appropriate to the nature of the relationship.</li> </ul>