

CONVERSATIONS THAT GROW!



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**HOW TO MANAGE MY HEART IN A CONVERSATION
USING “THE PROCESS COMPASS”**

Participant Workbook

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1. Use the “The Map” to gain self-awareness along with five talking and listening skills.
 - Learn five vital areas to gain self-awareness.
 - Learn to make five kinds of statements about yourself from the “I” orientation.
 - Learn five listening skills to gain awareness of another person’s experience and perspective.

“The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.” Prov 15:28

“My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” Jas 1:19

2. Use “The Process Compass” to manage your intentions and emotions in the communication process.
 - Learn to distinguish between communicating to know and be known from communicating to influence and be influenced.
 - Learn to distinguish between healthy influence and control.
 - Learn to manage the temptation to control by exercising “trust” in the process.

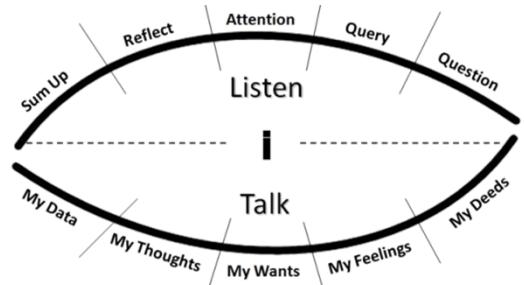
“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.” Lk 6:45

3. Use the Conversation Gear Shift to shift through five levels of communication.
 - Learn to listen and talk in five speeds.
 - Learn how to shift from communicating to know and be known to influencing and being influenced.

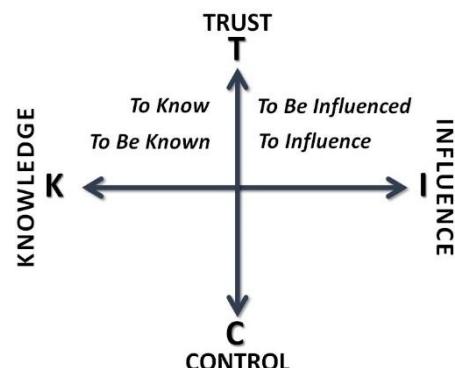
“The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.” Prov 10:32

“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Col 4:6

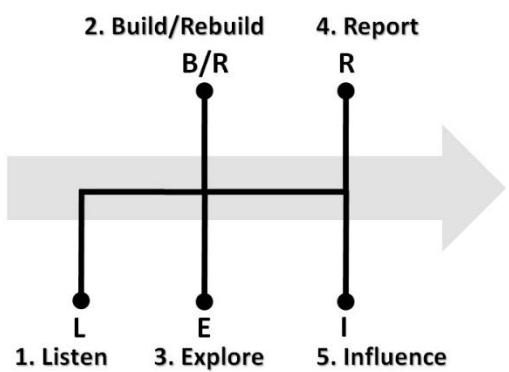
The Talking and Listening Map
(What do I say? How do I listen?)



The Process Compass
(Where is this conversation going?)



The Conversation Gear Shift
(How do I shift gears in a conversation?)



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NOTES

THE COMMUNICATION COMPASS – The Process Compass

Communication is Driven by the Direction of Our Wants, Desires, and Interests

- All communication is intentional. The direction of my conversations depends on my intentions when I communicate! We communicate because we want something. We are often unaware of what we want. To communicate effectively I need to become aware of what I want in the communication process.
- The intensity of our desires dictates the emotional intensity of our conversations. Conflict occurs when our desires are challenged, thwarted, or denied. I may not be getting what I want or getting what I don't want. When this happens, our emotions escalate. When our emotions escalate, our ability to communicate deteriorates.
- Emotional Intelligence is a popular concept. The five key components to EI are *self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills*. Emotional Intelligence requires “Volitional Intelligence.” Volitional Intelligence is the ability to choose something freely or to make your own decisions apart from other controlling forces.

“The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of... We know the truth not only by the reason, but by the heart.” — Blaise Pascal, Pensées

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? Jas 4:1

Three Levels of Wants and Desires: Material, Relational, and Process Interests

- Many of the things we want are material, substantive, and tangible. At a deeper level we desire things that are non-material. Examples: security, excitement, appreciation, significance, love, respect, etc. These are Personal and Relational Interests. We need to learn to talk about these deeper interests. **Example: “It's not about the remote!”**
- At the deepest level, we have four sets of desires or interests that drive all our communication. These are “Process” or “Communication” Interests. These are our most basic and fundamental communication objectives.
- Process interests are about what we need in order to pursue everything else we want in the process of communication.
- Process interests are about . . .
 - *How I get what I want from and with others*
 - *How I make decisions with others*
 - *How I negotiate issues & conflicts with others*
 - *How I find relational satisfaction with others*
- Many relationships get stuck and breakdown because of conflict at the level of process. To have conversations that grow, we need to be able to talk about our process. In other words, we need to be able to talk about the way we talk to each other.

