



Unifying Pastor and People Participant's Handout



The purpose of this module is to:

Develop effective skills for building good relationships so pastor and people can deal with issues of church life.

Objective:

- Understand the difference between the process of relationship and the substance of relationships;
- Identify five principles for being “unconditionally constructive”;
- Identify techniques for developing “unconditionally constructive relationships.”

I. Introduction

- A. Whether we are young or old, rich or poor, church members or pastors, we all have relationships that are important to us.
- B. It is through our relationships with others that we work and play, _____ a living, build a family, cope with problems, enjoy life, and build the Kingdom of God.
- C. It is not just infants who _____ on others. We all do!
- D. Our world does not start fresh every morning. Each day we _____ with people we have met before and will meet again. We...
1. _____ to the landlord
 2. _____ to the boss
 3. _____ customers or students
 4. _____ a family quarrel
 5. _____ a friend
- E. In almost every case, the fact that the relationship is continuing _____ the outcome of the encounter. Without our ongoing relationships, we would have no family, no friends, no business associates, no employees, no supervisors, no government, and no one to meet us for lunch.
- F. In the church, a new pastor does not mean a new beginning. He or she _____ with him/her the life experiences which make him/her unique.
- G. And the church has a life history as well. The “good pastors” and the weak ones have _____ our expectations and our ability to build this new relationship.
- H. Some relationships _____ better than others. We all know people with whom we are :
1. Comfortable
 2. Secure
 3. Able to talk through a problem
 4. Frustrated
 5. Mistrustful
- I. We rarely _____ why some relationships work well and others don't.
- J. We tend to _____ the quality of the relationship as inevitable: “That's the way it is. We just don't get along.”
- K. We may _____ the problems on the other person and assume there is little we can do to

improve the way we interact. But while it takes at least two to have a relationship, it takes only one person to change the quality of that relationship.

1. Just as we _____ to others, they react to us.
2. By _____ our behavior, we will change the way they react.
3. There are circumstances which are beyond our control.
4. There are even limits on the extent to which we can control ourselves.
5. But we do _____ choices. WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

L. Here are some questions that reveal hidden assumptions:

1. What is the best way to _____ a disagreement? Should I give in or sweep a problem under the rug?
2. Assumption: Avoiding disagreement is a good goal for a relationship.
3. Should I _____ the relationship to get what I want or should I sacrifice my interests for the sake of the relationship?
4. Assumption: There is a tradeoff between substantive interests and a good relationship.
5. Should I _____ the first step to improve the relationship hoping the other person(s) will reciprocate or should I wait and see what he or she does and respond accordingly? Assumption: Reciprocity of some kind is a good guideline for how to treat people.

M. In this session, we want to look for better assumptions, better choices, and better answers.

N. Within the church, the majority of our interests are shared.

1. Pastor and people alike have a _____ sense of the will of God for the salvation of a lost world.
2. Both have a desire to be _____ and efficient in the task.
3. Yet, conflict still _____ and misunderstanding hinders the progress we all feel calling us.

O. Relationship is more than the skill of negotiation.

1. The outcome of our unity is a worthy goal and we can _____ through problems to achieve that goal.
2. But unless and until we _____ relationships, we will keep repeating the same mistakes and failures.

P. So what do we mean when we say a "good" relationship?

1. What each of us _____ from a relationship varies greatly.
2. The differences, which are bound to arise, bring conflict.
3. We have different perceptions and values and must learn to _____ those differences effectively.

II. Guiding Principles

A. In each relationship within the church, there are guiding principles which will help us:

1. Every relationship and every encounter is to be _____ as a redemptive encounter and relationship.
 - a. Redemption is a two-way street.
 - b. We _____ and the other(s) benefit as well.
 - c. Everyone _____ redemptively!

