

Healthy Communication Principles

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services

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How difficult are these standards?

God's Standards for Communication and Relationships:

What is our responsibility within these standards?

Romans 12:18

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Ephesians 4:29

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Self-Examination Questions

- How well do I communicate?
- Where can I improve my communication skills?



Healthy Communication

- Communication takes place in *all* relationships at *all* times.
- Communication is not just talking; it's the transfer of knowledge and ideas.
- Ineffective communication leads to confusion, conflict, and hurt relationships.
- One of Satan's most effective tools in destroying relationships is to cripple the communication.

Identify the Enemy

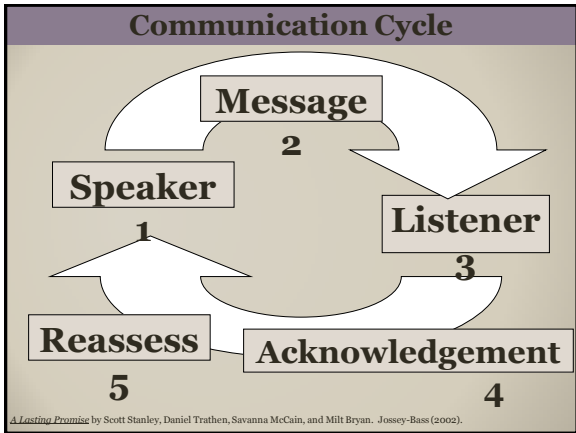
- A recipe Satan often uses to destroy relationships is to:
 1. Break down the lines of communication.
 2. Create misperceptions.
 3. Try to convince us the enemy is another person.
 4. Tell us there is nothing we can do about it.



What Is Healthy Communication?



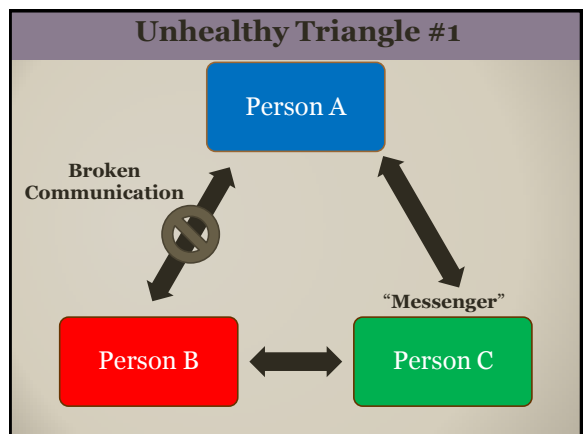
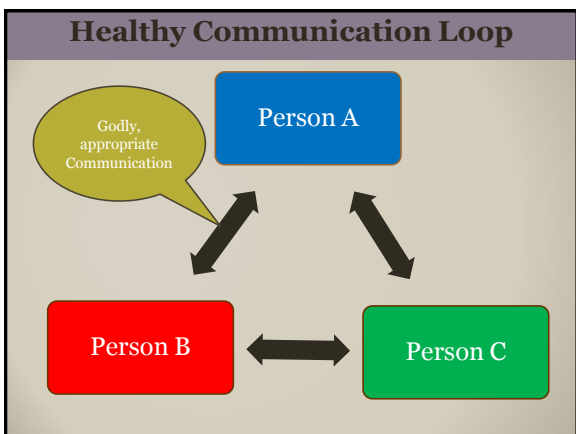
It can be more complicated than you think!

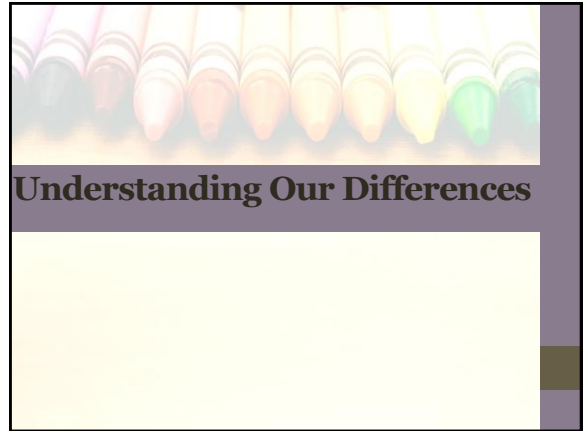
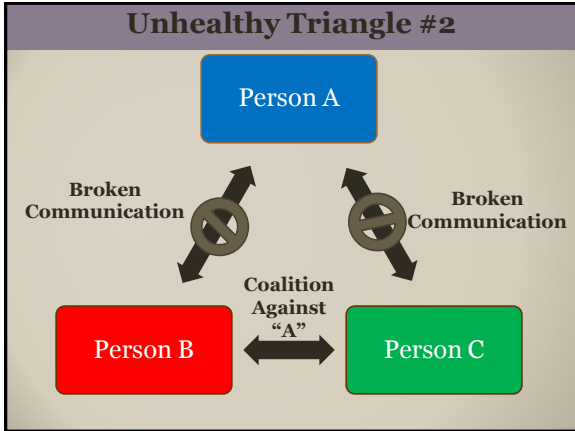


