

Communication Skills Training

by Dave Green
June 2019

1

An overview of our journey

- ▶ what is this all about? (10 mins)
- ▶ and who is this for? (10 mins)
- ▶ Stage 1: the **C**lock (20 mins)
- ▶ Stage 2: the **F**lower (20mins)
- ▶ Stage 3: the **T**ennis (20 mins)
- ▶ Stage 4: the **M**onkey (20 mins)
- ▶ can we take a step back? (10 mins)
- ▶ where can we use this? (10 mins)



2

What is this all about?



- ▶ A structured approach to the skills of productive confrontation, short of engaging in conflict.
- ▶ Confront (verb): to cause to meet; bring face-to-face; to meet face-to-face; **encounter** (Merriam-Webster, 2015).
- ▶ Conflict (verb): to contend in **warfare**; to be different, opposed, or contradictory; to fail to be in agreement or accord

3

And who is this for?



- ▶ those tired of **conflict**: some of us feel frustrated because when we try to communicate with our partner, we often end up in a fight, and maybe now we even avoiding communicating with them.
- ▶ those feeling **anxious**: some of us find it rather difficult to express our needs or wishes to others, especially if we were not free to express our thoughts and feelings while we were growing up.

4

Stage 1: the Clock



- ▶ Asking permission and getting the timing right:
- ▶ “I’ve got something on my mind which I think we need to discuss. Is this a good time for you?”
- ▶ If not, when should we schedule some time?
- ▶ Shall I come to you, or will you come and find me?”
- ▶ Probably a bad time: **H**ungry, **A**ngry, **L**onely, **T**ired
- ▶ role-play this with a counsellor
- ▶ role-play this with your partner

5

Stage 2: the Flower



- ▶ Leading with our feelings (which can’t be denied):
- ▶ “I feel ... when ... because ...” (1 feeling per petal)
- ▶ Avoid using words “you”, “always” and “never”
- ▶ Helping the other person to build their flower:
- ▶ “It seems like you’re feeling frustrated ... etc.”
- ▶ role-play this with a counsellor
- ▶ role-play this with your partner

6

Stage 3: the Tennis



- ▶ A reminder of non-aggression, and your higher goal:
- ▶ “I want us to ‘play doubles’ together to solve this.
- ▶ I’m not attacking you. We’re on the same side.
- ▶ And I’m sure we both want the same thing here ...
 - ▶ to feel in love / live in harmony / have a tidy home.”
- ▶ role-play this with a counsellor
- ▶ role-play this with your partner

7

Stage 4: the Monkey



- ▶ This is the stage of getting the issue off your back,
- ▶ and putting it in front of you both, for attention:
- ▶ “What do you think that I / we / you need to do differently? I’m interested in your perspective.”
- ▶ Don’t propose any solution. Just stop and listen!
- ▶ role-play this with a counsellor
- ▶ role-play this with your partner

8

Can we take a step back?



- ▶ Yes, go back to the **C**lock:
 - ▶ “I’m feeling a bit too tense. I think I need to call ‘time out’. Can we take a break for some tea?”
- ▶ Or go back to the **F**lower:
 - ▶ “**When** you interrupt me **I feel** frustrated **because** it seems you’re not listening carefully to me.”
- ▶ Or go back to the **T**ennis:
 - ▶ “Please don’t feel threatened. I’m not attacking you. I’m raising an issue we both need to solve.”

9

Where can we use this?



- ▶ Try it out with children
- ▶ then with someone “safe”
- ▶ then where it’s more scary, or
- ▶ to structure work encounters.

- ▶ Regardless of the context, with skillful use this structured approach increases the probability of our achieving the desired favourable outcome.

10

Thank you.

Any questions?

11

Sources consulted



- ▶ Collins, G. R. (2007). Christian counselling - a comprehensive guide (3rd ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
- ▶ DeVito, J. A. (2013). The Interpersonal Communication Book (13th ed.). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- ▶ Gottman, J. S., & Gottman, J. M. (2015). 10 principles for doing effective couples therapy. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- ▶ Gottman, J., Gottman, J. S., Abrams, D., & Abrams, R. C. (2016). The man's guide to women. New York: Rodal, Inc.
- ▶ Jongsma, A. E., Peterson, L. M., & Bruce, T. J. (2014a). The complete adult psychotherapy treatment planner (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- ▶ Merriam-Webster. (2015). confront. Retrieved June 14, 2019, from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/confront>
- ▶ O'Leary, K. D., Heyman, R. E., & Jongsma, A. E. (2014). The couples psychotherapy treatment planner (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- ▶ Professional Board for Psychology. (2013). Form 258: Framework for education, training, registration and scope of Registered Counsellors. Retrieved November 5, 2018, from Health Professions Council of South Africa: <http://www.hpcs.co.za/PBPsychology/Guidelines>
- ▶ Yalom, I. D. (2002). The gift of therapy - An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients. New York: HarperCollins e-books.

12