



# 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!