

## **Creating a Climate of Peace**

Adapted from Peacemaker Ministries materials

Ken Sande. *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991, 1997)

Tara Klena Barthel and Judy Dabler *Peacemaking Women* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005)

Notes from Tara Barthel workshop, Multnomah WM Conference, Portland, OR

Other references: writings of John Maxwell, Jill Briscoe, Daisy Hepburn

Psalm 133:

*Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!*

*It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard,*

*Running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes.*

*It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.*

*For there the Lord bestows his blessing,*

*Even life forevermore*

*When believers are bitterly embroiled in disagreement or coldly estranged from one another, few people will pay attention when we try to talk with them about the reconciling love of Jesus Christ.*      –Ken Sande in *The Peacemaker*

**What is Conflict?**

**What Causes Conflict?**

### **A Systematically Biblical Theology for Conflict Resolution**

*The four G's:*

- G**lorify God
- G**et the Log out of our own eye
- G**ently Restore
- G**o and Be Reconciled

**Glorify God:** *How can I please and honor God in this situation?*

**Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye:** *How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict? (Matt. 7:5)*

- Worldly sorrow brings death; godly sorrow sees sin and involves three steps:
  1. Confession
  2. Restitution
  3. Change

### **The Seven A's of Confession**

- A Address \_\_\_\_\_
- A Avoid \_\_\_\_\_
- A Admit \_\_\_\_\_
- A Apologize \_\_\_\_\_
- A Accept \_\_\_\_\_
- A Alter your \_\_\_\_\_
- A Ask for \_\_\_\_\_

**Gently Restore:** *How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?*

- *As difficult as it is, sometimes we are called to go humbly to the people who have wronged us in order to help them understand how they have contributed to our conflict. Of course, when appropriate, we should be quick to overlook (Prov. 19:11), and we must always first confess our own sins. (Matt. 7:5). But if after we have confessed our own sins we cannot overlook the offense, we are called to help the person who has offended us by gently restoring her (Gal. 6:1) and helping her remove the speck from her eye (Matt. 7:5)*
- Matt. 18:15-20
- The principle is that we should try to keep the circle of people involved in a conflict as small as possible for as long as possible.
- ***Five steps of the Matt. 18 principle:***
  - Step One
  - Step Two
  - Step Three:

- Step Four:
- Step Five:

### **Elements of an Effective Confrontation**

- Pray
- Choose the right time and place.
- Assume that things will be made right.
- Talk in person whenever possible
- Plan your words and anticipate likely responses
- Use a gracious tone of voice and friendly body language
- Be objective (avoid “always, ever, never” and other hyperboles)
- Use the Bible carefully (as a tool of God’s grace, not a weapon!)
- Always hold out the hope of the Gospel!

### **Some good listening skills**

“James 1:19: My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry”

1. Waiting:
2. Attending:
3. Clarifying:
4. Reflecting
5. Agreeing:

**Go and Be Reconciled:** *How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?*

### **The Four Promises of Forgiveness**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Observe:**

- There may still be consequences
- Trust God for a **MIRACLE**; forgiveness is not natural
- Decide not to harbor the “acid” of anger and hurt - *It harms the vessel it is contained in more than the surface it’s poured on....*

**Biblical Negotiation: PAUSE** (for reaching agreement on material issues rather than personal conflict) For a full explanation, see Sande, *The Peacemaker*, pp 225-246

P *Prepare*

A *Affirm* \_\_\_\_\_

U *Understand* \_\_\_\_\_

S *Search for creative* \_\_\_\_\_

E *Evaluate* \_\_\_\_\_

**How do we respond to conflict?** (Evaluating the Slippery Slope diagram)

**Escape Responses**

- Denial –
- Flight -
- Suicide –

**Attack Responses:**

- Litigation –
- Assault –
- Murder –

**Conciliation Responses**

- Overlooking
- Discussion
- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Arbitration
- Church discipline

### Reasons for Church Conflict:

1. Idolatry
2. Defensiveness
3. Core Issues
  - a. Related to deepest *beliefs and convictions*
  - b. Differences in essential view of scripture, *theological truth*
  - c. It is critical that even these are discussed with respect and love.
4. Preferences
5. Looking to a church to meet our felt needs.
6. Failures of people
7. Comparison –
8. Competition
9. Male-female relationships

### Three Principles to Learn About Conflict:

(Gary Fenton, “A Crash Course in Conflict; what your leaders need to know” in *Leadership Journal*, 1996)

1. There is a difference between *concerned disagreement and conflict*
2. There is a difference between *reconciliation and resolution*
3. There is a difference between *being peaceful and being a peacemaker*.