2. In each relationship, whether between individuals, boards, staff, or group (paid or volunteer), we should _____ to establish and maintain those qualities that will make it a good “working” relationship.
 - a. A good working relationship is one that is able to _____ well with differences.
 - b. We must _____ the people from the problem.
 - c. We must be unconditionally constructive.
 - d. It is vital we _____ our ways of dealing with each other independent of all substantive issues and differences. The substantive issues are things like:
 1. Money
 2. Dates & Times
 3. Property
 4. Terms & Conditions
 5. Who, What, Where, When, How, Why?

III. Process of a Relationship—How we deal with each other

- A. On the premise that a valuable goal is a good “working” relationship and that relationship issues can be separated from substantive issues, we will _____ a strategy for building a good, working, problem-solving relationship.
 1. This method does not _____ on others following our advice or on our having to follow their advice.
 2. But the advice of one and all is to be “unconditionally constructive.”
 3. That means that in a relationship only what is good for both the relationship and good for the individual are to be embraced.
- B. Each relationship between pastor and people is unique. But the basic principles that make it possible for any relationship to deal easily and well with differences are not unique. They are parallel.
 1. The goal: a relationship that can deal well with the issues of church life.
 2. What we _____ and what we need in a relationship are often unclear.
 3. Our assumptions about relationships are often inconsistent with the kind of relationship Christ _____ to accomplish His will in the church. These inconsistencies lead to confusion about our objective.
- C. We use the words “relations” and “relationship” in many ways:
 1. Those to whom we are related by blood or marriage;
 2. The diplomatic exchange between countries;
 3. A couple relationship may mean living together;
 4. A couple relationship may mean the healthy Christian family;
 5. A business relationship exists between client and business person.
- D. There are “good” relationships and relationships which are not so good. And we often have no practical way of _____ what we expect and want from a good relationship.
- E. Sometimes we _____ good relations with approval.
 1. In fact, one of the ways we express strong disapproval of what is happening in our relationship is

- to _____ the relationship.
2. A pastor will often be more open to a call to another church when relations are difficult or strained, but _____ disapproval by terminating a relationship is rarely, if ever, a good idea.
 3. Refusing to deal with someone will rarely solve an immediate problem. It will almost certainly _____ our ability to solve future problems.
 4. If I know circumstances will _____ my ongoing interaction with another person or group, whether in a Sunday School class, a committee, or in advancing of the Kingdom of God, then I should continue to deal with them even if I disapprove of their conduct.
- F. Unfortunately, one of the sociological characteristics of a holiness church is an unwritten goal of _____ disagreement.
1. You remember that verse: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14, KJV).
 2. We have learned well the lesson taught us as children: “It is naughty to quarrel—and the sin of disagreement will keep us from getting into heaven.”
 3. So holiness people _____ small differences under the rug and feel very uncomfortable when conflict arises.
 4. But a study of Scripture _____ that godly people have learned to talk through their differences and find the strength that comes from diversity.
- G. A good relationship between pastor and people will _____ inner peace for everyone and will also bring about the substantive outcomes that Christ has set before us.
1. When we _____ to work together effectively, we will give up the fantasy world of a church without differences, where everyone agrees on everything, and will build a secure future through the unique gifts of all those who worship with us.
 2. _____ this goal is vital in the Kingdom of God.
- H. Our goal is to _____ together the God-given giftedness of every believer who God brought together. But knowing the goal is not enough.
- I. Let’s briefly examine the process of interaction between the pastor and people. The strategy cannot begin until we separate the issues of process from issues of substance.

IV. Process vs. Substance

- A. In every situation, we have two kinds of concerns:
1. The way we handle the situation= _____.
 2. The results= _____.
- B. To get really good Christian results in our relationships within the church, we need to _____ on both the results themselves and the kind of process God has designed to yield those results.
1. We need to _____ ourselves what a well-managed Christian relationship looks like and how we can develop that kind of relationship between all the constituents of the church.
 2. In our relationships within the church, each of us is a joint manager of the process—a manager with significant (even if limited) ability to _____ the relationship and determine how it functions.

