

THE CONFERENCE TABLE

I. Definition

The Conference Table provides a **structured** use of the four rules of communication.

II. Rationale

- A. Counselees have formed sinful **habits**.
 - 1. In time of stress they will use them **automatically**.
- B. Counselees require **structure** to change.
 - 1. They must form new **habits**.
 - 2. They must learn to **communicate** biblically.
- C. The Conference Table **provides** that structure.

III. Goals

- A. Counselees must **learn** to communicate biblically.
- B. Counselees must **solve** problems. (A before B)
 - The first problem to solve is **communication**.

IV. Arrangements

- A. Time
 - 1. Must be agreeable to **both**.
 - 2. When there is the least likelihood of **interruption**.
 - 3. Best when not at your **worst** physically.
- B. Place
 - Preferably not someplace used **frequently**.

V. Rules and Procedures

- A. Participants
 - 1. Whoever is **involved** in the conflict i.e. husband-wife, parent-child, etc.
- B. Signal
 - 1. If a rule of communication is **broken**, raise your hand (anyone can raise their hand).
 - 2. Then it becomes the **other** person's responsibility:
 - a. To **identify** it.
 - b. To ask for **forgiveness**.
 - c. To **change**.
 - d. To **resume** communicating biblically.
 - 3. Each person is to serve as a helpful **coach**, not as a condemning **judge**.
 - a. The goal is not to see how many times you can **catch** each other.
 - b. You are **teammates** to help each other learn of failure.
 - c. Remember **Matt. 7:3-5**, "*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*"
- C. Leadership
 - 1. The **husband** is responsible to call the conference - at prearranged times.
 - 2. **Either** may request it at other times or in an **emergency**.
- D. The **wife** keeps a written record of:
 - 1. The **Day** and **time**.
 - 2. The topics **discussed**.
 - 3. The solutions **reached**.

4. The **steps** to be taken.
 5. The topics not **solved**.
- E. Topics
1. Begin by reading **Ephesians 4:25-32**, *"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 'In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."* and the four rules of communication.
 2. **Each** person prays briefly asking God to help you communicate biblically and to solve problems.
 3. Initially, only deal with that **day's** problems.
 4. If none, you may deal with **previous** problems listed by the counselor (See G. Conflict List below).
 5. Alternate **turns** in bringing up matters to be discussed.
 6. Deal with **problems** *only* at the conference table.
 7. Problems are to be discussed with a view to a **solution**. The solution must be specific.
 8. Keep the **goals** in mind.
- F. Length
1. Each session:
 - a. At least **15** minutes, no more than **30** minutes.
 - b. If there is no solution, put it off to the **next** time.
 - c. If you are unable to agree, agree to **disagree**.
 2. Total number of sessions.
 - a. Continue until the participants have **learned** to communicate biblically and to solve problems.
 - b. After you have gained proficiency, you will begin to use these principles **automatically** at other times.
- G. Conflict list.
1. Make a list of failures you see in the **other** person.
 2. Make a list of failures you see in **yourself**.

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