

Truly Connecting with others
Welcome to Harvest Community Church
Series: 10 X²
Text: Matthew 7:12

All people have a desire to connect and to be understood by others. The key to this is remembering the Golden Rule. Relationships really are not all that complicated. Personalities are complicated but the need for connection boils down to this: a desire to be loved and appreciated.

To really connect with people, we must stop thinking about ourselves and begin focusing on others. **Philippians 2:4** Part of living 10X is when we stop worrying about ourselves and start looking at others and what they desire. It helps us to build bridges that help us to connect over things that would in many instances divide us. This is called seeing the big picture.

The world's philosophy is to "look out for #1" - God says to look out for others and to think about how we would like to be treated by others. The entire population of the world with one minor exception is composed of others. The question that we must ask is – Do I have a hard time putting others first? Remember, love is not selfish, it is others focused. If when you read that last sentence and you find yourself asking "What about Me?" This is an opportunity for growth in your life.

When it comes to winning with people the Big Picture is to practice being unselfish. This is one of the most basic and common-sense principles of building relationships. People who remain self-serving and self-centered will always have a difficult time getting along with others. Selflessness is a big part of maturity.

People who are responsible realize that if they desire successful relationships, they can't be ME first. This is true of marriage, having children or running a business. Maturity approaches life with the attitude of a servant. When others succeed then we succeed. We give up a level of freedom because we are no longer just concerned about one. Responsible people take the initiative and the responsibility in a relationship. **Romans 12:18**

Responsibility means that we purposefully look at how other people are seeing and receiving things. This is called perspective. Too often we want people to see things our way. Maturity takes time to see things their way and to walk a mile in their shoes. This means that we have to check our ego. A person with a big ego is not just someone who thinks too much of themselves, they also really have very little true interest in others.

How do you know if you are ego – centric? Listen to how you talk with people. If you are often "me deep" in conversation and bored with hearing their stories and perspective you need to become less self-centered. Maturity understands that people want to be seen, appreciated, heard and understood. Refresh others and you will be refreshed. **Proverbs 11:25**

- ❖ In relationships there is something called the exchange principle. Instead of putting people in their place, we must put ourselves in their place. **Proverbs 15:1**

~ Sometimes when you give someone a piece of your mind, you lose your own peace of mind.

One of the things that we learn from Jesus is the principle of giving. **John 10:10**
As someone with power Jesus never used His position to take from others to benefit Himself. He exchanges our sin for His salvation, His healing for our health, His Purity for our shame. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. His goal was always to add value to our life.
Luke 22:25-27

When it comes to relationships, we have options. Our treatment of people really depends on our perspective of how we see them. Are they people we desire to share life with or a means to an end, an obstacle or an annoyance. Much of our conflict with others comes from our failure to see things from the perspective of the other person.

~ George Washington Carver – “How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, tolerant of the weak and strong. Because sometime in life we will be all of these”.

- ❖ One of the ways that we truly connect with others is realizing that each person that we meet has the potential to teach us something. We can learn something from everyone. Sometimes it is something that we don't know and sometimes we learn what we don't want to be.

All of us can learn things from unlikely people and in unlikely places.
Proverbs 6:6-11, Proverbs 24:30-34, Proverbs 13:20 Ignorance is not the greatest hinderance to teachability, that belongs to the attitude of arrogance. No one arrives in life. No one is a know it all. No one is too old, too successful or too smart to learn something new from someone younger, or less experienced. Everyone can teach us something.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson – I have never met a person who was not my superior in some particular way.

Those who connect with others realize something vital. People are interested in the person who is interested in them. This goes right along with the famous phrase – “people don't care how much you know until they know how much that you care.”

~ Dale Carnegie – You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.

People genuinely want to know that they matter to you and in life. Most people struggle with significance and confidence. This world makes most people feel like just another number and like they always want something from them.

Ways to make a good impression on people

- 1) Become genuinely interested in people. Remember, people can spot a phony pretty quickly. You will not always find what people do interesting but you can show a true interest in them as a person. Let people know that they matter, be glad to see them and show interest when engaging them.
 - 2) Smile. A smile has just as much of an effect as a good handshake and a scowl will turn people off just as much as bad body odor. Sometimes the best way to show interest in people is to simply change your face.
 - 3) Remember that people love to hear their name. If you have ever messed up someone's name you know how awkward that is. I love the joke that says you can call me anything you want, just don't call me late for dinner.
 - 4) Be a good listener. Encourage other people to talk about themselves and what they like. People want to be heard and understood. If you are interested in people, you will listen and they will feel valued and noticed.
 - 5) Help the other person to feel important - compliment them, ask their opinion, give them feedback, praise a job well done or give compassion when they are hurting. Do all of this sincerely. Never rush them or cut them off. Be patient and understanding. Never belittle an accomplishment or make what they do seem insignificant.
- ❖ A great way to connect with people is to believe the best of people. This isn't being naïve. Believing the best in people usually brings out the best in people. **Matthew 7:12**
- ~ Mark Twain – Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

