



Be a Peacemaker.
Transform Your Relationships.™



Bringing Relational Wisdom Into Your College, University or Seminary

Relational Wisdom® 360

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BRINGING RELATIONAL WISDOM INTO YOUR COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OR SEMINARY

Learn and teach skills that strengthen relationships, improve academic performance, reduce conflict and lay the foundation for lasting marriage, effective leadership and fulfilling, life-long ministry.

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DAILY RELATIONAL CHALLENGES

Post-secondary education is an exciting and formative time of life. But it's also a time when young Christians face many day-to-day relational stresses, including:

- Unpredictable friendships and romances
- Incompatible roommates
- Challenging professors and heavy academic loads
- Financial pressures and mounting debt
- Spiritual challenges, questions and doubts
- Disillusioning cross-cultural encounters
- Uncertainty about their future lives and careers

TRANSFORM STUDENT LIFE

As students strengthen their relational skills, they can overcome these challenges, reduce stress and turn their college, university or seminary years into an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Relational wisdom enables students to:

- Form godly friendships and romantic relationships
- Build healthy rapport with roommates
- Enhance academic performance
- Improve adaptability and stress management
- Make wise academic and career decisions
- Learn vital teamwork and cross-cultural skills
- Build a compelling and highly competitive resume
- Develop skills for resilient God-honoring lives and ministries

EQUIP FOR LIFELONG MINISTRY

Christian ministry can be wonderfully rewarding or devastatingly stressful, which gives rise to these [sobering statistics](#):

- 23 percent of all current pastors in the United States have been fired or forced to resign from past positions.
- The average pastoral tenure in a local church is just 3.8 years.

- Some seminaries report that over 50% of their graduates drop out of ministry within five years after graduation.
- An average of 79 pastors give up on or are driven out of their churches every week!
- The most common factors in forced pastoral exits are conflict, relational incompetence, power struggles and burnout.

One of the best ways to prepare college, university and seminary students for life-long ministry (and marriages!) is to equip them with solid relational and peacemaking skills during school.

SUPPORTING STUDIES

Multiple studies reveal the personal and financial value of relational skills training in the college, university or seminary.

- [Emotional Intelligence for College and Beyond](#)
- [Emotional Intelligence for Church and Ministry](#)
- [Relational Wisdom Strengthens Both Families and Businesses](#)

STAFF AND DEPARTMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Numerous studies show that relational skills training is one of the best investments any organization can make. As [one study](#) concluded,

“When companies invest in the physical and relational wellness of their workers, returns on investment can range between \$1.50 and \$6.85 for every dollar spent on these types of programs.”

As explained in [Relational Wisdom Strengthens Both Families and Businesses](#), one of the greatest benefits of relational skills training is that these skills can be taken home to strengthen families and reduce marital strife and divorce. Happy home lives contribute to productive work lives, which include improved teamwork and productivity, reduced conflict, lower attrition, greater creativity and enhanced mental and physical health.

But there is an even greater benefit for relational skills training for faculty and staff in a Christian college, university or seminary.

One of the most important lessons that the instructors and staff in these institutions can pass on to their students is how to live out Jesus’ teaching in John 13:34-35:

“A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

Francis Schaeffer referred to this passage as “the final apologetic.” In [The Mark of a Christian](#), he wrote:

“Without true Christians loving one another, Christ says the world cannot be expected to listen, even when we give proper answers. Let us be careful, indeed, to spend a lifetime studying to give honest answers. For years the orthodox,

evangelical church has done very poorly. So it is well to spend time learning to answer the questions of men who are about us. But after we have done our best to communicate to a lost world, still we must never forget that the final apologetic which Jesus gives is the observable love of true Christians for true Christians.”

This type of training is especially needed today, because many of the students coming into Christian colleges, universities and seminaries have learned little about this kind of Christian life. As the president of a leading seminary told Ken Sande:

“A generation ago, you could safely assume that most of the students coming to seminary were raised in a Christian home by parents who were married for life and provided their children with a solid understanding of the Bible, an inspiring example of Christian character and marriage, and an example of active involvement in their local church.