- ### Communication Cycle
- **Speaker**
 - The *Speaker* “has the floor.”
 - Speak in short sentences and at a speed rate that allows the listener to keep up with you.
 - Speak from your perspective.
 - Don’t expect the *Listener* to be able to “read your mind.”
 - **The Message**
 - “Say what you mean and mean what you say!”
 - Stick with one topic at a time - Don’t switch topics mid-conversation.
 - Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication:
 - Facial expression, eye contact, posture, tone of the message, etc.

- ### Communication Cycle
- **Listener**
 - Focus on understanding the other person instead of focusing on your answer.
 - Don’t interrupt.
 - Listening is your gift to the *Speaker*.
 - Your job is to:
 1. Hear what the *Speaker* says.
 2. Comprehend it.
 3. Let the *Speaker* know you understood what he/she said.
 - Listening is not just waiting to speak.
 - **Acknowledge/Reassess**
 - Let the *Speaker* know he/she has been heard.
 - “Reflect back” what you heard the speaker say.
 - Don’t just “parrot back” the exact words.
 - When the *Speaker* hears the *Listener’s* acknowledgement, he/she can assess if the message was heard correctly.

- ### Keys to Communication Cycle
- It is the *Speaker’s* responsibility to match the *Listener’s* level of understanding.
 - It is the *Listener’s* responsibility to verify to the *Speaker* whether or not his/her level has been matched.
 - Without proper understanding, communication is incomplete.
-





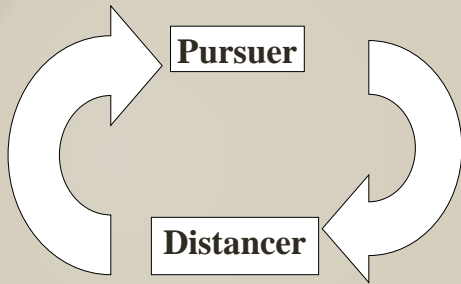
- ### 1) Expanders vs. Condensers
- **Expanders**
 - Expanders are people who tend to talk more than others.
 - They elaborate, give detailed, lengthy descriptions, and have a dislike of silence.
 - Expanders may be frustrated by Condensers who do not provide as much information when talking.
 - **Condensers**
 - Condensers are people who do not talk as much and who do not always include a lot of detail in their conversations.
 - They prefer an efficient use of words and tend to stick to the main points or the "bottom line" when communicating.
 - A Condenser may become overwhelmed by the Expander's seemingly excessive use of words.
- Wright, H. (2000). *Communication: key to your marriage*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.

- ### 2) Processing Styles
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Thinkers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cope primarily by thinking things through logically. • Work through problems and stressors by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keeping emotional distance. 2. Understanding information and facts. 3. Having assistance in problem-solving. | <p style="text-align: center;">Feelers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cope primarily by working through emotions. • Work through problems and stressors by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing their feelings and experiences. 2. "Venting" or pouring out their emotions. 3. Having others empathetically listen. 4. Being understood by others. |
|---|--|

- ### 3) Interpersonal Behavior Styles
- We interact with each other in several key manners:
- Passive: I want to please.
 - Passive-Aggressive: I'll get you back.
 - Aggressive: I want my own way.
 - Assertive: I want to communicate.
- (Definitions in Appendices)

- ### 4) The Pursuer-Distancer Cycle
- It is quite common for us to have different ideas about how to deal with challenges, resolve conflict or even start a conversation.
 - Some of us want to talk about problems right away or get right to the point.
 - Others of us want time to think about it, talk later, or avoid the issue altogether.
 - This arrangement often leads to the **Pursuer-Distancer cycle**.

Who Causes the Pursuer-Distancer Cycle?



