

Conflict Transformation – A simplified approach

[Remember, as a facilitator / peacemaker, you are the point of security for both parties]

Outline

- **Explain the ground rules for ‘face to face’ meetings (see below)**

Ask both parties by name - “Do you agree to this?”

Ask each party in turn - “Will you tell me briefly what you feel the difficulty is and how you feel about it”. Both parties should be instructed to direct their comments initially to the facilitator – not to the other person.

(The facilitator seeks to understand if the presenting issue is the real issue – or is it just a symptom of a bigger relationship breakdown? Remind both parties not to interrupt. Should people interrupt or become emotional then the facilitator will intervene and restore order, even calling a brief moment of silence for reflection.)

Party A speaks - no comment from the facilitator, except for thanking them for their honesty

Party B speaks - not to answer the points of party A but to tell their own story

The facilitator should recap briefly both perspectives

Party A is given the opportunity to clarify any points

Party B is given the opportunity to clarify any points

Ask each person the question ‘What is the most important thing you have heard in the other’s story?’

Ask each party to express how they feel having heard the other person speak - not just the words of the story but the feelings and emotions behind it.

The facilitator asks both parties what on reflection they might have done differently to bring justice and peace to the relationship – and what might be done now to bring healing and reconciliation.

Each party should be prepared to admit where their conduct could be viewed as unhelpful and ask for the forgiveness of the other where this was so.

Leader’s comments - this is for the facilitator to present the relationship dispassionately and then outline the common elements of the difficulty, seeking to define the way ahead within Biblical principles.

Solutions and reconciliation: ask both parties what they themselves could now do to be reconciled with the other.

Ground rules for face to face meetings

- Everyone here is unique, precious, and loved by God
- Our goal is to find a godly solution that will strengthen and transform the relationship that has been damaged.
- We will treat one another with respect and honour

- We have not come to apportion blame or to solve a problem but to transform the situation, allowing you either to continue in relationship or to part amicably
- We will not interrupt each other
- We will not make inflammatory comments/remarks (“She did this, you said that”. Instead of using phrases like ‘you did ...’ we will say how we felt.)
- We will not use negative body language, anger or tears to get our point across (raised hands, pointing, raised voices)
- We are committed to telling the truth and being honest about our feelings
- We are prepared to admit where we have been wrong and ask forgiveness for any hurt caused even if our actions were unintentional
- We will be open to input from godly counsel which applies the scriptures to this situation, and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit
- As a peacemaker, I will gently challenge if at any time these arrangements are lost sight of or forgotten.