

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Are You Making Things Better or Worse?

Proverbs 16:27-30 and Matthew 5:6-10

Option 1: The Troublemaker Approach

Proverbs 16:27-30 (KJV) ²⁷ An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire. ²⁸ A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends. ²⁹ A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good. ³⁰ He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.

- In a conflict, you can choose to *troublemaker* or the *peacemaker approach*
 - Unfortunately, we sometimes choose to the troublemaker approach
 - A troublemaker in a conflict works against the idea of resolution of the conflict, they want to keep the conflict going and make it worse
1. **Troublemakers dig up evil by their actions and their words *27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.***
 - Instead of trying to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the troublemaker is *digging up evil*
 - Troublemakers work to find or dig up dirt on others to make them look better, or appear to be “right”
 - Troublemakers don’t use their words *to extinguish* the conflict, they use their words *to accelerate* the conflict
 - Their words are a destructive like fire
 - Troublemakers will use lies, rumors, and even suggestions to keep the conflict going **James 3:5-6 (KJV) 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.**
 - The troublemaker’s objective is not just to “start” a fire, but to “*fan the flames*” to make the fire spread
 - How can there be a resolution of conflict if we continue to dig up dirt on others or make things worse with inflammatory words?
2. **Troublemakers spread gossip and cause division *28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.***
 - The “froward man” or troublemaker plants seeds of strife
 - Where there is conflict and strife, there is a troublemaker sowing the seeds of strife
 - The troublemaker is working to plant seeds of strife that *grow* into conflicts between people
 - The troublemaker works to drive a wedge between people; people that were once friends, but the seeds of strife have made them enemies
 - One of the ways the troublemaker divides people is through gossip, “...*the whisperer separateth chief friends*”
 - How many close friendships have been destroyed by gossip?
 - God Himself hates those who sow discord **Proverbs 6:16-19 (KJV) 16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17**

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A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

- How can a conflict be resolved if knowledge of the conflict is spread through lies and gossip?
- 3. ***The troublemaker recruits others to join in*** ²⁹ ***A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.***
 - It's bad enough being a troublemaker, but they make a bad situation worse by recruiting others to "take sides"
 - They influence others by using lies, rumors, and gossip
 - How can a conflict be resolved if there are people leading others away from the truth and away from reconciliation?
- 4. ***The troublemaker is always planning more trouble*** **30** ***He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.***
 - A troublemaker designs plans for the strife, the conflict between people to continue
 - A troublemaker is not really interested in resolving conflict, restoring relationships or peace
 - How can a conflict be resolved if people continue bringing up things that are not helpful?
- It's obvious the objective of a troublemaker is not *peace*, it's winning, it's having the last word, it's stubbornly holding a position, even if it's wrong, it's getting people on your side
- The troublemaker approach to conflict resolution can result in broken relationships, wounded feelings and an increase in the conflict
- How can a conflict be resolved if we continue to stir up strife?

Option 2: The Peacemaker Approach

Matthew 5:6-10 (KJV) 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- The other option in dealing with conflict is the *peacemaker* approach
- A peacemaker is someone who actively seeks to create harmony, resolve conflicts, and restore relationships using biblical principles
- **Matthew 5:6 (KJV) 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**
 - In a world filled with injustice, peacemakers have a deep desire for righteousness, justice and fairness
 - When faced with conflicts, we must strive to do what right, fair and just to ensure everyone is treated fairly

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- **Peacemakers show mercy to others 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**
 - Mercy is compassionate treatment of those in distress, showing kindness and forgiveness to those who deserve punishment
 - In Genesis 45, Joseph showed mercy to his brothers by blessing them in the famine and by forgiving them for selling him into slavery
 - We show mercy by being compassionate and forgiving those who have wronged us
 - The attitude of mercy can break the thoughts of revenge and retaliation and bring about reconciliation
- **8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**
 - Being pure in heart in resolving conflict means you are free of selfish motives and deceit
 - When we approach conflicts with a pure heart, it helps build trust and leads to effective resolutions of conflicts
- **9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**
 - A peacemaker is a person who works to bring people together; solve disputes and conflicts; reconciles differences and eliminates strife
 - To be a peacemaker we must first have peace **with God *Romans 5:1 (KJV) 1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***
 - To have peace with God; it means we have by faith accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior
 - A peacemaker is a *bridge builder*
 - A bridge builder in conflict resolution is someone who creates connections between conflicting parties
- The peacemaker seeks opportunities to make peace *within others* ***Romans 14:19 (KJV) 19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.***
 - The peacemaker work to help others find peace with God; to end their inner struggles
 - seeks opportunities to make peace *between others*
 - The peacemaker works to solve disputes, heal divisions, reconcile differences and eliminate strife
- The peacemaker knows the difference between *peace* and “a truce”
 - A truce is a temporary halting of hostilities, but there is no resolution of the underlying issues
 - Peace is entirely different, it is a *complete resolution* of the conflict that restores relationships and addresses the underlying issues that causes the conflict
 - Why settle for a “truce” when peace is available?
- The peacemaker will bring about peace *through* peaceful means
 - The peacemaker will use *calm* ***Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath...***

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- The peacemaker will use *wisdom Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright:...*
- The peacemaker will speak with *grace Colossians 4:6 (KJV) 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*
- The peacemaker is not evil in word or deed *Psalm 34:13 (KJV) 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*
- **10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
 - Peacemakers are willing to stand up for what's right even when faced with opposition
 - The peacemaker loves peace, but is not afraid to face trouble
 - Peacemakers love peace, but they are not passive
 - They do not run from trouble or remove themselves from trouble or evade the issues
 - When you stand firm in the face of opposition, your firm stand can inspire others and bring about lasting peace

Steps to Being a Peacemaker

- **Seek to understand both sides James 1:19 (NLT) 19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.**
 - When dealing with conflict, we must have a listening ear to carefully listen to all parties feel heard and understood
- **Address the issue directly and in a loving manner Matthew 18:15 (NLT) 15 "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.**
 - In dealing with conflict, we must approach people privately and lovingly aiming for reconciliation instead of confrontation
- **Encourage forgiveness and reconciliation Colossians 3:13 (NLT) 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.**
 - In resolving conflicts, we must facilitate conversations where forgiveness can be offered and received, opening the way for reconciliation
- **Promote honest communication Ephesians 4:25 (NLT) 25 So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.**
 - When working to resolve conflict, it is important for both parties to express their feelings and perspectives honestly which promotes an environment of transparency
- **Seek a mutually beneficial resolution Romans 12:18 (NLT) 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.**
 - When resolving conflict work toward a resolution that respects the interest of both parties, that will promote long-term peace and cooperation