

# COMMUNICATION 101



Apostolic Christian Counseling And Family Services  
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## Outline

Clear Communication

Skills for Difficult Conversations

## Clear Communication

*Proverbs 25:11* "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

## Barriers to Asking for Help



- Believing that asking for what you want is selfish, rude, or shows weakness.
- Past experiences of rejection.
- Feelings of fear and vulnerability.

## Alternatives to Secret Cues?

Option 1 – "I'm always cooking dinner and you never help me with the dishes. You're always just there in the living room on your phone while I do it. Why don't you help me for a change?"

Option 2 – "Um, just maybe, you know, you could help me with the dishes, if you want."

Option 3 – "Do you want to help me with the dishes, or would you rather just sit in the living room on your phone?"

Option 4 – "Can you please help me with the dishes?"

## Components of Healthy Request

**Ephesians 4:15**  
*"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ:"*



## Example

"Honey, I'd love some help with the dishes (*Desire*). I worked hard on making dinner tonight (*Why*) and I'd appreciate it if you helped clean up. Can we do the dishes together now (*When*)? It would really make me feel loved (*Result*)."



## Maintaining Healthy Dialogue

**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."

Skills in this section have been adapted from:  
*Crucial Conversations: Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High* (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012)

## Difficult Conversations

- What are some examples of difficult conversations?
- How do we usually handle difficult conversations?

- Why we handle difficult conversations poorly:
- We are under pressure.
  - We tend to react irrationally.
  - We are caught off guard and don't have time to process.
  - We are overwhelmed.
  - We don't have enough information.
  - We avoid them.

## Start With Heart

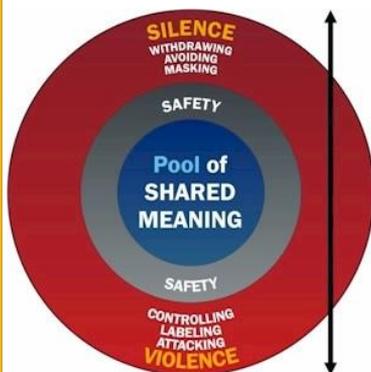
### Questions to ask ourselves:

- What am I behaving like I want?
- What do I really want? For me? For spouse? For the relationship?
- How would I behave if I really did want this?



What is your style under stress?

Silence or Violence?



## Path To Action

SEE / HEAR → TELL A STORY → FEEL → ACT

Spouse says "yes" to event with extended family before talking with you.

My voice does not matter. Our relationship takes back seat to in-laws.

Hurt  
Inferior  
Ignored

Silence  
Cheap shots

## Retrace Your Path

SEE /  
HEAR

What factual  
evidence do I have  
that supports this  
story?

TELL A  
STORY

What story is creating  
these emotions?

FEEL

What emotions  
are making me  
react this way?

ACT

Have I fallen  
out of  
dialogue?

## Master Your Stories

Separate Fact from Story Challenge Clever Stories:



- Victim – “It’s not my fault!”
- Villain – “It’s all your fault!”
- Helpless – “There is nothing else I can do!”

## Tell the Rest of the Story

Turn victims into actors:

- Am I pretending not to notice my role in the problem?

Turn villains into humans:

- Why would a reasonable, rational and decent person do this?

Turn the helpless into the able:

- What do I really want for me? For others? For the relationship?
- What would I do right now if I really wanted these results?

Watch out for the downward spiral...

Do not let emotions or stories run away from you!

*Proverbs 15:14 “The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.”*

## STATE Your Path

**S**hare your facts

**T**ell your story

**A**sk for others’ paths

“What”  
SKILLS

**T**alk tentatively

**E**ncourage testing

“How”  
SKILLS

## STATE Your Path

**S**hare your facts first

- Non-controversial
- Persuasive & least insulting
- “I noticed...”

**T**ell your story

- “Based on the facts, I am beginning to conclude...”
- Don’t pile on or go on and on.
- Watch for safety problems.

**A**sk for other’s paths

- What are their facts/story?
- “What’s your perspective?”



## STATE Your Path

### Talk Tentatively

- "I was wondering..."
- "Perhaps you were unaware..."
- "In my opinion..."
- Don't be overly passive or do the message a disservice.

### Encourage Testing

- Encourage others to challenge you
  - "Do you see it differently?"
  - "What am I missing here?"
- Play devil's advocate
  - "What if I'm wrong here?"

**Proverbs 18:13** "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

## Make it Safe

**Mutual Purpose**  
You believe I care about your goals and vice versa.

**Mutual Respect**  
You believe I care about you as a person and vice versa.

Safe for dialogue

If mutual purpose or respect are at risk, it is no longer "safe" and you are no longer in dialogue!

## Skills to Maintain Mutual Respect and Mutual Purpose

	Clear Problem	Misunderstanding
Mutual Respect	Apologize	Contrast
Mutual Purpose	Create Mutual Purpose	Contrast

## Apologizing and Contrasting

### Apologizing:

- Must be sincere.

### Contrasting:

- A don't/do statement:
  - "I don't mean to question your intentions. I do want to clarify our decision making process."
  - Addresses others' concerns that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose.
  - Confirms your respect or clarifies your real purpose.
- Is not apologizing.
- Provides context and proportion.
- Useful for prevention or first aid.

## When Mutual Purpose does not exist...

Sometimes Mutual Purpose must be created...

- Commit to seek mutual purpose.
- Recognize the purpose behind the strategy.
- Invent mutual purpose.
- Brainstorm new strategies.

## Explore Others' Paths

Seek the truth in spirit of understanding, NOT to disprove others' points of view.

Ask questions and paraphrase, as needed:

• "What I heard you say is...Is that accurate?"

• "I get the feeling..."



**Colossians 4:6**

*“Let your speech always be gracious,  
seasoned with salt, so that you may know  
how you ought to answer each person.”*