

## Crossing Divides

If a divide is a clash of cultures, crossing a divide is a *blending* of cultures.

Does this blending of cultures weaken your culture? Are you afraid it will sap you of your convictions or convert you? Will it, at best, be an absolute waste of your time?

Ideas flow freely when you lower your defenses. And the risks with dialogue are the same as when you immerse yourself in a movie or book.

The risks with dialogue are *less* than the risks of immersing yourself in a movie or book. Because with dialogue, ideas flow both ways.

## Talk vs Action

There is often a sharp divide between those who enjoy sitting around talking, and those who are impatient to get out and *do* something. Talkers frustrate doers with huge questions that seem to lead nowhere. Doers exhort talkers to get on with it already. (Or they get up and leave.)

Talkers want to talk and doers want to do. And so they should. Talkers should talk. Doers should do. Everyone cleaves to their strengths. With talkers and doers sometimes talking together and sometimes doing together. Or not. Whatever each person decides.



“Talk Is Cheap”

*Talk vs Action*



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## Talk Is Cheap

Talk is cheaper than action.

Sergeant Best leads the charge screaming into battle. And a hero's death.

Guns are best approached from behind. Everyone knows that, including the enemy. So stop and think. How to approach blazing guns without turning yourself into chopped steak?

Sarge is certain it can't be done. Charge!

Whoa! Hold on there a minute, Sarge. *Think!*

Think of a way to approach the guns safely. Better still, think of a way not to approach the guns at all. Let's talk.

"Okay," says Sarge as if talking to a bratty two year old, "We'll talk. Let the enemy attack. You want to talk."

And there you have it. Talk and do nothing, or rush to action. (Better still, have Sarge rush for you.)

Talk without action is like skipping your turn at chess. What should happen doesn't and what shouldn't happen does.

And action without talk is like chess on a motorbike. There's plenty of movement. But not a great game.

Talk is a costless way to test actions before investing in them fully—like keeping your finger on a chess piece before committing to a move. More importantly, talking is a way to shape your actions for best effect. To accomplish something that actually matters.

## Crossing Divides

A divide is where different cultures meet—and clash.

The clash often starts innocently enough. Someone says, "Here's what I think." Then someone answers. "*You're wrong!*" Conversation ends. Clash begins.

"Look at those incredible storm clouds!" The reply, "What *lousy* weather!"

Or, "I'm voting for so-and-so." The reply, "Are you *insane?*"

Each reply takes what was said into a context for which it was not intended. "Those incredible storm clouds" aren't incredible if felt as lousy weather, and voting for so-and-so isn't sane if so-and-so looks as crooked as a bent nail.

## Take a Hint

Playing catch, one person gently tosses a ball. The other person *rips* it back! No problem. The first person tosses gently again. The second *rips* it back!

This sounds like an argument but it isn't. The parent throws gently. The toddler throws hard.

Would it be an argument if the parent perceives hard throws from the toddler as weak and inaccurate while the toddler perceives soft throws from the parent as painful and scary?

Not necessarily. The parent dives for every groundball, making both parent and child laugh. And children often enjoy scary rides. Even when they hurt a bit.

Two adults play catch. One tosses gently. The other throws hard. *Ouch!* It hurts.

No problem. The first player tosses gently again. The second player takes the hint.