Many people have the philosophy of I'll show them. They think this way because they have no other choice. They don't have people around them who believe in them. Many people fail simply because they are living up to the level of someone's poor expectation of them.

All people have incredible potential. They just need people who will help them to see it. Everybody wants to be somebody. Not everyone is called to be famous but God created us all to matter. In Christ we are all significant. Everyone needs somebody to help them to see that.

We should never allow our disappointment in a few to stop us from believing in people. All of us have been hurt, burned and let down by others. Let those things make you wiser but not jaded and hard-hearted. Those who trust are emotionally healthy. Those who trust no one will never make true and lasting connections. Disappointments help us to learn who we can trust and who we cannot and to what extent. Trust is earned not given is a lesson for the mature. To never trust is to live in constant fear of others.

We behave in light of our beliefs. If you don't like people or if you don't believe in them, you will not be able to fake it. It is ok to be realistic about people and their strengths and weaknesses and still have high expectations that you are confident they will reach.

- ❖ One of the keys to connecting with people is to truly care for them before you confront them.

~ Conflict is like cancer - early detection increases the possibility of a healthy outcome.

No one enjoys conflict but it is unavoidable. The only way to avoid conflict is to isolate ourselves from people. But even in isolation we can come into conflict with ourselves. I love the saying – Where two or more are gathered there will be friction. The same people that bring out the best in each other often times also bring out the worst.

Confrontation is difficult but it is a skill that we can get good at. Most people do not like confrontation even when it is necessary, so they avoid it. Most of us dislike confrontation because we are afraid of being misunderstood, disliked or rejected. We fear the unknown and the known. Often, we feel like if we do confront that things will just get worse. How we handle conflict determines our success in tough situations.

Poor and harmful strategies for dealing with conflict.

- Win at all costs. This means that someone is a loser.
- Pretend that it doesn't exist. Just because you wish it a way does not mean that it will. It actually will in all likelihood make it worse.
- Whine about it. Winners are not whiners and whiners are not winners. Playing the victim doesn't cure conflict, it just irritates everyone.
- Keep score. No one can ever dig out from a deficit.
- Pull rank. Using position never resolves conflict. It may actually increase it because a person has no ability to contribute to a solution.
- Throwing in the towel. Quitting is a permanent solution to a temporary discomfort and problem that can be resolved.

Conflict Resolution isn't complicated. It is intellectually simple but emotionally difficult. It requires honesty, humility, dedication to the relationship and truly caring for one another.

Step 1 – Confront a person only if you care for the person. We are not talking about legal and criminal things we are talking about relationships. The goal is to bring a win for all involved.

Step 2 – Meet together ASAP. When it comes to conflict, most people procrastinate. Anytime you let conflict go you make it worse. Too much that needs to be communicated is left unsaid and people start speculating and making decisions with not enough information.

Step 3 – Seek first for understanding, not necessarily for agreement. There is a saying that the person who gives an opinion before they understand is human, but the person who gives a judgement before he understands is a fool. **Proverbs 18:13**

~ Abraham Lincoln – When I am getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say – and two-thirds thinking about him and what he is going to say.

Step 4 – Outline the issue. Describe your point of view so they can see what you see. Explain how that makes you feel. (Angry, sad, disappointed, frustrated). Help them to know why this is important to you.

Step 5 – Encourage a response. If you care about people you will want to listen. Confrontation is a discussion not a monologue or lecture. Just like you feel a certain way, so do they.

There are several things to realize about confrontation

50% of the time people didn't realize that there was a problem.

30% realized that there was a problem but didn't know how to solve it.

20% realized that there was a problem but didn't want to solve it.

80% of the time there is a way to resolve the problem.

Step 6 – Agree to a plan of action. Most people hate confrontation but they love a resolution. An action plan focuses on the future not on the past problems, it is solution based. There is agreement, there is a desired end so all know what it looks like. There is a deadline and then things are left in the past.

Successful confrontation usually changes both people. It brings us together because we worked together. What once brought weakness now has made us stronger.