

Peacefakers, Peacebreakers, and Peacemakers

Pt. 4, Look also to the Interests of Others

Introduction (8-10 min.)

After breaking up in groups, read and discuss the situation involving the Johnsons and Smiths.

- What are some ways the Johnsons could handle the situation?
- How could the Johnsons look to the interests of the Smiths as they navigate the conflict?
- How could the Smiths look to the interests of the Johnsons?
- When was a time you faced a conflict like this? (*Obviously, it doesn't have to involve dogs!*)

Group Discussion (35 min.)

The Slippery Slope of Conflict. So far, most of our discussion has focused on resolving personal issues or offenses that arise during a conflict. Sometimes resolving conflict as a peacemaker requires negotiation, mediation, or arbitration.

This often occurs when there are disagreements about the situation or it involves material issues. E.g.,

- Two friends disagree on the cost of repairing a property
- Neighbors may differ on whether a fence needs to be replaced and who bears the cost
- Settling disputes over a will, inheritance, etc.
- Coworkers who aren't doing their job adequately on a project, so you pick up their slack

Cooperative vs. Competitive Negotiation

Often when material issues arise, people automatically resort to a competitive style of negotiation – this usually ends in a tug-of-war. A positive of Competitive Negotiation is that people say exactly what they feel like saying and they leave feeling like they got everything off their chests.

Here are a few negatives from Competitive Negotiation:

1. It may not produce the best solution to a problem, because people are more likely to focus on surface issues and neglect root issues. It assumes that for one side to get more, the other must get less.
2. It can consume much time and generate much frustration, since it involves successive compromises and concessions.
3. It can damage personal relationships, since it tends to be self-centered and send the message that relational matters are unimportant.
4. It usually leads to overt intimidation, manipulation, and/or personal attacks.

Cooperative Negotiation, however, reduces these tensions, since it emphasizes working *with* our opponents rather than *against* them.

Ken Sande: *“In cooperative negotiation... a solution beneficial to all is sought, underlying concerns and needs are addressed, complete solutions are pursued, less time and energy is wasted on defensive posturing, and more attention is paid to personal concern, thus preserving or even improving relationship.”*

Being concerned for others doesn't mean we meet all their demands or become door-mats. We're still responsible for our interests, and we're called to be prudent and wise. The way of the cross shapes us to see others' needs as more important than our own.

Phil. 2:3-4 – *Do nothing from selfish ambition or van conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

The PAUSE Process

1. **P**repare

- a. *Pray.* As God for humility, discernment, and wisdom.
- b. *Get the Facts.* Read relevant documents carefully. Talk with key witnesses. Conduct necessary research.
- c. *Identify issues and interests.* Try to discern the real cause of the conflict/disagreement. Carefully list the issues involved. List your interests as well as theirs, as you understand them.
- d. *Study the Bible.* Clearly identify biblical principles involved and how to apply them.
- e. *Develop options.* Brainstorm so you can propose a few reasonable solutions. Prepare to show how each can benefit your opponent.
- f. *Anticipate reactions.* Consider how your opponent may respond. Develop a response plan to each reaction.
- g. *Plan an alternative to a negotiated agreement.* In advance, decide what you will do if the negotiations do not succeed.
- h. *Select an appropriate place and time to talk.* Consider your opponents possible preferences.
- i. *Plan your opening remarks.* In particular, plan how to set a positive tone and how to encourage your opponent to open mindedly enter the discussions.
- j. *Seek counsel.* If you have doubts about how to proceed, talk with people who can give you wise advice.

Ken Sande: *“This may seem like a lot of work; it is. But you can either put your time into grumbling about a problem or put that time into carefully negotiating with others. The sooner you devote your time to planning a solution to the problem, the less time you’ll spend stewing over it.”*

***What’s encouraging about this? What’s challenging about it?**

2. **A**ffirm Relationship

A Key to effective negotiation is to continually affirm your respect and concern for your opponent.

- a. *Communicate in a courteous manner.* Listen to what others say. Use words or sentences such as, “Please”, “May I explain...” “I don’t think I explained my reasons clearly.”
- b. *Spend time on personal issues.* Try to understand your opponents’ personal concerns instead of moving directly to material issues.
- c. *Earnestly seek to understand.* Pay attention to what others think and feel. Ask sincere questions. Discuss their perceptions.
- d. *Give praise and thanks.* When someone makes a valid point or a gracious gesture, acknowledge it or express your appreciation for it.

Ken Sande: *“Even if at the end of your negotiation process you’re not totally satisfied with the agreement, affirm your relationship with the other person.”* ***When was a time you did this?**

3. **U**nderstand Interests

Interests differ from issues or positions. An **issue** is an identifiable and concrete question to be addressed in order to reach an agreement. *E.g., Is it right for you to park in front of my house?* A **position** is a desired outcome or a definable perspective on an issue. *E.g., I can park wherever I want!*

An interest is what motivates people – a concern, desire, need, limitation, or something valued. Interests provide the basis for positions. *E.g., Your car blocks my view as I back out of my driveway. Last week I nearly ran over your daughter on her bicycle.*

1 Sam. 25:1-44 – Nabal, Abigail, and David

4. **S**earch for creative solutions

Seek solutions that will satisfy as many interests as possible. Encourage imagination and creativity. The best solution may involve combining several options.

Try to “expand the pie” by bringing in additional interests that could be satisfied as part of your agreement so everyone can benefit more. (E.g., Smith and Johnsons – Offering to help move kennel and plant Trees).

Ken Sande: *“As you focus on solutions that seem wise to you, explain how these solutions benefit your opponent. By focusing on shared interests and developing options that benefit everyone, you create incentives for parties to agree on more difficult points of contention.”*

5. **E**valuate options objectively and reasonably

As you evaluate the different options and solutions, there will likely be disagreement. Try to be as objective as possible when you express your opinion. Introduce facts, rules and regulations, or professional reports, or seek respected advice.

Besides the above, try to discern the hidden reasons behind objections.

Ken Sande: *“To avoid misunderstandings, try to put in writing any agreement reached. Include what issues were involved, actions to take, who is responsible for what, deadline dates, and how results will be evaluated.”*