

Healing the Family Series: Moving Relationships Forward

ST. DOMINIC CATHOLIC CHURCH, SW WASHINGTON, DC
CHARLES RUSSELL, PSY.D.
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Overview

- Objectives
- “Spilling Tea”
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Geared toward Outcomes
- Addressing Challenges with Interpersonal Effectiveness
 - Objectives Effectiveness
 - Relational Effectiveness
 - Self-Respect Effectiveness

Objectives

Focus: education about *how* to address problems that emerge in families

Purpose: to enhance safety and fulfilment in relationships

Outcome: to facilitate forgiveness, reconciliation, and reconnection in families

Caveat: actually deciding to address significant problems, especially problems from the past, is not as easy of following a few steps – it requires intense preparation, soul-searching, and a willingness to destroy the very thing you’re attempting to save.

Request: re-read the caveat above: when you only inhabit 50% of a relationship (at best!) it’s not possible to be 100% of the solution – all you can do is try, and trying may make it worse.

What we’re not going to do is pretend like every relationship or relationship problem is easy to solve or worth solving: only you can make that decision.

For example's
sake...

WHAT IS THE VERY
FIRST THING THAT
COMES TO MIND IF I
ASK YOU TO PLEASE
THINK ABOUT AN
INTERPERSONAL
EXPERIENCE THAT
CAUSES YOU MINOR
IRRITATION?

Examples: the way people drive, when your mom asks questions you've already answered, or your partner's difficulty putting down the toilet seat.

Here's the Tea...

- The challenge facing Catholics is how do we live and love in the world we came into?
- Taking Jesus as an example, what does it look to love people into repentance?



<https://images.app.goo.gl/EqrL9rBZsureBf7w6>

- Last week we discussed several manifestations of relationship that challenge Christian anthropology and catholic theology.
- I asked two questions last week that we need to revisit:
 - The challenge facing Catholics is how do we live and love in the world we came into?
 - Taking Jesus as an example, how do we love people into repentance?
- If the topic today is how we achieve healing in the context of relationships, which it is, then what do these two questions tell us?
- Not what is the answer to these questions, but what do these two questions reveal to us about what we want to know?

... Spilt

Love isn't enough.

Because if it goes bad, it will almost certainly be because of **how** it all unfolded.



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- Before I answer that question... I have a secret to tell you...
 - Regardless of how a person defines it, ** love is not enough.
 - Remember that love is always a disposition of willing another's good.
 - But willing the good doesn't mean you'll be good at accomplishing what you will.
- In the context of our talk on healing the family. Metanoia may be desired related to:
 - Living a life that you, as Catholics, can't condone.
 - A single event or series of adverse events that harmed you - even if that harm doesn't qualify as some kind of abuse.
 - Experiencing formal trauma because someone abused you.
 - Anything else that interrupts relationships.
 - Lastly, maybe the metanoia is yours to be had too.
- So what's the answer to that question? What do the two statements about loving people into repentance and how to live and love in the world we received tell us about what we want to know?
 - **It matters how we love people
 - There's a right way to go about getting healing in terms of content → we've got to be true *and* tell the truth

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Interpersonal Effectiveness is essential when addressing difficult topics.

Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- You need interpersonal skills when addressing difficult topics.
- Therefore, I'm going to be introducing you to a conceptual framework from a therapy modality called Dialectical Behavioral Therapy.
 - I'm not going to get into the theory or anything like that.
 - These skills that I'm going to sharing can provide you a way of addressing emotionally evocative things that come up in a variety of settings.

Clarifying Priorities

What is the goal of having this conversation?

Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- It might sound odd, but what are you hoping will happen as a result of having the conversation?
 - Often the goal of healing the relationship of past hurts is not the obvious thing... Getting them to admit wrongdoing or harm.
 - It often has to do with our own identity. Example of that.... Who here has been asked the same question repeatedly by the same person?
So,
 - Without understanding what your objective is, you're not going to reach your goal.
 - Think about how the past is influencing the present as a means of introducing the topic. Answer the question... Why is this past thing still on your mind?
 - Then you'll need to know how to have the conversation in a manner that not only conveys your story but tells it in a way that the other person can receive.

Making Outcome Distinctions

Forgiveness

Forgiveness v Reconciliation

Reconnection

- In the context of family, forgiveness is very often necessary. So let's make some distinctions here.
- When you are in a position to receive someone else's repentance, you too must know what needs forgiving. That's especially true when a person doesn't get why you're upset.
- What do we mean by forgiveness though?
 - Forgiveness is letting someone out of a debt they owe you.
 - Reconciliation is mending the relationship.
 - Reconnection returns the relationship to its former state. Reconnection is typically subsumed under reconciliation but on a human level there are many reasons that a relationship can be mended without ever going back to the same kind of relationship, much less the way that it was.
- You have options for what "healing" looks like. You cannot healthily or helpfully remain in unforgiveness:
 - Forgiveness alone.
 - Forgiveness and reconciliation.
 - Forgiveness, reconciliation, and reconnection.

Goal of Interpersonal Effectiveness

Maintain self-respect and the respect of others, while also achieving your goal.

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- It's important to achieve your goal while also keeping both the respect of others and self-respect
- But the emphasis on each one of those depends on what you're hoping to get out of addressing the issue.

