

Catalytic Conversations

A "Catalyst"

It is defined as "a substance, usually used in small amounts relative to the reactants, that modifies and increases the rate of a reaction without being consumed in the process."

Note 3 essential parts of the definition.

1. small amounts
2. increases the rate of reaction (or change)
3. not consumed in the process

Jesus is the ultimate catalyst. He doesn't overpower you, even though He could. He says that He uses a "still small voice" to get your attention. And He speeds up change and never is changed.

How can you be more like Jesus when you decide to have a difficult conversation with someone? Here is God's "catalytic" approach.

Galatians 6:1-5 (NKJV) – *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.*

Trespass not Opinion

"...a man is overtaken in any trespass..." – James Bobo (BEE World and great friend) says, "We need to have **chapter and verse** available for them." A significant danger in talking to someone about a "trespass" is the difference between your preferences and God's Word. A trespass is a crossing the boundary of what God has stated is right or wrong, not what you believe is incorrect. Before you go to anyone, verify that the issue you will discuss is from God's Word. Those passages in God's Word are better than anything we can say because those words are alive.

Be Spirit-led

"You who are spiritual", "considering yourself" – Paul just finished talking about the fruit of the Spirit, so it is evident that "spiritual" is about walking in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh. And, during these conversations, it's easy for the flesh to take you in the wrong direction - "lest you be tempted." You can easily be sidetracked by your emotions or what the person says. Difficult conversations only work right when you follow the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Restore

"...restore..." – Restore is the verb, the critical action of "...you who are spiritual..." An implication is without the Holy Spirit leading; the restoration will not happen. Restore is about mending. God wants you to walk in the Spirit with a heart that desires to mend and restore relationships, not leave them broken. He wants you to say "yes" to the other person, even when they say "no."

It is so easy not to have a difficult conversation when you need to. The thought of the emotional conflict that may happen becomes a big flashing stop sign – stop, don't do it!

But God is in the business of restoration and redemption. He wants you to be a channel of His grace, mercy, and truth. You are not doing this alone; His Spirit guides you. So, let's see how God uses you in this conversation.

Be Gentle

A "spirit of gentleness" is only possible with humility, and that, too, is in the context. Look at Galatians 5:26, the verse immediately preceding verse 1 of chapter 6, saying, "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another." Gentleness reduces barriers; force raises them.

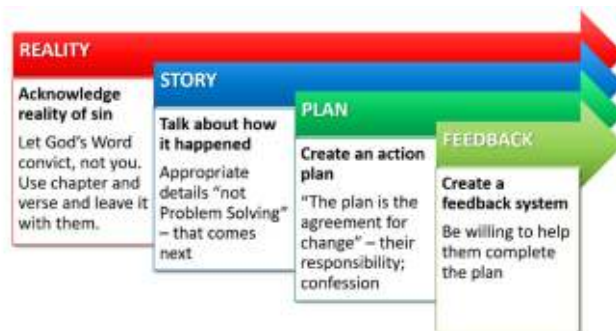
Difficult conversations are not about you using truth as a sledgehammer. It is about you using truth in love, following the Holy Spirit to see how God might use you to restore this person.

Fulfill the Law of Christ

Not only gentle but do this in love. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Love – pursuing the BEST for others is the law of Christ. And you will not bear their burdens unless you want what is best for them. Love requires a decision before you enter the conversation, while conversing, and after you finish. Love is what will make the difference, not whether you are persuasive.

Structure for the Conversation

You can use the four steps of the "Moment of Truth." The power of God's Word is the most important, so step one is critical. If more conversation is needed, you can use steps 2 through 4.



We have a detailed document covering the above four steps and how to do them titled "Moment of Truth Conversations," or read chapter 7 in [Servants Leading Servants – 15 Signs of a Real Servant Leader](#).

Rejoice

If the conversation helps them and they change, it's not because of you. Look at this part of the passage. "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself." This is a direct reference to times we take the credit instead of giving glory to God for any change that occurred. It is also a clear reference to the obstacle to love - thinking about "ME" more than others.

And, if they didn't change, then it is time for "rejoicing in himself alone." That is not a "ME" flashing moment. You did what was right, so you praise God that He is at work in you and being thankful in all things (1 Thes. 5:18). This is about FREEDOM because this rejoicing is "not in another." You are rejoicing that you did what God wanted, not whether they changed. "For each one shall bear his own load" is about you being accountable for your behavior and them for theirs.

Persevere

Finally, look ahead at Galatians 6:9. Difficult conversations typically start the process toward a solution. That means you will need to persevere because most things aren't solved overnight. Don't tire of doing what is right, "for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."