

Avoiding Landmines: Developing People Skills

Some of the most common reasons for ministry failure are not moral or doctrinal but relational. Our greatest struggles can stem from a lack of our ability to navigate relationships and church dynamics with practical wisdom. To effectively lead others, you must learn how to communicate with tact and diplomacy, how to navigate and resolve conflict, and how to avoid common ministry pitfalls.

Talking Points: Questions to Consider

- Describe a time when you unintentionally miscommunicated, offended someone and “put your foot in your mouth,” or said something you didn’t mean?
- How often do you typically consider your words in conversations and communication? How important is timing in communication? What are some important ministry dynamics of communication that you must consider?
- Do you typically avoid difficult conversations? What are some ways to navigate hard conversations with people you love, people you don’t know, and others in leadership?
- How would you describe your typical approach to conflict, fight or flight? How important is it for leaders to admit when they’re wrong? Why is conflict sometimes necessary and how can it be healthy?

Teaching Points: Scriptures to Consider

- **Romans 12:9-21** – God’s Handbook for Healthy Relationships
- **1 Thessalonians 5:14** – How to Deal with Difficult People
- **1 John 4:7-12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7** – All We Need is Love
- **James 2:1-12** – The Sin of Partiality

Thinking Points: Resources to Consider

- *War of Words* by Paul David Tripp
- *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John C. Maxwell

Training Points: Opportunities to Consider

- **Discuss practical aspects of communication**, including: the importance of in-person conversations, suitable etiquette for electronic interaction (text/email), timely responses, and maintaining appropriate levels of confidence.
- **Walk through ministry scenarios** that require practical wisdom, sound judgment, church dynamics, and relational sensitivity.
- **Discuss how to handle** various levels of conflict, the importance of safeguarding conversations, when to include other people, and how to guard your heart from bitterness.