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TWO SETS OF PROCESS INTERESTS: KNOWLEDGE AND INFLUENCE



Set #1 - To Know and Be Known

- **We deeply desire to know and be known.** Often, we communicate to share information about ourselves to be known. Often, we communicate to acquire information about others to know.
- Sometimes I want to be known, but don't care to know. Sometimes I want to know, but don't care to be known. Conversations that grow require a willingness to do both.

Set #2 - To Influence and Be Influenced

- **We deeply desire to influence and be influenced.** Often, I communicate to influence others to make a change, a decision, or take action. Examples: giving advice, warnings, suggestions, instruction, guidance, directives, reasons, etc. Also, I communicate because I want others to influence me to change, make a decision, or take action. Examples: asking for advice, or warnings, suggestions, instructions, or guidance, etc. *Often someone will try to influence me without me inviting them! And often I may try to influence another person without them inviting me! This is a common conflict in the communication process.*
- Sometimes I want to influence someone without wanting to be influenced by them. Sometimes I want to be influenced by someone without wanting to influence them. Conversations that grow require a willingness to do both.

Knowledge vs. Influence

- **Knowledge and Influence are competing interests.** Competing interests are where I want two things but cannot pursue one without moving away from the other. The moment I shift from my desire to know or be known to my desire to influence or be influenced, the dynamics of the conversation change. When I move toward influence, I have begun to assess, analyze, and move to action. To move toward knowledge, I must stop assessing, analyzing, and planning for action. I must put my agenda to change things (or keep things the same) on hold and accept what is in order to know it. On the other hand, to move toward influence, I must stop gathering information and move toward change and action.
- **Influence is good.** Good process starts with knowing and being known and then moves to influence, not vice versa. We often jump to influence before adequately knowing and being known. However, we can also get stuck knowing and being known and fail to move to influence. We need to negotiate how we shift from communicating just for knowing to influence.

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Healthy Communication Boundaries

- A healthy relationship requires both mutual knowledge and mutual influence.
- A healthy relationship is able to negotiate and respect healthy “boundaries” around the issues of mutual knowing and influencing of one another. It requires spiritual maturity to manage these boundaries.

When others initiate the conversation with me . . .

I may need to say "No." *There are times I may not want to know or be known by someone. There are also times when I do not wish to influence or be influenced by someone.* Instead of reluctantly giving permission or just giving in, I can courteously set a communication boundary. This is okay and often necessary. When someone wants to know or be known, and/or to influence or be influenced with me when I do not wish them to, I need to learn appropriate ways to say “no.”

I may need to say "Yes." *There are times when it is appropriate and necessary to know and be known by someone. There are also times when it is appropriate and necessary to influence and be influenced by someone.* When someone desires me to know them or be known by them, I need to be open myself up to knowing and being known when asked or invited. I also need to find a way to open myself to influencing others and being influenced by others when asked or invited. There are times I need to say “yes.”

When I initiate the conversation with others . . .

I need to hear their "Yes." *There are times I want to know or be known by someone, and times I want to influence or be influenced by someone. I need to be able to proceed when given permission.* When I am given permission to know and be known and/or influence and be influenced, I need to be able to hear their “yes” and speak honestly and listen attentively.

I need to hear their "No." *There are times I want to know or be known by someone, and times I want to influence or be influenced by someone, and they are not willing.* In this case, I can stop proceeding when I ask for and do not receive their permission. I can hear and respect their “no.”

NOTE: Sometimes we go into “control mode.” When this happens, we push, force, block, and withhold the process to get our way. We cross boundaries and deny permission. Many conflicts are just about process.

Q: From the above four boundary types, which do you struggle with the most?

Q: From the above four boundary types, which come easiest for you to establish and maintain?

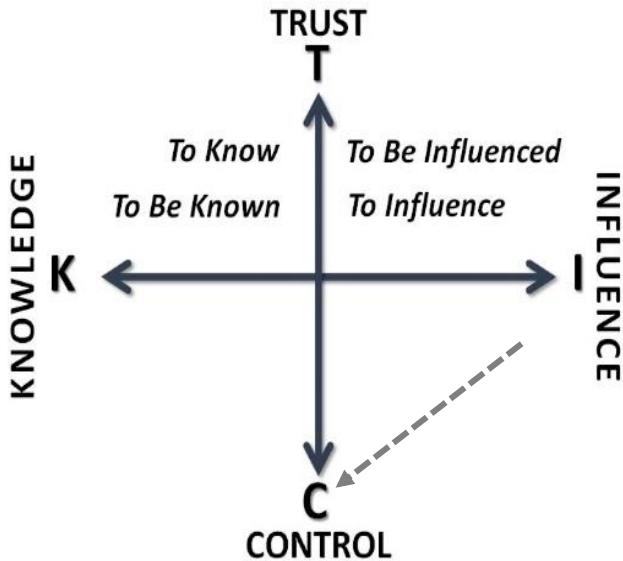
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COMMUNICATION OR CONTROL