"Your need to have a conversation about our problems is interfering with my need to pretend they don't exist."

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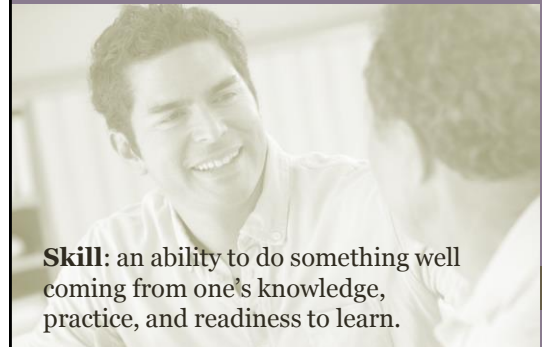
5) Five Conflict Styles

1. Avoiding – The Passive Turtle
2. Accommodating – The Lovable Teddy Bear
3. Collaborating – The Wise Owl
4. Compromising – The Wily Fox
5. Competing – The Aggressive Shark

(Definitions in Appendices)

From the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument

Crucial Skills Of Healthy Communication



Skill: an ability to do something well coming from one's knowledge, practice, and readiness to learn.

1) Dealing with Filters

- Filters are anything which come between the *Speaker* and *Listener* and can potentially alter the meaning and/or reception of the message.
 - **Environmental Filters:** radio, children, telephone, being in different rooms, etc.
 - **Internal Filters:** being tired, being frustrated, having a headache, being sick, etc.
- Filters can be temporary or systemic.



2) Dealing with Negativity: A Tunnel to Nowhere!



Source of Negativity

- Negativity occurs in outlook, attitude, and talk.
- Negativity has its source in negative emotions such as:



- Fear
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Guilt
- Shame

Other Factors Contributing to Negativity:

- Trust Issues
- Unrepentant Sin
- Losses
- Repeated Failure

Negativity Analyzed

- Negative thinking has a longer shelf life than positive thoughts.
- Our inner dialogue and thoughts aren't always easy to recognize.
 - Our inner critic can say some pretty harsh things.
- Negative thinking is often the result of our expectation the world should behave according to our wishes and it doesn't.
- Negativity attracts negativity.
- Perception is often deemed reality although this perception can be quite inaccurate.

Overcoming Personal Negativity

- Learn to recognize the many irrational and unhealthy thoughts we tell ourselves.
- Break worry patterns.
- Manage and decrease stress.
- Learn to not take the negativity of others personally.
- Get enough rest.
- Remember to close the mouth and open the ear.
- Empathize.
- Get the "buts" out of your dialogue! ("You did a good job but....")

Additional Elements of Negativity

Cynicism

- **Definition:** Believing others are motivated purely by self-interest.
- Overcome cynicism through optimism and gratitude.
- Be careful of the stories we tell ourselves about others' motives.

Sarcasm

- **Definition:** A form of irony in which apparent praise is used to mock or convey contempt.
- Overcome sarcasm by treating others with dignity and respect.
- Remember the Golden Rule...and the Platinum Rule.

3) Staying Focused

What are we *really* talking about?



Event or Topic

Hidden Issues

Separating Events from Issues

- There are two layers to most conversations:
 - **Events** – the topic at hand.
 - **Issues** – the “under-the-surface” feelings, meanings, and goals.
- Always seek to communicate on the same issue.
- Many conflicts are never solved because the people talking are actually arguing about different hidden issues.
- It is a loving act (though often a challenge) to work at understanding why another person is reacting to an issue the way he or she is.

4) Dealing with Conflict:

How We Often Handle Conflict!



Conflict Happens Even In the Best Relationships

- Occasional conflict in relationships is both normal and inevitable.
- However, how you handle conflict (submitting yourselves to the flesh or the spirit) determines whether it harms your relationship or helps you to grow.



Active Listening Is Important

- Active listening is a key skill to understanding each other and in dealing with conflict.

James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

Proverbs 29:20 “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.”



“Using” good listening skills is very different from just “knowing about” them.

Watch What You Say

- Avoid speaking quickly and angrily. Criticism, sarcasm, and put-downs are hurtful to your relationships.

Proverbs 29:11 “A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.”

Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Proverbs 15:1 “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”



Slow to Speak

- The words we speak when frustrated or angry often hurt others deeply and leave us feeling regret.
 - This means harsh words spoken early in a conversation can doom the discussion to turn into destructive conflict.
 - When entering difficult or tense conversations, don’t use inflammatory words, keep your voice tone steady, and the volume moderate.
- Many people think they need to “vent” their anger in order to deal with it.
 - However, venting often leads us to “spew out” words and actions that are neither godly nor healthy.
- As our tension level goes up, our ability to think clearly and solve problems effectively **GOES DOWN**.




Slow to Speak cont.

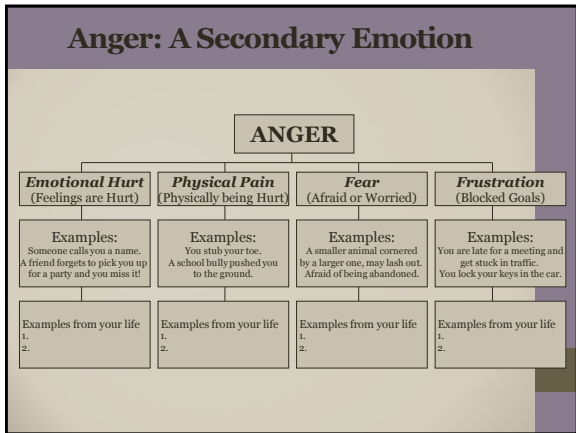
- If your level of tension is in the **Red Zone (7-10)**, don't try to talk out any problems right now.
 - Take steps to calm down such as going for a walk, writing out your feelings, working in your garden, and taking deep breaths.
- If you are in the **Yellow Zone (4-6)**, be aware that you can quickly move into the **Red Zone (7-10)**, so pay attention and work to stay calm.
- Ideally, we would always talk to each other from the **Green Zone (1-3)** with a prayer on our heart and with the other person's best interest in mind.

Slow to Wrath

- When conflicts occur, pray!
 - Ask for God's help in dealing with your feelings, understanding the other person, and sharing your feelings.
- Anger is often referred to as a secondary emotion because it comes as a result of another issue.
 - When you are angered by something, try to identify which of the following categories likely triggered the anger...



Ephesians 4:26-27
"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil."



Deal With Anger Appropriately

- Deal with anger and hurt proactively. Don't deny it, "stuff" it, or let it turn to bitterness.

Hebrews 12:15
"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."



Forgiveness is Essential

- The ongoing practice of seeking forgiveness and being forgiving is essential to a healthy, Christ-centered relationship.

Ephesians 4:32 *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

1 Peter 3:8-9 *"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."*

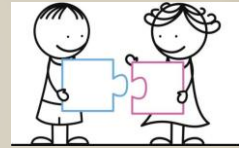
Acceptance & Forbearance

- Accept that you will not agree on everything. Forbearance is an act of love.

Colossians 3:12-14 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

No Magic Formula to Resolving Conflict

- No right answer exists for every situation.
- Match your response to the needs of the situation and the other person.
- Sometimes remaining silent or saying few words is best while other situations will require loving confrontation.
- Mutual Respect is an essential starting point.



For more resources, visit:
www.counseling.org/conflict

5) Avoiding “Silence” or “Violence”

Silence

Withholding information from the pool of shared meaning.

1. **Masking** – sugarcoating; not saying what you really need to.
2. **Avoiding** – staying away from topics, issues, people.
3. **Withdrawing** – pulling out of communication.

Violence

Any action trying to **force** others to take your view.

1. **Controlling** – coercing others to take our perspective.
2. **Labeling** – using labels to dismiss people.
3. **Attacking** – belittling, put downs, etc.

From *Crucial Conversations* by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2002

6) Dealing with Feedback

Questions to ask yourself concerning feedback:

- Am I willing to receive loving feedback from others?
- Am I willing to hold others accountable with loving feedback?
- How do I deliver feedback to others?

Dealing with Feedback: Types of Criticism

Constructive Criticism

- Is specific enough to be clear.
- Is done to help the person grow and improve.
- Points out a need for growth or correction without attacking or demeaning the person.
- Shows belief in the person's ability to grow and improve.
- Holds people accountable for behavior.
- Part of a dialogue. Willing to listen, share, and understand.

Unhealthy Criticism

- Either “microscopic” or “global.”
- Is done to indict or “pin” someone.
- Is personally harsh, a personal attack and/or demeans the person.
- Characterizes the person as failing or a failure.
- Indicts people for not fulfilling the speaker's opinions, requests, and ideals.
- Is a monologue and only allows the other person to speak from a defensive position.