“Not so today. Many of our seminary students come from broken homes, have been Christians for less than ten years, and have few examples of a healthy Christian marriage and involvement in a local church. As a result, we are now having to develop classes on remedial Christian life, marriage and spirituality to help our students prepare to set an example for the churches they hope to someday lead.”

One of the best ways to help college, university and seminary students grow in these areas is to see these qualities modeled by the instructors and administrators they encounter every day at school. As the Apostle Paul taught his young protégé, Timothy,

“Practice these things, immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress” (1 Tim. 4:15).

Godly character is caught as much as it is taught. Therefore, modeling is an essential element in teaching godly relational skills. And as Paul taught Timothy, the best way to become an effective model is to “practice these things and immerse yourself in them.”

There are two ways you can begin practicing and modeling these skills in your school.

The first way is through *individual study*, which you can pursue by registering for one or both of RW360’s two foundational courses, which you can take in either order:

- [Discovering Relational Wisdom](#) (10-12 hours).
- [Relational Peacemaking](#) (12-14 hours).

Rather than studying alone, we encourage you to invite your spouse or a close friend to study and learn with you. This gives you accountability, motivation to maintain progress and opportunities for feedback from someone who knows you well. Better yet, join one of our online Interactive Cohorts to work through a course as part of an interactive group. These courses could take your friendships, marriage, parenting and workplace relationships to a whole new level.

As you learn and model these skills so that others can see your progress, you could inspire many other students, instructors and staff in your college, university or

seminary to follow in your footsteps and join you in building relationships that reflect the transforming power of Jesus in your lives.

This training will also strengthen your effectiveness as a leader in your sphere of influence and enable you to put relational wisdom and peacemaking into practice, as illustrated in these articles:

1. Relational leaders [model humility, teachability and flexibility](#) (Phil. 2:3-4).
2. Relational leaders realize that [sin can turn strengths into weaknesses](#) (1 Cor. 8:1).
3. Relational leaders guard against [the seductiveness of power and its potential for abuse](#); (see [Power Causes Brain Damage](#) and [Psychology of Power](#); contrast with [Reagan, Lincoln, RW and You](#), [Lincoln's Relational Wisdom](#) and [Nelson Mandela](#)).
4. Relational leaders become [skilled peacemakers](#) and [conciliators](#) who [model confession](#) and inspire the "[Golden Result](#)" (Matt. 5:9; James 3:18; Matt. 7:12).
5. Relational leaders [always bring the gospel to your people](#) (Rom. 5:1-11).
6. Relational leaders develop and model [empathy and compassion](#) (Col. 3:12).
7. Relational leaders show how to [redeem an offense](#) (Prov. 15:1).
8. Relational leaders are both [approachable](#) and [accountable](#) (Luke 7:37-38; Matt. 8:9).
9. Relational leaders constantly [build passport](#) (John 4:7-30).
10. Relational leaders always provide the [Three P's of Satisfaction](#) (1 Cor. 14:40; Matt. 7:120).
11. Relational leaders show how to practice [clarity plus charity](#) (Matt. 7:12).
12. Relational leaders learn how to [defuse explosive meetings](#) (Matt. 7:3-5).
13. Relational leaders show that there is [a better way to handle](#) abuse (Prov. 28:13).
14. Relational leaders show how to apply RW in every challenge of life, including [cancer](#).

Many of these principles are drawn from conciliation cases where churches or ministries *failed* to practice these concepts and consequently experienced major conflict. You will be preparing your students for the challenges of Christian ministry if you teach and model these leadership qualities to them while they are still in school.

An even better way to learn relational wisdom and peacemaking is to arrange for your entire department to *study these concepts together as a group*. Group study provides an even greater level of motivation, accountability and interaction, all of which enhance the learning experience. You can pursue group study in two ways.

Each person in your department can study one of the online lessons in relational wisdom or peacemaking each week at their own convenience. Then your group can

gather once a week, perhaps over coffee and donuts or a meal, to discuss what you are learning and to apply the concepts to actual issues of concern to your department.

The other way to study is to purchase a group study set and then schedule a one hour meeting each week to watch the videos and discuss applications as a group.

