



Where we are going and where we have been.

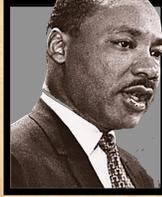
1. Character and Christianity
2. Character and the image of God
3. Character and the Body of Christ
4. **Challenges that shape and show character.**
 1. Vision - direction & expectations
 2. Fear - faith
 3. Relationships - community
 4. **Conflict - differences**
 5. Change - growth
 6. Success & Failure - stress
 7. Private life - the heart

Red Skelton



"I don't hate my enemies. After all, I made 'em."

Martin Luther King Jr.



"Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

Persons of Godly character discern the difference between:

- peacemakers, pacifism, and empathy fatigue.
- necessary & unnecessary conflict.
- **conflict and combat.**

Max Lucado



"conflict is inevitable, but combat is not."

Insight #1

Conflict provides a unique opportunity to develop and demonstrate Godly wisdom, creativity and character.

2 Peter 3:8-9

“to sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; **not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead**; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”

Being treated unjustly is the context of a call to display Godly virtues.



Virtue	Context
Faith	Fear
Hope	Failure
Love	Abuse
Courag	Disappointmen
Grace	Injustice



Peter - before Pentecost

slow to listen, quick to speak, and quick to anger.

Peter - after Pentecost

1 Peter 4

“¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you **share the sufferings of Christ**, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”

Paul - before conversion

slow to listen, quick to speak, and quick to anger.

Paul - after his conversion

Philippians 3:10

“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and **the fellowship of His sufferings**, being conformed to His death;”

Rule of engagement #1

Seize the moment not just to win or even resolve conflict but to respond in a Godly way.

The leader's first responsibility in conflict is to model how to respond to conflict.

Most of the decisions we make will not be as important as the quality of our relationships in making them.

Don't confuse Goals with Wants.

- ✓ **Set goals only for issues we can control.**
- ✓ **When we confuse wants with goals we tend to be anxious and manipulative.**
- ✓ **Pray for wants, work for goals.**

“My desire (want) is to have you agree with me. My goal is to really hear you out, present my case lovingly, and respectfully and work with our decision.”

Insight #2

When we are committed to love each other we tend to be patient and depersonalize conflicts.

Martin Luther King Jr.



“Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend”

Nelson Mandela



“If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy, then he becomes your partner.”

We do not mistreat those we love.

1 Corinthians 13

“⁴ Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

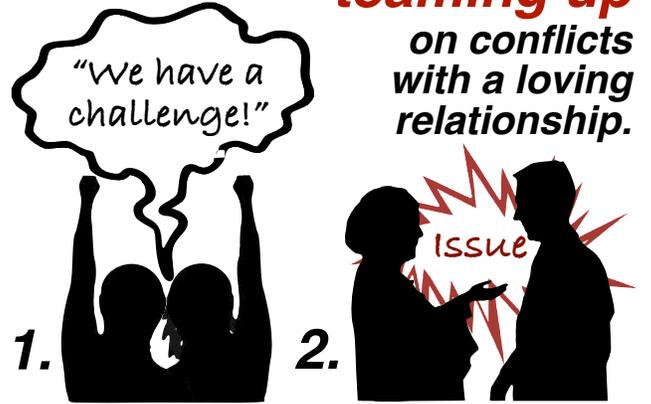
This is not us but Christ in us.

When the issue is “you” or “me” there will be winners and losers but no love or peacemaking.



Peacemaking means **teaming up**

on conflicts with a loving relationship.



Levels of spoken communication

“Shooting the breeze”

“Giving advice”

“Drawing out”

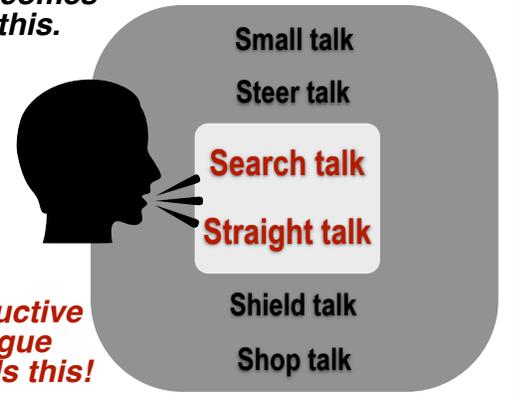
“Revealing the heart”

“Keeping at bay”

“Sharing interests”



Peacemaking seldom comes from this.



Constructive dialogue demands this!

How should I respond to the “bad” ideas of others?



Yes if.



No because.

Rule of engagement #2

Take your baptism seriously.

It's no longer all about you or me.



Insight #3

Dealing with
the fear and anger
in ourselves and others

**is dealing with
the conflict.**

**Those who demand
justice for
themselves are
poor peacemakers.**

Matthew 18:21-35

**Peacemakers will, like Jesus,
bear a cross.**

- They must at times absorb a personal loss.
- They must be willing to manage pain in themselves and in others.
- In a conflict, the peacemaker may be seen as an enemy to both sides.
- They must at times be willing to accept failure and not succeed in making peace.

Rule of engagement #3

Attend (listen)
Appreciate (value)
Affirm (connect)
Argue (reason)

James 1:19

“Be quick to hear,
slow to speak,
and slow to wrath.”

**Slow down
and listen!**

**Peace
makers**

**Peace
breakers**

*“I am sorry, I did not
listen well.”*

*“You are not
listening to me!”*

*“I am sorry, I spoke
too soon.”*

*“You are not giving me
a chance to speak!”*

*“I am sorry, I rushed
to judgment.”*

*“You are
(the, my, a) problem!”*



Others are:

worriers
narrow minded
hot tempered
wishy-washy
stuck up



I am:

concerned
principled
intense
flexible
discriminating

Insight #4

**Peacemaking
is not always
successful.**

Peacemakers may have to agree to disagree but remain one in Christ.

Acts 15:39

“And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.”

Paul later mentions Barnabas (1 Cor.9:6) and John Mark (Col.4:10) in favorable ways.

Rule of engagement #4

We may not agree on the issues, but we can agree to disagree civilly.

C.S. Lewis



“God can’t give us peace and happiness apart from Himself because there is no such thing.”

Vance Havner



“The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps - we must step up the stairs.”