Set #3 - To Control (and being Controlled)

- Instead of communicating to influence, I can use my words and body language to try to control others to get what I want. This is “Control Talk.” *Control talk is never true communication, and true communication always avoids control talk. I cannot do both.*
- “Control” is what I do when I seek to satisfy my wants, desires, and interests “apart from” trusting God and His higher plans and purpose. (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- “Control” is what I do when I seek to satisfy my wants, desires, and interests without considering the wants, desires and interests of others. (Philippians 2:4)
- The purpose of communication is for us to enjoy satisfying relationships with each other while striving to achieve some greater purpose together. When I use communication to just get what I want, it fails to bring satisfaction to both me and others.
- For Christians: The desire for control is the core component of what the bible calls “sin.” It is our desire to play God.
“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.” Gen 3:5



There is a difference between healthy and appropriate Influence and Control

<u>INFLUENCE</u>	<u>CONTROL</u>
Trusts God	Trusts Self
Considers Everyone' Interests	Focus on Self Interest
Asks Permission	Doesn't Ask Permission
Gives Permission	Withholds Permission
Respects Boundaries	Ignores Boundaries
Operates Within Its Authority	Operates Outside Its Authority
Empowers Others	Disempowers Others
Depends on Grace	Depends on Rules
Promotes Freedom	Restricts Freedom
Treats People like People	Treats People like Objects

The Impact of Control: Control Resists and Blocks Honest/Truthful Awareness

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My Intention to Control Results in Control Talk

Control Talk can be “Aggressive” and/or “Passive-Aggressive.”

Examples of Aggressive Control Talk

“You” Talk	Bullying	Defending	Lecturing
Demanding	Ultimatums	Justifying	Moralizing
Ordering	Labeling	Rationalization	Preaching
Blaming	Name-calling	Arguing	Bragging
Accusing	Belittling	Interrogating	Psychologizing
Shaming	Criticizing	“Why” Questions	Diagnosing
Scolding	Judging	Confrontation	Cursing
Threatening	Comparing	Challenging	Loaded Words
Intimidation	Put downs	Taunting	Has Last Word

Examples of Passive-Aggressive Control Talk

Zingers & Digs	Silent Treatment	Guilt tripping	Denying
Pot shots	Stonewalling	Shaming	Not my fault
Foot-dragging	Mumbling	Self-righteous	Defending
Complaining	Cynicism	Keeping score	Justifying
Whining	Sarcasm	Getting even	Excuse Making
Pouting	Whatever!	Innuendo	Red Herring
Ignoring	Poor me	Lying	Placating
Withholding Info	Martyr/Victim	Distorting	Gossip
Withdrawing	Put down self	Nagging	Complains about Last Word

Control Produces All Kinds of Negative Attitudes

*Fear, Distrust, Suspicion, Worry, Anxiety
Blame, Defensiveness, Irresponsibility,
Dishonesty
Manipulation, Nagging, Possessiveness,
Neediness
Self-Pity, Laziness, Victim Thinking*

*Anger, Frustration, Rage, Resentment,
Vengeance
Disrespect, Judgmentalism, Criticism,
Perfectionism
Authoritarianism, Bossiness, Domination,
Intimidation
Pride, Envy, Jealousy, Selfish Ambition*

Exercise – My Experiences with Control Talk (p. 12)

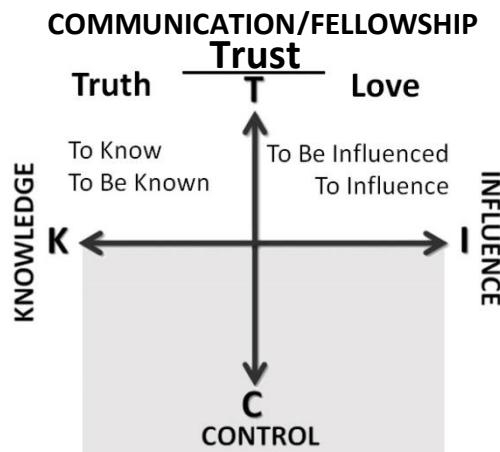
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TRUE COMMUNICATION REQUIRES TRUST

Set #4 – To Trust and Be Trusted

- The purpose of communication is for us to enjoy satisfying relationships with God and each other while striving to achieve some greater purpose (God's will) together. Satisfying relationships require mutual knowledge and influence. The Bible calls this kind satisfying relationship "fellowship." (1 John 1:3-4).
- The key ingredient to biblical fellowship is **TRUST (T)**. Healthy communication and healthy relationships are built on trust.
- Trust and Control are competing Interests. You cannot pursue both at the same time. Control undermines trust. Trust chooses not to control. The more I try to control, the less the other person will trust me.
- We all have control issues. Control issues are really trust issues. To avoid control, I must trust. The question is: "Who do I Trust?"