Range of Ways of Take Feedback

Dismissive: These people tend to quickly discount criticism and may overlook what they actually need to consider.

Prudent: These people consider and sort feedback, filtering-in what is wise and helpful and filtering-out what is not.

Over-Personalize: These people too quickly take in criticism and tend to ruminate about the opinions of others.

7) Further Key Communication Tips

- Be Completely Present.
- Use X, Y, Z format.
 - *"In situation X, when Y occurred, I felt Z."*
- Use "I" statements. Avoid "You" Statements.
 - *"I feel disrespected when you criticize my driving."*
 - *"You're never ready to leave on time."*
- Learn the skill of Contrasting.
 - *"I am trying to..." I am not trying to..."*
- Share the Floor when necessary.

Self-Examination Questions

- How well do I communicate?
- Where can I improve my communication skills?



Putting it into Practice: Common Communication Challenges



Keys to Communication

1. Cover with Prayer
2. Seek and Acknowledge Reality
3. Continually Build Safety
4. Seek to Understand the Other / Listen
5. Be Clear and Remain Gentle
6. Remember the Power of Questions



Telling People What You Want

Verbalizing your Thoughts



Telling People What You Want

- We should have the freedom to communicate without walking on eggshells all the time:
 - Keep balance between our Needs and Wants.
 - Keep balance between Demands and Requests.
 - *Example: choice of a restaurant vs. the need to eat*
- When making a request, be clear and direct:
 - Use 'I' Statements, not 'you' statements.
 - Talk about yourself, do not judge the other person.
 - *Example: "I feel neglected when my choices are never considered."*

Telling People What You Want

- Two responses possible when a request is made:
 - 'Yes' → accept this gratefully
 - 'No' →
 - If the request is *not important*, accept this answer & move on.
 - If the request is *important*, then seek dialogue:
 - Reevaluate the importance of the request → Is it a Need or a Want?
 - If it is a 'want', you can be 'sad' but don't force the other person to feel 'bad' (this can lead to bitterness).
 - Seek to understand the reason for the 'no'.
 - Empathize and gently ask again.
 - Highlight the consequences of the 'no' to yourself and/or others.

Cloud & Townsend. (2006) *How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding*

Making Someone Aware of a Problem

Speaking the Truth in Love



Making Someone Aware of a Problem

- We will not address problems in ourselves until we are 'aware' of them.
- We should always assume a person is innocent and doesn't know any better. *I Corinthians 13:6-7*
 - Beware of the Fundamental Attribution Error – *assuming* it is a lack of desire that causes someone to act the way they do.
- Be humble as you approach the situation – (*Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 12:3*)
 - Pray you can see yourself as you really are with all of your strengths and weaknesses (others can help us see our own blind spots).

Cloud & Townsend. (2006) *How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding*

Making Someone Aware of a Problem

1. Empathize.
2. Gauge understanding
 - Do you need to warn or support? (*I Th. 5:14*)
3. Be specific but loving.
4. Teach about the effects on him/her/you/others.
5. Request change:
 - Preserve the person's freedom to choose options when possible.



Cloud & Townsend. (2006) *How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding*

Stopping a Behavior

Confronting Respectfully



Stopping a Behavior

- *Micah 6:8* "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
- It is a good thing to judge rightly:
 - Remember the difference between a commandment and preference.
 - Remember the two real issues at hand: the problem and the person's ability to deal with the problem.
- Be sure to show mercy:
 - Be hard (hate) on the issue/sin, be soft (love) on the person until forced otherwise. (*John 8:1-11*)
- Walk humbly with God.
- *Proverbs 19:11* "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression [revolt]."
 - Know when to confront and when to let go (commandment/preference)
 - Relationships are more important than preferences.

Cloud & Townsend. (2006) *How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding*

Stopping a Behavior

Choose Your Battles Wisely:

- *Proverbs 9:7-8* "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame;...rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."
- Realize possibilities and assess your motives – *what do you really want?*
- *Proverbs 9:8* – the wise man might listen and it goes well.
- *Proverbs 9:7* – the scorner might not listen and it goes poorly.
- You can influence but you can not control the outcome.

