

BRINGING RELATIONAL WISDOM® INTO MISSIONS

Get upstream of conflict and equip your mission team with relational skills that build unity, prevent conflict, strengthen teamwork and enhance your Christian witness.

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DAILY RELATIONAL CHALLENGES

Missions teams, both short and long term, serve alongside churches and communities across cultures. Although most partnerships and field interactions are constructive and beneficial, some interactions can trigger major relational challenges:

- Language and cultural misreads that fracture teams
- Sending-church/field-team misunderstandings
- Family stress, isolation and compassion fatigue
- Partnership conflicts with local ministries and NGOs
- Reentry, support-raising, and transition challenges
- Security and crisis decision-making under pressure
- Conflict leading to team attrition

TRANSFORM YOUR MISSIONS TEAM As you strengthen your relational skills, you can build a team characterized by partnership, humility and compelling witness. Relational wisdom enables you to:

- Build a solidly united and supportive leadership team
- Strengthen empathy and humility across cultures
- Surface values and expectations before they clash
- Resolve conflict to protect witness and partnerships
- Coach field leaders for feedback and care conversations
- Support marriages and families on the field
- Strengthen partnerships with respectful communication
- Reduce attrition and keep united teams in the field

SUPPORTING STUDIES

Multiple studies reveal the value of relational skills training in missions.

1. [Emotional Intelligence and Peacemaking for Missions](#)

THE LIFE-GIVING FRUIT OF RELATIONAL WISDOM AND PEACEMAKING

When your missions team learns and practices relational wisdom and peacemaking, you will be prepared to teach these transforming principles to the people your team is serving. For example, when a missions team to Uganda taught peacemaking to a group of pastors, three of those pastors wrote these testimonies:

“For me to forgive was like an abomination. I could teach on forgiveness, but I could not forgive. But when peacemaking came, I confessed and repented of unforgiveness. I have asked for forgiveness from everyone whom I had refused to forgive, starting with my family and my church.”

“When I went to the conference I had the idea of committing suicide. These teachers came to heal our souls and save us from death. I had started looking at everybody as if they were all wrong, from my wife and children to the church I pastor. The teaching was medicine for me. It healed my heart and thoughts. I was delivered and became peaceful. I now love everybody including those I thought were my enemies.”

“Through this teaching I realized I had been very bad to my wife. I have been oppressing her in many ways. After this training, I repented before her. Now peace prevails. The whole world should get this teaching, not only in churches but also in offices and every home.”

Peacemaking training has produced similar fruit in many other settings, as illustrated by these reports:

- [Cattle Rustling in Uganda](#)
- [Relational Dynamics in China](#)
- [Peacemaking in the Middle East](#)

Relational and peacemaking training is like a pebble thrown into the middle of a pond: the ripples can spread much further than you ever dreamed.

SET AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE AS A RELATIONAL LEADER

In 1 Timothy 4:15, the Apostle Paul gave his young protégé some life changing advice: *“Practice these things, immerse yourselves in them so that all may see your progress.”*

Modeling is the most effective way to teach relational skills and to set the stage for sharing the gospel (1 Cor. 11:1; John 13:35). As Paul teaches Timothy, the best way to become a good model is to “practice these things and immerse yourself in them.”

Here are some practical ways that you and your leadership team can do this:

1. [Model humility, teachability and flexibility](#) (Phil. 2:3-4).
2. Realize that [sin can turn strengths into weaknesses](#) (1 Cor. 8:1).
3. 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. Become [skilled peacemakers](#) and [conciliators](#) who [model confession](#) and inspire the “[Golden Result](#)” (Matt. 5:9; James 3:18; Matt. 7:12).
5. [Always bring the gospel to your people](#) (Rom. 5:1-11).
6. Develop and model [empathy and compassion](#) (Col. 3:12).
7. Show how to [redeem an offense](#) (Prov. 15:1).
8. Show your people how [political strife creates opportunities](#) (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1).
9. Use [gentle shepherding](#) and [loving discipline to restore lost sheep](#).
10. Be both [approachable](#) and [accountable](#) (Luke 7:37-38; Matt. 8:9).
11. Constantly [build passport](#) (John 4:7-30).
12. Always provide the [Three P’s of Satisfaction](#) (1 Cor. 14:40; Matt. 7:120).
13. Show how to practice [clarity plus charity](#) (Matt. 7:12).
14. Learn how to [defuse explosive meetings](#) (Matt. 7:3-5).
15. Show that there is [a better way to handle](#) abuse (Prov. 28:13).
16. Show how to apply RW in every challenge of life, including [cancer](#).

A STRATEGY FOR MISSIONS TRAINING

God desires peace for his people, promising it to those who trust him, obey his law and seek after him: “Peace I leave with you” (John 14:27), “Perfect peace I give to those whose minds are steadfast” (Isa. 26:3), “The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7). Here are some practical ways you can build and preserve this kind of peace on your missions team:

1. Pray for guidance, asking God to give you wisdom, discernment and unity as you build a growth plan that fits your church.
2. To see how relational skills training can equip your leaders and team members to prevent and resolve serious conflicts, take a few minutes to read these real-life peacemaking and conciliation cases:
 - [Personal Peacemaking Cases](#)
 - [Informal Conciliation Cases](#)
 - [Formal Conciliation Cases](#)
3. Develop a plan for personal and organizational growth ([Download template here](#))
4. Start with yourself; practice these things, set an example (1 Tim. 4:15).
 - Download free resources ([RW App](#), [RW Blog](#), [Free Downloads](#))
 - Foundational training ([Discovering Relational Wisdom](#), [Relational Peacemaking](#)).
 - [RW Shepherd Certificate](#)
 - [Advanced Training and Certification](#)
5. Use relevant training resources to disciple your current leadership team and to screen and train new leaders.
6. Use this 70-page ebooklet, [Guiding People Through Conflict](#), to learn the basic principles of conflict coaching, mediation and arbitration.
7. Build a [Peace Sower Team](#) within your organization to share training, coaching and peacemaking responsibilities (Exod. 18:22-23).
8. Use relational wisdom and peacemaking [online courses](#) and [group study sets](#) to equip your team with vital relational skills before they leave for the field.
9. Modify these [Relational Commitments](#) for a missions context to clarify and obtain informed consent to your policies and practices, which can reduce misunderstandings, conflict and exposure to legal liability.
10. Use PACE (Professional and Community Engagement) resources to spread the gospel in in secular venues (see [Using RW for Outreach, Evangelism and Church Growth](#), [PACE Program](#), [PACE FAQs](#), [RW Strengthens Both Families and Businesses](#); [PACE Instructor Training](#)).

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