

## Higher Dimensions in Relationships (Part 4)

You cannot be spiritually mature without being emotionally and relationally mature.

### 7. Sincerity and Transparency

Sincere comes from two words Sin and Cere meaning without wax. Sincerity and transparency build trust. We live in a world where there are so many weights being put on us to a point where we feel pressure to present an image of ourselves that is false. We end up being insincere.

#### Romans 12:9

**Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.**

A lot of times love is not sincere. In fact for love to be love it must be sincere, as scripture tells us that love rejoices in the truth. Sadly, there are guilt-based acts of goodness; there is love with a hook; that's not love.

E.g. TJ not wanting to have to greet someone if its going to be insincere. Jesus hates it when we pretend.

#### Mt 15:7-9

**You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you: 8' These people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. 9 They worship Me in vain; they teach as doctrine the precepts of men.'"**...

Are you saying things to God but not meaning it? Its worship in vain. When we do and say things but its insincere, not from the heart, it makes it vain and pointless. There is no reward for it. There must be congruency between what we say and what's in our heart. Often, we can misrepresent the weight of what we are saying by presenting our preferences as doctrine. This is also seen where we present our opinion and desire as a prophetic word from God. This is deceptive. Sadly, many people today are duplicitous. This means deceptive in words or action; having two elements or parts. Even in law its when one act results in two counts against you.

**1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.**

Sadly we often do the opposite. We think that we will have fellowship by hiding the truth.

Transparency builds fellowship

New Living Translation Rom 12:9

Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

#### John 1:47

**When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."**

**Deceit = guile, bait, hook. Trying to hook in the unsuspecting.**

**Assertiveness is our goal as opposed to aggressive or passive behaviour. Passive people often come across as two faced because they keep sitting on the fence.**

**Passive – emotionally dishonest, indirect, self denying, blaming**

Passivity – girl is on first date and asked if she is ok with going to an Italian restaurant for pasta. She says yes yet she really didn't want to because spaghetti is messy. You tell waiter you want your meat well done but when it comes and you cut it you see the blood. They ask you whether its fine and you say yes. Your self esteem is so low with regards to self respect that you don't want to bother anyone or come across as difficult. Eg coachee who walked into board room having cut his shirt and himself but continued to focus on the task at hand. This behaviour trains others to treat you as a doormat. If you don't respect yourself they won't either. You are responsible to mentor people in how they should

relate to you. Resentment on your part can also build up when you are a people pleaser who doesn't know how to say no.

**Passive aggressive – Emotionally dishonest, indirect, self-denying at first, self enhancing at the expense of others later**

Its passive because your wants and needs are not communicated clearly and directly but it is aggressive because of the sting of sarcasm that is used. Pouting and giving the silent treatment is a form of this. Various forms of miscommunication styles go with this e.g. guilt maker, trivial tyranniser, etc You never really know where you stand with these people.

**Aggressive – Inappropriately honest, direct, expressive, blaming, controlling, self-enhancing at the expense of others.**

The truth must be spoken in love.

Eg you are not served the meat you asked for and you shout at the waitress and label them as incompetent. You use sarcasm to shame them. Aggressive communication very rarely solves the problem and people end up avoiding you. Often aggressive people feel better after they have let it out but they erode their relationships in the process. In the long term they often regret how they have communicated as they have now alienated themselves.

**Assertive – Appropriately honest, direct, self-enhancing and expressive, self confident, empathetic to the emotions of all involved.**

*"I'm afraid my steak is undercooked. I asked for it medium well and there is too much pink for me. Would you please take it back and have the chef cook it a bit longer?" The needs and desires are stated, but not at the expense of the feelings or self-worth of the waitress.*

Assertiveness comes with empathy. "yes my Love I would like some tea but whenever you make for yourself, you must be feeling tired."

**8. Difficult conversations**

Great leaders are able to have difficult conversations and deal with difficult people. The ability to have difficult conversations is what distinguishes a lot of couples. Every great step to success often involves having a difficult conversation. Sadly, many people remain stuck because they avoid the difficult conversation. You see this when a girl can't move on from a relationship that is abusive or with an unsaved guy.

**What makes conversations difficult?**

- **The nature of the relationship (eg older person)**

**1 Tim 5:1 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers,**

- **When they are already doing you a favour**
- **When it affects your self-concept** (Generosity to friend, or the type of manager you want to be seen as)
- **When the stakes are high** (e.g. confession that may lead to a divorce)
- **When it affects their status** (e.g. men after retiring)
- **When they are sensitive** (Is it really because you don't want to hurt them or you don't want to be rejected?)
- **When you don't know what to expect**
- **When it's a difficult person** (sniper, bully, gossip etc)

**Luke 17:3 "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.**

To rebuke is to chide, admonish, warn, correct and redirect.

Think of Jesus's potentially difficult conversations. They might not have been as difficult for Jesus because of His relationship with the Father.

Get thee behind me Satan; You brood of vipers;

**Mt 16:23**

Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

Jesus here was not just speaking to the air. There was risk. He could have been misunderstood by the very person he wanted to lead the church.

Candour – say what you mean and mean what you say. Jesus could have difficult conversations because He was straightened to the Father and not bent towards man.

**Eph 4:15**

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

We have been called to speak the truth in love as opposed to keeping silent. We need to be assertive in order to be truly transparent. Here is a biblical example of assertiveness:

**Acts 4:15-20**

But when they had ordered them to leave the [a]Council, they began to confer with one another, 16 saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy [b]miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." 18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all [c]in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

We need to be free from the fear of man in order to be truly authentic. Learn to respectfully say no. Have you lost your voice?

**John 5:41 NIV** "I do not accept glory from human beings,

**NLT** "Your approval means nothing to me," for many its "Your approval means the world to me."

We need to call things what they are instead of sugar coating. Drunkenness is drunkenness not anything else eg he drinks too much. Homosexuality is homosexuality it's not anything else.

**Mt 23:32**

Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' sins. 33 You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape the sentence of hell?

Jesus saw their wickedness and called it out.

We need to be direct even when it comes to resolving matters where we have sinned against someone. Eg When I missed a promised appointment.

**Mt 5:23-25**

**Therefore if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup>Reconcile quickly with your adversary, while you are still on the way to court.**

The key is do it quickly instead of sitting on it. Its part of your spiritual maturity.

This often involves having a difficult conversation and having it quickly. We often avoid the difficult conversation because we struggle with conflict and also because it results in an internal conflict because of our self-concept.

#### **Pattern for difficult conversations**

- **Let me hear your story** (Help me to understand)
- **This is my story (I need. I felt. I experienced)**
- **Let's come up with a solution**

**Be willing to face stuff (Self, work and others)**