- a. Like a production manager in a factory, we need to think about how we deal with victories as well as problems.
 - b. And we need to _____ the process from the substance.
- C. God _____ every relationship of His children to be redemptive in nature.
 - 1. We are to _____ every situation in ways that will assure salvation—and wholeness in Christ—to ourselves and to all who are part of that relationship.
 - a. Every conversation;
 - b. Every board discussion;
 - c. Every telephone call;
 - d. Every opportunity to work together on a project;
 - e. And the list is unending...
 - 2. We are _____ to focus on the result and neglect how we get there, but Christ wills us to focus on how we get there and leave the results to Him.
- D. “They will know we are Christians by our love,” the song says. But too often we are identified by other things and the quality of God’s love in us is overlooked.
 - 1. We must _____ relationship goals and substance goals independently.
 - 2. The relationship goals must come first!
 - 3. We must not make our relationship contingent on agreement!
 - 4. Nor must we ever try to _____ a better relationship.

V. Be Unconditionally Constructive!

- A. Most of the time, we _____ our relationships within the Kingdom of God without following any conscious strategy—specific rules of conduct or guidelines that will enhance the relationship.
- B. We simply _____ to what others do. Or emotions may dominate logic and keep us from pursuing any strategy we may have had in place.
- C. Sometimes we have a _____ strategy—a theory of how to have better relationships between pastor and people—without realizing it is not the best one. It is not the one designed in the Word of God.
- D. At a minimum, God has _____ before us two common mistakes made within Christian communities. We should avoid them!
 - 1. We often ignore partisan _____.
 - a. We forget how differently people can see things.
 - b. The way we see things tends to protect our own interests first.
 - c. The facts we know are those closest to us.
 - 2. We often rely on _____.
 - a. We try to build a relationship by expecting others to follow our lead or by following theirs.
 - b. We sometimes compromise what we truly believe rather than effectively discuss the issues.
 - c. We must learn to show mutual respect for the differences.
 - d. Two people will deal more skillfully with their differences if both:

1. Behave _____;
2. Fully understand each other's _____;
3. _____ effectively;
4. Are _____;
5. Do not try to _____ the other;
6. Accepts the other as someone whose interests and views _____ to be taken into account.

e. The Golden Rule is our guide in helping us understand how our behavior is likely to affect us and others.

1. But the Golden Rule is not based on the premise that if I behave as you would like, I can safely predict you will behave the same way.
2. I cannot assume that if I avoid criticizing you in public, you will avoid criticizing me in public.

f. Some avoid the risk of expecting reciprocity by letting the other person(s) take the lead.

1. If and when you treat me well, I will treat you the same way.
2. In the meantime, I will do whatever you are doing to me.
3. However, the biblical principle is not "an eye for an eye."

E. Five principles form a strategy of being unconditionally constructive:

1. We must deal _____ of either agreement or disagreement. (We must deal independently of _____ -- our goal is not to have others give in to us.)
2. We must deal independently of _____. (The value of our life together in Christ is that we _____ not everyone sees things in the same way and we respect the rightness of their insight even though it differs from ours.)
3. We must deal independently of _____.
4. We must deal independently of permanent "_____." (Do only those things that are both good for the congregation and for the person.)

F. Characteristics of unconditionally constructive relationships:

1. _____: Even if they are acting emotionally, balance emotions with reason.
2. _____: Even if they misunderstand us, try to understand them.
3. _____: Even if they are not listening, consult them before deciding on matters that affect them.
4. _____: Even if they are trying to deceive us, neither trust them nor deceive them. Be reliable.
5. _____: Even if they are trying to coerce us, neither yield to that coercion nor try to coerce them. Be open to persuasion and try to persuade them.
6. _____: Even if they reject us and our concerns as unworthy of their consideration, accept them as worthy of our consideration, care about them, and be open to learning from them.
7. _____: We are Christians and we are to allow Jesus Christ to live out His life with us!