### Developing and Maintaining Peaceful Relationships: (Barthel. P 132 ff)

- Be willing to sacrifice (time, money, energy, emotions) to sustain relationship
- Don't look for repayment
- Develop proper expectations

- Demonstrate commitment and loyalty (Ruth/Naomi)
- Protect your friends (David/Jonathan)
- Accept what is offered with hope for more (Jesus, Simon Peter)
- Work through conflicts
- Breathe grace

### **Dealing With Difficult People** (from Daisy Hepburn, with a few additions)

In women's ministry we work with a wide variety of women of many backgrounds, experiences, talents, personalities: many opportunities for conflict! Here are some that you may have encountered:

- *The kittens* they are content only when they are someone's pet
- The *wheelbarrows* – they are not any good unless pushed.
- The *footballs* – you can never tell which way they're going to bounce
- The *kites* – If you don't keep a strong on them they'll fly away. (lots of talk, little action when pinned down to follow through)
- *The trailers* – they have to be pulled to get anywhere
- The *neon lights* – they're temperamental and fragile
- *The stars* – they have to shine – and everyone must notice. She must lead or not happy.
- *The chronic complainer*. Nothing is ever right with her; meetings are too boring; her spiritual needs aren't being met; it's not like it used to be.
- The *disrespectful* – those who carelessly stomp on the past, who seek change just for change sake. Encourage communication across the generations, and love may grow!

### ***So, when you are criticized – what do you do?***

***From John Maxwell:***

1. Understand the difference between *constructive and destructive* criticism
2. Don't take yourself too *seriously* (but take God very seriously)
3. Look beyond the criticism to see the *critic* (Do you respect her? What is her need?)
4. Guard your *own attitude* toward the critic (Don't get defensive; stay objective)
5. Recognize that *good people get criticized* (Don't beat yourself up).
6. Keep yourself physically and spiritually *in shape* (weariness distorts our perspective.)
7. Don't see only the critic; *see the crowd* (Is this criticism widespread?)
8. Wait for *time* to prove the critic wrong (be mature enough to be patient)
9. Associate with *people of faith* (Spend your optional time with optimists).
10. Concentrate on your mission; change your mistakes (*Focus on the big picture*).

**Be Still, My Soul**      (Ruth's Self-Coaching During Conflict)

1. **Keep your perspective.** Remember, the complainants are a small – though vocal – minority. Don't minimize their potential for damage, but don't blow it out of proportion, either.
2. Surround yourself with **happy, positive people.** There are always some!
3. Remember that **YOU can't change negative people.** Their patterns are probably long-established and more recognized by others than you realize. Maybe something you or others did offended them and some degree of restoration may be possible by peacemaking efforts, but there will always be perennial malcontents for reasons which you cannot change – but God can do miracles. **Make prayer your focus!**
4. **Try not to get paranoid.** Because some are critical and whispering rumors doesn't mean that you need to "walk on egg shells" around everyone. Your spirit will just dry up if you're forever wearing a target on your back.
5. **Laugh a little!** Even when things seem tough, some things are always funny. Laughing at some outrageous behavior helps to take the sting out of it.
6. Remember that **GOD KNOWS all the details.** He knows you've done your best (if you truly have) and His judgments of your labor is what matters in the end. His smile is what it's all about.
7. The future seems dark and uncertain? **Don't let tomorrow's promised cloud shadow the sunshine of today.** Yes, declining years are often sad. There's loneliness, illness, regret, poverty – but it's just a stage before the eventual blaze of heaven's transformation! God will be with you – you'll make it. And worrying about it will only ruin today's joy. Its time will come, and its time will pass.
8. **Take time to play.** What makes you happy? Riding a bike? Sewing new curtains? Painting anything blue? Building a dollhouse or reading a mystery? Picking some flowers and arranging them in an old jug? Calling an old friend? Baking your favorite cookies? Listening to Perry Como ballads? Give yourself a break! Toss the ever-present guilt about being lazy out the door. You can pick it up tomorrow on your way out if you really want to. Everyone around you will benefit from your renewed spirit!
9. It sounds trite to say, but just as day follows night, **better days follow awful ones.** It's the rhythm of life. Horrible depression is seldom sustained except by illness. Yes, the sun comes up in the morning. "Weeping may endure for a night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning!" (Ps. 30:5)