

CONFRONTATION PRINCIPLES

Tim Schmoyer (1/17/01)

1. Confrontation is necessary in genuine, truthful relationships. It is a way to help people and relationships grow to maturity.
 - Ephesians 4:15-16: *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*
 - Colossians 4:6: *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*
2. Confrontation is needed when there is an unaddressed or unrecognized problem.
3. Confront when absolute truths are at stake.
 - Galatians 2:11ff: *When Peter came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.*
 - Titus 1:10, 11, 13b: *For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach – and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ...Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.*
 - In both of these passages, men were teaching the old Jewish laws that were no longer in effect. After Jesus' death, the laws changed. Man no longer had to be circumcised or not eat certain foods. Other laws changed also, but these two were hard to drop. Many continued following the laws, though they meant nothing to God. In fact practicing these old laws anger(ed) God because they promoted the idea of gaining redemption through doing good works rather than through accepting God's grace. Therefore, the main beliefs (absolute truths) of Christians were being defiled and needed to be rebuked.
4. When you confront someone in love, you are showing them your love. If you do not confront them it is as if you hate them.
 - Proverbs 27:5 *Open rebuke is better than secret love.*
 - Leviticus 19:17-18: *Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.*
5. Our closest friends are those whom we should be willing and ready to confront, and be confronted by.
 - Mentoring relationships are another good place for confrontation. The Book "As Iron Sharpens Iron" discusses that three types of mentoring relationships are

represented in the Bible and suggest it is good if we have all three. The first is having someone whom you respect and is older than you to help guide you [Sr. High Leader, parent, older and wiser friend]. The second is to have a peer in an accountability relationship. The third is to have someone whom you are willing to mentor [Children's ministry, Jr Higher friend].

- Proverbs 27:17: *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*
- Hebrews 10:24: *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

6. Confront in humility. You are not perfect. Once you confront someone you open the door for yourself to also be confronted. Do not be judgmental!!!

- If you confront in humbleness, not in judgment it looks like...
 - A. "I know I may not be perfect in this area. I am probably not the best person to be mentioning this to you, but I see you doing ____ and so it seems like you may be having problems in the same area.
 - B. Maybe we can help each other out with this and keep each other accountable."

Galatians 6:1: *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

Luke 6:37, 41-43: *Judge not, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

John 8:3-11: (The story of the adulteress that was not stoned.) vs. 7b *"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

7. Do not confront everyone. There are those that would not benefit from confrontation. How do you know who to confront and who not to? ...Pray, ask God!

- Proverbs 9:7-9: *Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.*

8. Stop the confrontation if it does not appear that it will be helpful.

Proverbs 17:14: *Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.*

9. Remember that you cannot change someone. Some people, God calls them fools, will not take the wise advice of a friend.

Proverbs 27:22: *Though you grind a fool in a mortar...you will not remove his folly from him.*

10. Focus on the facts, not on your personal conclusions.²Do not interpret someone's problem for them. Instead, tell them what you observe, and in what way it concerns you.

¹Augsberger, David. (1981) *Caring Enough to Confront* Regal Books: California.

² Lee, Jimmy R. (1995) *Concerned Persons Group: Because We Need Each Other* Turning Point: Chattanooga, TN.

- Example: If a person seems to spend very little time with you even though she claims to be a good friend, you would be better saying, “I notice you have spent a lot of time with Susie and Jane lately, but we haven’t done anything for a few months. Is there anything that you are upset about? I miss spending time with you and I’m not sure why we haven’t been getting together.” That line of questioning will get you much further than jumping to conclusions and saying, “Why don’t you like me any more? We used to be good friends and I don’t know why you hate me so much all of a sudden.”
11. Tell how you are feeling. Use defensive “I feel” statements rather than offensive “you did” statements.
 12. Do not exaggerate with words like “always” and “never”.
 13. Don’t ask pointless, broad questions like, “Why do you do that to me?” or “How does that not bother you?” Usually “why” questions are good to avoid.
 14. Do not label the person or attack her self-esteem. Example: “You are rude.”
 15. Do not label actions as “good” or “bad”.
 16. Identify the problem, but do not tell the person what you think they should do about it unless they ask. Your opinion on some options may be helpful, but give them only if they are asked. In other words, do not give advice where it is not needed. Most people will be able to figure out how to deal with a problem once the problem is identified.
 17. Search for truth, understanding and knowledge in order to be more able to confront in truth.
 - *1 Peter 3:15: But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*
 - *Proverbs 2:1-7, 11: My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out to insight and cry aloud for understanding and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless...Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.*