"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:19

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Prov 3:5-6

How TRUST in God Empowers Us!

- When I trust God, I do not have to control anyone or anything. Nor am I supposed to!
- When I trust God, knowing and being known becomes truth, and influence and being influenced becomes love.
- Trusting God enables me to take risks trusting others.
- Trusting God also enables me to endure hurt and offer forgiveness.
- The More I Trust God, the More God can Trust Me!
- Trusting God empowers positive attitudes and emotions in our actions and words.

<i>Honesty</i>	<i>Loyalty</i>	<i>Patience</i>	<i>Devotion</i>
<i>Honor</i>	<i>Courage</i>	<i>Forbearance</i>	<i>Compassion</i>
<i>Genuineness</i>	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Forgiveness</i>	<i>Respect</i>
<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Kindness</i>	<i>Humility</i>	<i>Gentleness</i>
<i>Reliability</i>	<i>Courtesy</i>	<i>Gratitude</i>	<i>Love</i>

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Questions about Trust to Consider:

- What beliefs and assumptions do I have that keep me from trusting?
- What past experiences and past relationships have harmed my ability to trust?
- How do my control issues keep me from trusting more?
- What keeps me from trusting others?
- How can I engage in trust talk with people I shouldn't trust?
- What positive steps can I take to improve my ability to trust?
- How would trusting God help me trust others?
- Can I learn to trust without taking risks?

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How Do I Shift From CONTROL to TRUST?

Christ frees us from our need to control and gives us Someone better to trust.

See 2 Peter 1:3-4; Rom 6:12-14

To become free from control, I need to have a trust “conversation” with God!

1. ***“God, I admit I am not in control.”***
3. ***“God, I trust you are in control.”***
2. ***“God, I concede I cannot gain control.”***
4. ***“God, I Surrender!”***

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Lk 9:23

Q: How often do you think we need to have this conversation with God?

Q: Have you ever truly had this conversation with God?

To shift from “control” to “trust” helps to spiritually breathe and center.

- **“Spiritual Centering” addresses my “thoughts.”**

For by him (Jesus) all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Col 1:16-17

“Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

- **“Spiritual Breathing” addresses my “wants.”**

“He (Jesus) withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’” Lk 22:41-42

Q: How might spiritually breathing and centering help you have conversations that grow in challenging situations?

When I trust God, I can be . . .

SILENT

or

BOLD

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” ⁶¹But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Mk 14:60-61

Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Acts 4:29

NOTE: Sometimes Godly “Influence” can look like “Control Talk!” (Mt 23)

Q: Where do you struggle being silent? Where do you struggle being bold?

Exercise – Personal Reflection Exercise (p. 13)

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Where do we go from here?

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

To have conversations that grow, I need to practice, practice, practice. Remember, in the beginning it feels awkward, then it feels mechanical. Eventually, it becomes natural.

Consider continuing keeping a conversation journal where you note principles and skills you put in use, or lessons learned from mistakes.

Some Closing Questions

Q: What have been some of your biggest “Aha’s” in this course?

Q: What principles or skills have had the most impact?

Q: What principles or skills have been the hardest to learn or apply?

Q: How will you practice what you have learned? What is your plan of action? Is there a difficult conversation you need to have with someone, where you can apply these principles and skills?

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Y Exercise – My Experiences with Control Talk

Pair up with another participant and share the following:

1. *Share a conversation where someone engaged in control talk with you. How did it make you feel? How did you react or respond?*
2. *Share a conversation where you engaged in control talk with someone else.*
3. *What subjects or topics are you more likely to engage in control talk about?*
4. *What people are you more likely to engage in control talk with?*

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Y Exercise – Personal Reflection Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

1. *One talking skill I have used this week was _____, when . . .*
2. *One listening skill I have used this week was _____, when . . .*
3. *I refrained from “control talk” and choose to trust God when . . .*

- You do not need to write out the whole conversation. Just note who the conversation was with, and a short phrase indicating what it was about and the specific skill you used. Be prepared to share your answers in the next session.
- This can be done at home.