Three Kinds of Effectiveness

Objectives: *obtaining your goal*

- What specific result do I want from this interaction?
- How emphatically do I make my request or say 'no' to a request made of me?

Relationship: *keeping or improving the relationship*

- How do I want the other person to feel about me/the interaction, whether I get what I want or not, after the fact?

Self-Respect: *maintaining or improving your respect for self*

- How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction is over, whether I get what I want or not?

Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Now let's move into the "how" one actually talks about issues that are sensitive... in order to do that, you need to know what the most important object of your
- But which is most important for this situation
 - Meeting my objective?
 - Making sure this person will still like and respect me?
 - Or, maintaining my own sense of self, which includes living in accord with my values and guiding principles?
- You're going to be using all three, but the goal determines which kind of effectiveness needs to lead.

Factors to Consider

Factors to consider the maximize success for each kind of interpersonal effectiveness

- Do I have the right to make this request?
- Can this person give me what I want?
- Is this the right time to make this request?
- Do I know the relevant facts needed to make this request?
- What are my priorities?
 - Does this request align with my long-term AND short-term goals?
- Can I make this request and maintain the relationship?
 - Can I continue on with the relationship as it is?
- How can I make the request and maintain self-respect?

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Objectives Effectiveness: *DEAR MAN*

DEAR MAN is a skill used to maximize potential of meeting an interpersonal goal.

DESCRIBE the facts

EXPRESS your feelings and opinions

ASSERT your request

REINFORCE why your request matters to the other person

MINDFULLY keep your eyes on the goal you've identified

APPEAR confident in your posture, eye-contact, tone of voice, etc.

NEGOTIATE to meet your goals

Schill, M. H., (2019). Doing DBT: Interpersonal effectiveness skills. *Saint Luke Institute*.

Objectives Effectiveness

DESCRIBE “Hey Janet. Can we chat? Thanks. Do you recall our meeting last Thursday? You have me some important feedback about how I can tend to overload the client with information... Then today, in our meeting, I started to say too much again, and you had a strong bodily reaction that I believe was an attempt to alert me to what I was doing.”

EXPRESS “But the way you did it wasn’t helpful. In fact, it felt so shaming that I just stopped talking mid-sentence, which was really awkward and the client was clearly confused.”

Objectives Effectiveness

ASSERT “I’m very open to in-the-moment feedback, but again, the way you went about it wasn’t helpful to me. Can you please avoid doing that in the future..”

REINFORCE “... Not only for the sake of our working relationship, but also for to avoid awkward experiences in meetings that compromise our firm’s credibility.

Reinforcement is the most important aspect of the DEAR MAN skill...

And you may need to find a different reinforcer

Schill, M. H., (2019). Doing DBT: Interpersonal effectiveness skills. *Saint Luke Institute*.

Objectives Effectiveness

MINDFULLY *keep your eyes on the goal you've identified*

APPEAR *confident in your posture, eye-contact, tone of voice, etc.*

NEGOTIATE "I want to thank you for the feedback you gave me, and I wonder if we can work together to develop a signal that you can give me when I need to give the client some breathing room?"

Relationship Effectiveness: *GIVE*

GIVE is a skill that helps maximize potential of using conflict to enhance relationship.

Be **GENTLE**, the other person has feelings too – even if they don't act like it or you don't care

Act **INTERESTED**, even if you're not

VALIDATE the other person

Have an **EASY** manner

Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Relationship Effectiveness

Validation communicates that the other person's experience makes sense...

Empathy is the best way to validate

Remember:

- Every invalid response makes sense: *Janet believes that it's harmful when I provide too much information*
- Validation is not necessarily agreeing: *I don't need to agree with Janet to validate her experience*
- Validation does not require that you like it: *I don't need to like what Janet did, or even her feedback*
- Validate ONLY that which is valid: *I can and should only validate what Janet was attempting to do without validating her behavior*

Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Empathy: Janet thank you for giving me that feedback. It's clear to me that you're very concerned that our client's have all the information they need without overwhelming them.

Self-Respect Effectiveness: *FAST*

FAST is a skill that maximizes the likelihood that you'll walk away feeling good about yourself.

Be **FAIR**, *it's hard to like yourself if you take advantage or are taken advantage of*

Do not **APOLOGIZE**, *unless you make a mistake or do something wrong**

STICK to your values – *that means know them; avoid selling out*

Tell the **TRUTH**, *dishonesty damages self-respect*

Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual*. New York: The Guilford Press.

*Rather than apologize, simply state the meaning behind the apology: "Oh, I didn't know that. Thank you for sharing it. It helps me understand your experience better."

Troubleshooting

Think about the ways in which addressing challenges could go wrong...

- Lack of skills
- Unclear objective
- Interference between short-term and long-term goals
- Emotions getting out of hand
- Anxiety
- Overpowering environment
- Stay in the middle of the road

Schill, M. H., (2019). *Doing DBT: Interpersonal effectiveness skills. Saint Luke Institute.*

- Emotions getting out of hand: “Volume is inversely proportional to veracity.”
- Stay in the middle of the road:
 - avoid extremes, move from “I’m right you’re wrong.” to “What am I missing in this situation?”
 - As self, “Where is the kernel of truth in the other side?”
 - What is giving ride to their experience?

Questions...