Steps of Confrontation:

- Choose the right time & place:
 - Distinguish between preferences/ commandments and vary your approach appropriately.
 - Avoid the line: "we need to talk".
- Affirm the person by speaking the good first.
- Be specific and clear:
 - Start with the end in mind.
 - Keep the issue clear.
- Seek to understand (listen):
 - Speak to feelings but return to the issue.
- Request specific change.
- Be patient/stay in control. (*James 1*)

Cloud & Townsend (2005) How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding

Dealing with Blame and Counterattack

Knowing When to Engage and When to Walk Away



Dealing with Blame and Counterattack

How we resist confrontation:

- Shoot the messenger
- Rationalize
- Minimize
- Blame
- Deny
- Project our problem on others

We should not be surprised by resistance:

- It is part of our sin nature (*Gen. 3*)
- Use grace and love as much as possible while not compromising.
 - These are important for any redemptive conversation.

Cloud & Townsend (2005) How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding

Dealing with Blame and Counterattack

Tips for dealing with Counterattack:

- Gently mention defensiveness in an effort to get back to the issue.
- Humbly examine any contribution you may have on the issue.
- Listen and contain the emotions of others when possible.
 - Think of the example of a mother calming her child's emotions.
 - Handle the situation as an adult, not a child.
- Be honest about the consequences the behavior has on you.
- Admit helplessness and dependency on them to fix the problem.
 - Moves the situation from one of power/debate to one of relationship and helps to create healthy vulnerability.
- Do not make it into a debate. (*Rom. 12:18*)
- Persist and be as patient as possible.
- Have consequences ready if needed but always offer a way back.

Cloud & Townsend (2005) How to Have That Difficult Conversation You've Been Avoiding

Keys to Communication

1. Cover with Prayer
2. Seek and Acknowledge Reality
3. Continually Build Safety
4. Seek to Understand the Other / Listen
5. Be Clear and Remain Gentle
6. Remember the Power of Questions



APPENDICES



Comparison Of Behaviors (Appendix A)

People with Passive Behavior Intent: To Please

- Ignore or do not express their own rights, needs, desires.
- Permit others to infringe on their rights.
- Are emotionally dishonest, indirect, inhibited.
- Allow others to choose for them.

How they feel: hurt, anxious, disappointed in self at the time and possibly angry later.

Outcome: do not achieve desired goal(s)

Payoff: avoid unpleasant and risky situations; avoid conflict, tension, confrontation; do not get needs met; accumulate anger; feel non-valued

People with Passive-Aggressive Behavior Intent: I'll get back at you!

- Expect others to know their needs, desires, and feelings.
- Permit others to infringe on their rights then become angry and want to get even.
- Are emotionally confusing, avoid or distract when put on the spot, get back later, use sarcasm or gallows humor.

How they feel: self-righteous, vindictive, "got ya", and need to justify behavior.

Outcome: achieve desired goal(s), but leave others hurt or uneasy.

Payoff: feel vindicated, smug, or smarter than others; feel others are fools.

People with Aggressive Behavior Intent: I want my own way!

- Express their own rights at expense of others.
- Make inappropriate outbursts or hostile overreaction, with intent to humiliate, to "get even," to put down the other.
- Are emotionally honest, direct, expressive at other's expense.
- Choose for others.

How they feel: angry, then righteous, superior, depreciatory at the time, possibly guilty later.

Outcome: achieve desired goal(s) by hurting others.

Payoff: save up anger, resentment, justify blow-up or emotional outburst, "to get even, get back at".

People with Assertive Behavior Intent: To communicate

- Express and assert own rights, needs, and desires.
- Stand up for legitimate rights in a way that rights of others are not violated.
- Are emotionally honest, direct, expressive.
- Choose for self.

How they feel: confident, self-respecting, feel good with self at the time and later.

Outcome: may achieve desired goal(s).

Payoff: feel good; valued by self and others; feel better about self; improved self-confidence; needs are met; relationships are freer and more honest.

Conflict Styles (Appendix B)

Using the
Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument

Avoiding

- *Mascot* – The Passive Turtle
- *Motto* – “I will stay out of it.”
- *Intent* – To stay out of the conflict and avoid the feelings of tension that conflict brings.
- *Actions* – Unassertive and passive.
- *Results* – “You lose; I lose.”



Accommodating

- *Mascot* – The Lovable Teddy Bear
- *Motto* – “I will give in.”
- *Intent* – To preserve relationships.
- *Actions* – Tries to embrace everyone involved in the conflict.
- *Results* – “You win; I lose.”



