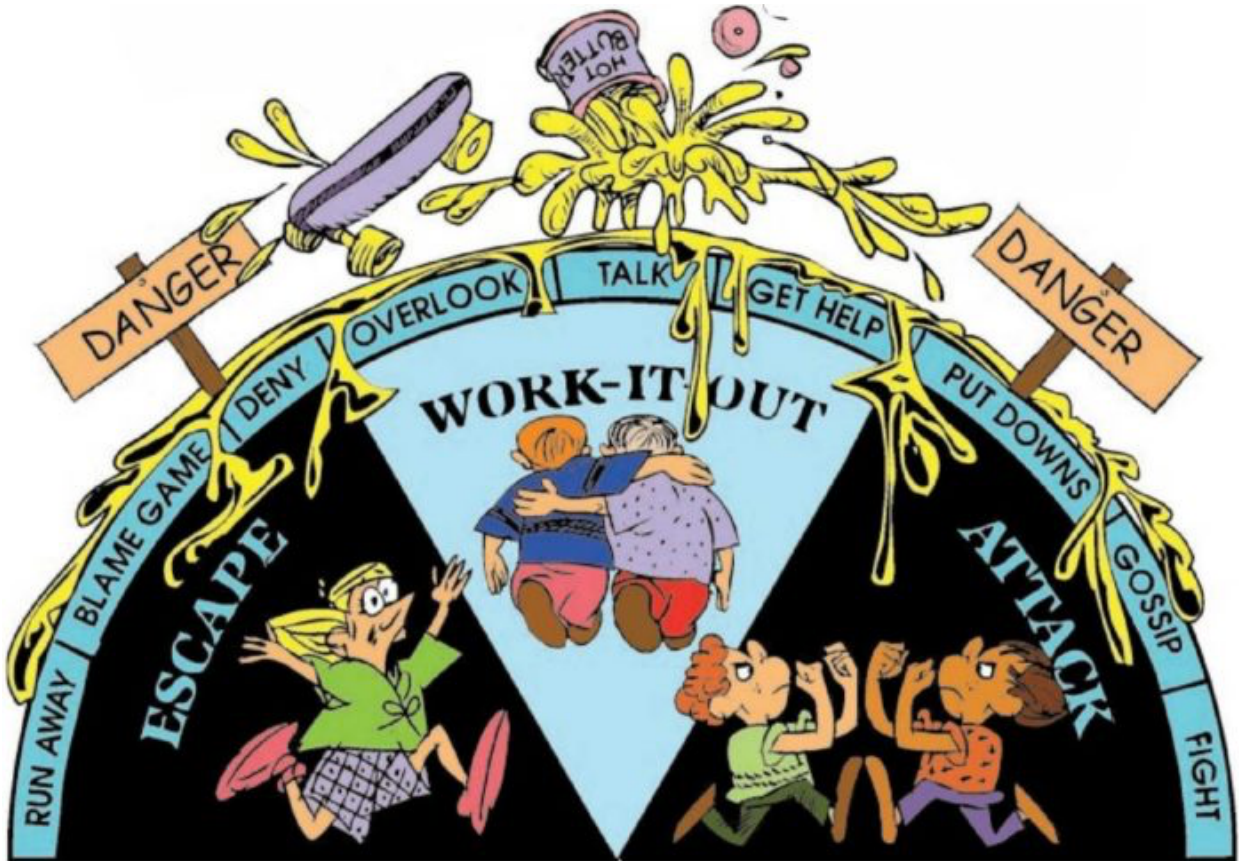


Corrective Discipline (Part 2): Conflict Resolution

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE: HOW DO CHILDREN DEAL WITH CONFLICT?



1. Escape Responses (Peace-Faking)

The escape responses are used to get away from conflict instead of trying to resolve it. They often prolong conflict and can result in bitterness and unforgiveness.

Denial—Pretending that a conflict does not exist, or refusing to do what we can to work it out, is always a wrong response to conflict.

Blame Game—Instead of taking responsibility for our choices, we try to escape their consequences by blaming others for the problem, pretending we did nothing wrong, covering up what we did, or lying about our contribution to a conflict. This is never a responsible way to handle conflict, nor does it resolve problems.

Run Away—Running away from the person we are quarreling with is only acceptable if there is danger of harm. Otherwise, this response does not solve problems.

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2. Attack Responses (Peace-Breaking)

The attack responses are used to put pressure on others to get our own way. These responses usually damage relationships and often result in anger and hatred.

Put Downs—We attack others with harsh and cruel words when conflict arises. This response usually stirs up anger in the other person, and is always a wrong response to conflict.

Gossip—We talk about people behind their backs in order to damage their reputation or to get others on our side. Gossip is hurtful and is always a wrong response to conflict.

Fight—We use physical force to get our own way. This is almost always a wrong response to conflict. (This response is proper only if you have to protect yourself or another person from being injured by an attacker.)