For more information on how to bring this training into your department, see [Using Relational Wisdom for Organization-Wide Professional Development Training](#).

These skills are especially valuable for human relations (HR) staff and those working in student life and development-some of whom may wish to pursue more [advanced training](#) as Relational Wisdom Coaches or Conciliators.

ENHANCE COURSES AND PROGRAMS WITH RELATIONAL WISDOM AND PEACEMAKING

[The Peacemaker](#) book and [Guiding People Through Conflict](#) are frequently used as required reading in many courses in Christian colleges, universities, seminaries and law schools. Some professors have also added RW360's [Discovering Relational Wisdom](#) and [Relational Peacemaking](#) courses as required study for courses in counseling, practical theology, spiritual formation and pastoral ministry.

Undergraduate Examples:

The [College of Biblical Studies](#) in Houston, Texas, has included Discovering Relational Wisdom in a 16-week, 3 credit course called [Spiritual and Ministry Formation and Foundation](#) (MSSF1311) since 2019. This course is designed for freshmen and sophomore students and is required for all associate and bachelor's degrees. As students complete each lesson, they are encouraged to discuss what they are learning through a chat room created specifically for the course. For more information on this course, please contact Lee Bouldin at lee.bouldin@cbs-houston.edu.

Montana Bible College has integrated Biblical Peacemaking and Relational Wisdom in multiple ways. Their 3-credit course called Biblical Peacemaking (BC 304) became part of their core curriculum for all bachelor's graduates. The course taught students to "get upstream of conflict" by incorporating the Discovering Relational Wisdom course (8-10 hours) into the assignment structure, including discussion opportunities. In-class time taught personal peacemaking skills, conflict resolution coaching skills, and mediation skills. In addition, the personal peacemaking skills were introduced in Family Development (LS 205) (3-credits), another required course.

At still another level, student applicants for Resident Advisor (RA) positions were required to have the Discovering Relational Wisdom and/or Biblical Peacemaking training as a prerequisite. RA training incorporated and fleshed out those principles into student life.

For more information, contact Ryan Ward, the former president of Montana Bible College and current Director of Academic and Church Initiatives at RW360, ryan@rw360.org

Graduate Examples:

Metro Atlanta Seminary has embedded RW360's training on relational wisdom and peacemaking into their Doctor of Ministry in Revitalization and their Doctor of Ministry in Discipleship programs. We have begun collaboration on the design of a D.Min. program with relational wisdom and peacemaking as its primary focus.

Reformed Theological Seminary developed a counseling course that required completion of RW360's [Discovering Relational Wisdom course](#).

Birmingham Seminary is in the process of developing courses that incorporate relational wisdom.

Liberty University includes relational wisdom and peacemaking training as part of its military chaplain program.

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER BENEFITS

A [growing number of employers](#), including Amazon, FedEx, IBM, General Electric, Mayo Clinic, Microsoft and Starbucks, have seen that emotional intelligence training makes their employees more productive, so they are emphasizing EI screening and training during the recruitment process. As a result, college and university students who complete [Discovering Relational Wisdom](#) and add a "Certificate in Enhanced Emotional Intelligence" to their resumes will have an advantage over competing applicants and have a greater chance of landing their dream jobs and excelling in their careers.



A similar trend can be seen in the Christian hiring landscape. Many churches and ministries have seen or experienced the effects of destructive conflict or the loss of leaders through a forced exit (see [Strike the Shepherd](#)). As a result, they, too, will give special attention to applicants who come with relational wisdom and peacemaking credentials.

RESIDENT ADVISORS

One of the most important and challenging responsibilities of resident advisors is to maintain peace and healthy relationships among student housing residents. Training in relational wisdom and peacemaking is an excellent way to help them improve their skill set and prepare them to set an example that inspires students to practice these types of skills themselves.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Bringing Relational Wisdom into Your Family](#)
- [Bringing Relational Wisdom into Your Church](#)

If you have any questions about these resources or how to use them in your personal life, workplace or church, please contact RW360 at mail@rw360.org or 406-294-6806.