Collaborating

- *Mascot* – The Wise Owl
- *Motto* – “Let’s work together for everyone’s good.”
- *Intent* – To achieve a “win” solution for everyone
- *Actions* – Assertive but flexible.
- *Results* – “You win; I win.”



Compromising

- *Mascot* – The Wily Fox
- *Motto* – “I will meet you half way.”
- *Intent* – To give each party some of the winnings as well as some of the losses.
- *Actions* – Negotiation, bargaining, and trading.
- *Results* – “We both win some and lose some.”



Competing

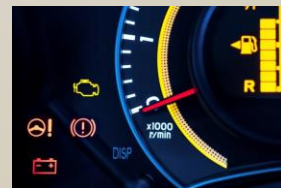
- *Mascot* – The Aggressive Shark
- *Motto* – “I will get my way.”
- *Intent* – To win.
- *Actions* – To be assertive, and if necessary, domineering.
- *Results* – “I win; you lose.”



Signs Of Unhealthy Conflict

(Appendix C)

Warning Lights on the Dashboard



Four Types of Destructive Conflict

1. **Escalation:**

- When individuals, “respond back and forth negatively to each other, continually upping the ante so the conversation gets more and more hostile. In escalation, negative comments spiral into increasing anger and frustration.”

2. **Invalidation:**

- “a pattern in which one individual subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other.”

A Lasting Promise (Stanley, Trathen, McCain, and Bryan, 1998)

Destructive Conflict (Cont'd)

3. **Negative Interpretations:**

- “occur when one individual consistently believes that the motives of the other are more negative than is really the case.”

4. **Withdrawal and Avoidance:**

- occurs when one or both of the individuals, “shows an unwillingness to get into or stay with important discussions.”
- **Withdrawal:** “shutting down” and trying to get out of a conversation.
- **Avoidance:** an attempt to keep the conversation from starting in the first place.

A Lasting Promise (Stanley, Trathen, McCain, and Bryan, 1998)

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

- Another researcher has identified types of conflict that can be so poisonous to marriages that he calls them the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.”
- In fact, the **chronic presence** of the Four Horsemen in a marriage predicts divorce by 82%!

The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work (Gottman and Silver, 1999)

Watch Out For...

1. **Criticism:**

- global negative statements about your spouse’s character or personality.

2. **Contempt:**

- words or gestures that show your spouse you are disgusted and repulsed with him/her.
- sarcasm, cynicism, ridicule, name-calling, rolling eyes etc.

3. **Defensiveness:**

- instead of listening to your spouse’s position and talking through it, defensiveness is blaming your spouse and pointing out flaws in his/her behavior, opinions, etc.

4. **Stonewalling:**

- avoiding your spouse by shutting him or her out and not communicating/giving your spouse the “silent treatment.”

The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work (Gottman and Silver, 1999)

When the Four Horsemen are Present

- When you notice any of the “Four Horsemen” in your conflicts:
 - Take note and try to find ways to resolve the conflict in a Christ-honoring way.
 - Calm down and take time to pray.
 - Calm discussion of the conflict can often resolve it.
 - However, if you find you cannot seem to work through the conflict on your own, don’t hesitate to seek support and guidance from an elder, minister, mentor, or counselor, etc.

Steps Of Good Problem Solving (Appendix D)

Steps of Good Problem Solving

- When you have an issue that isn't solved through communication alone, go through the steps below.
- For minor issues, you can move through the steps fairly quickly.
- For emotionally charged, difficult issues you should move through the steps slowly and deliberately.
- Steps of Good Problem Solving:
 1. Find an appropriate time and setting to discuss the issue. *Ecclesiastes 3:1*
 2. Decide what issue is going to be discussed. Don't switch topics mid-conversation.

Steps of Good Problem Solving cont.

3. Define the problem clearly - from both points of view.
4. State what you can agree on.
5. Brainstorm together for possible solutions.
6. With an attitude of mutual submission, summarize, compromise, and agree upon a plan of action to try.
7. Pray to God for help to take the necessary steps and to make progress.

Listening Skills (Appendix E)

Adapted from "*How to Be a People Helper*"
by Gary Collins

Elements of Listening

1. Prepare to listen.
2. Paraphrase and encourage further sharing.
3. Check your listening attitude.
4. Be aware of both content and delivery.
5. Be aware of your own emotions and reactions.
6. Resist distractions.
7. Listen for themes.
8. Curb your own curiosity.
9. Avoid preaching, lecturing, arguing.
10. Ask appropriate, leading questions.