3. Work-It-Out Responses (Peace-Making)

The work-it-out responses are found at the top of the curve. These responses usually lead to constructive solutions to conflicts and help to preserve relationships.

Overlook an Offense—You deal with the offense *by yourself*. You simply *decide to forgive* a wrong action against you and walk away from a conflict. This is not the same as denial, as forgiveness is the key here. The person who overlooks another's offenses will continue to have a growing healthy relationship with him or her (Prov. 12:16; 17:14; 19:11; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:8).

Talk It Out—A conflict is resolved by going directly to the other person to *talk it out together*. This can include confessing your own wrongs and confronting the other person's wrongs in a kind and respectful way. This response should be used if you cannot overlook what the other person did, and the problem is hurting your relationship (Matt. 5:23–24; 18:15; Gal. 6:1–3).

Get Help—The third way to resolve a conflict is to get help from others.

- Get Help to Know What You Should Say—This is called *coaching* (Prov. 15:1; Eph. 4:29).
- Get Help to Talk Together—This is called *mediation* (Matt. 18:16).
- Get Help to Decide—This is called *arbitration* (1 Cor. 6:1–8; Exod. 18:13–27).

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WHY DO OUR CHILDREN HAVE CONFLICT?

“What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don’t they come from your passions that wage war within you? 2 You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and don’t receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jas. 4:1–3).

Principle: *Conflict starts in the heart. Sinful conflicts among you come from sinful cravings within you.*

1. **I Desire**
2. **I Demand**
3. **I Judge**
4. **I Punish**

“So to sum up, outer quarrels among Christians come from losing battles within. Once again James takes an inside view of man. James does this, as before when dealing with temptation, to expose the dynamic at work so that you will know where to aim your efforts to rectify the situation. It is within that the first and foremost change must begin. One must realize his sin, confess it and seek God’s forgiveness (and the forgiveness of those he has offended) and then, after reconciliation, begin to put on the new, biblical, righteous ways outlined in the Scriptures” (Jay Adams, *Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, and Jude*, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary, 201).

“Love, fear, trust – these are words of worship! Jesus commands us to love God, fear God, and trust God alone (Matthew 22:37; Luke 12:4–5, John 14:1). Any time we long for something apart from God, fear something more than God, or trust in something other than God to make us happy, fulfilled, or secure, we are engaging in the worship of false gods. As a result, we deserve the judgment and wrath of the true God” (Ken Sande, *Peacemaking for Families*, 25).

“They themselves report what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath” (1 Thess. 1:9–10).

“Sin is what you do when you are not fully satisfied in God” (John Piper).

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WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES CONFLICT PROVIDE OUR CHILDREN?

1. Glorify God

- a. Trust God (Ps. 28:7)
- b. Obey God (John 14:15)
- c. Imitate God (Eph. 5:1–2)

2. Serve Other People

“But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27–28).

- a. Love
- b. Do Good
- c. Bless
- d. Pray

3. Grow to be More Like Christ

- a. Recognize Your Need for God (2 Cor. 12:9–10)
- b. Confess Your Sin (1 John 1:9)
- c. Practice New Attitudes and Actions (1 Cor. 4:13; Gal. 5:22–33; 1 Pet. 2:21–24).

HOW CAN OUR CHILDREN RESOLVE CONFLICT AND MAKE PEACE?

1. Confrontation

“Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. 26 Be angry and do not sin. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don’t give the devil an opportunity. 28 Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. 29 No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. 30 And don’t grieve God’s Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ” (Eph. 4:25–32).

- a. Be Honest (v. 25)
- b. Keep Current (vv. 26–27)
- c. Attack the Problem, Not the Person (v. 29)
- d. Act, Don’t React (vv. 30–32)

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2. Confession and Repentance

“The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

The Five A’s of Confession:

- **Admit** specifically what you did wrong (Both attitudes and actions)
- **Apologize** for how your choice hurt the other person (Express sorrow for causing pain)
- **Accept** the consequences (Such as making restitution)
- **Ask** for forgiveness (Seek forgiveness from God and the people you sinned against)
- **Alter** your choice in the future (Change your attitudes and actions)

3. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Four False Ideas About Forgiveness

- “You need to FEEL like forgiving before you can really forgive.”
- “Forgiveness means FORGETTING about what someone did that hurt you.”
- “Forgiveness EXCUSES the other person’s sin.”
- “Forgiveness depends on getting a GUARANTEE that someone won’t do the same wrong thing again.”

Four “I Forgive You” Promises:

- I promise I will think good thoughts about you and do good to you.
- I promise I will not bring up this situation and use it against you.
- I promise I will not talk to others about what you did.
- I promise I will be friends with you again.

These promises may be summarized in a poem that is so easy a four-year old can memorize it:

- Good thought
- Hurt you not
- Gossip never
- Friends forever

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Raising Future Men and Women” by Randy Stinson at equip.sbts.edu/article/raising-future-men-and-women/