

Care-Fronting

(Notes from WANDAALGER.ME, Based on "Caring Enough to Confront" by David Augsburger)

Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment. A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. (Proverbs 18:1-2, ESV).

1] How do you view conflict?

- a. **A given:** It is a fixed matter of fate; therefore, it is to be avoided at all costs!
 - b. **Crushing:** Conflict will crush me therefore I'll give in to alleviate pain.
 - c. **Inevitable issue of right and wrong:** It's obvious who's wrong – you are!
 - d. **Mutual difference:** Let's just compromise so we'll both be happy (and I'll keep score)!
 - e. **Natural, neutral & normal:** We have some honest differences but we can work through it.
- ~ *If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame (Proverbs 18:13, ESV).*

2] How do you resolve conflict?

- a. **"I'll get you!"** I win, you lose. It's the principle that matters (not the relationship)!
 - b. **"I'll get out"** It's hopeless, you'll never change – I'll just leave now to keep the peace.
 - c. **"I'll give in"** I'll yield so I can still be your friend.
 - d. **"I'll meet you half way"** Let's compromise (and settle for 2 half-truths).
 - e. **"I care enough to confront"** I want relationship but I also want honest integrity.
- ~ *He that is a friend loveth at all times: and a brother is proved in distress (Proverbs 17:17, Douay-Rheims).*

3] Communication tips when in conflict:

- a. When you listen to others, be aware of 2 strong tendencies – to read IN (my interpretations) or to read OUT (don't listen to what they're saying out of fear of rejection.)
 - b. When you speak to others speak simply and to the point.
 - c. Speak for yourself – "I feel", "I think", instead of "People feel" or "They say".
 - d. Be totally honest, not selective.
 - e. Don't try to second-guess others' feeling.
 - f. Share observations not (usually) one-sided conclusions.
- ~ *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid (Proverbs 12:1, NIV).*

4] "Leading" questions that put others on the defense:

- a. The leading question: "Don't you feel that..." Simply ask what they want or mean.
- b. The punishing question: "Why did you say that?" Puts people on the defense.
- c. The demanding question: "When are you going to do something about...!"
- d. The dreaming question: "If you were in charge here, what..." Work in the here and now.
- e. The needling question: "What are you waiting for!"
- f. Setting-up question: "Didn't you once say...?" Ask about the here and now.

Point: Don't ask "why" questions, but "what" and "how". "Why" questions evaluate and judge. "What" or "how" questions deal with what is wanted.

Confrontation can be healthy and lead to stronger and deeper relationships. It can be an invitation to change and growth. When we focus on the person (with whom we have conflict) and approach them with God's love, we can get past the behavior that has caused the conflict. God's love can be manifested in even the most hurtful situations if we focus on what is helpful to the other person – not just what we feel we are owed. When the other person's safety and security are as important to us as our own, then "care-fronting" will take place and healing and restoration can follow. By allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us through the process we will probably end up surprised that the mountain turned out to be a molehill, after all!

~ *An appropriate answer brings joy to a person, and a well-timed word is a good thing (Proverbs 15:23, NIV).*