



MANUAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS
FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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This work seeks to offer the practical development of skills that will allow those who exercise it to manage their conflicts in an assertive manner.

To be able to do these exercises it is necessary to start from a principle of good will. That is, it is about learning and growing. The sisters do not want to bother or hurt me. If I come to feel this way, we recommend that they attend a psychotherapy process, since it may be a personal problem due to some unresolved wound or specific problems with certain types of personalities.

Peace can only be achieved with the union of wills. Each person must feel that he or she is a unique and particularly valuable collaborator in this process.

It is necessary to develop both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. In this sense we propose 2 exercises in each area. It is proposed to do one exercise each week.

PROGRAM:

- **1. Problem awareness**

You cannot solve a problem that you do not accept. Most people have difficulty recognizing that they have a problem they cannot solve.

It is necessary for us to raise awareness. This is an intrapersonal work. To learn how to do it, we recommend the following exercises:

Intrapersonal Skills

- 1.1** Focus my attention on what I am doing, avoiding doing more than one thing at a time or thinking about things other than what I am doing.
- 1.2** Ask ourselves, when faced with a situation, How do I feel? Identify the root of that feeling and the ways in which I can resolve it.
- 1.3** Identify when I feel unfairly treated and the reasons for this in order to become aware of the needs that are not being met.

Interpersonal Skills:

- 1.4** Start by sharing in community what I like and dislike about something simple like food, weather or work schedules. Share what I learned about myself and others.
- 1.5** In community meetings, always allow space to express: how I feel, what I need and what I discover about myself and/or others..

- **2. Motivation to solve it**

I can only resolve a conflict if it is worthwhile for me to resolve it. Most of us are selfish and what we do is seek to make ourselves feel good. We tend to focus on asking the other person to recognise what I am asking for and to change.

If this is my motivation, it will hardly lead to resolution. It is necessary that I really want to solve, which always implies giving in and taking responsibility. Commitment to the process is essential.

There are 2 basic types of motivation, that is, what drives us to change the place where we are: the first is when we are fed up with the situation, because it is no longer tolerable. The second is when we want to change what is happening because we believe we will be better off somewhere else.

We recommend the following exercises:

Intrapersonal Skills

- 2.1** Try to realize if your main form of motivation is when you reach a point of being fed up or when you want to walk to a better place, because that gives you an idea of the way you usually make a change.
- 2.2** Identify what are the reasons why you don't want to change, or give up that particular conflict. What is the purpose of this particular conflict?

Interpersonal Skills

- 2.3** Write down your personal commitment to resolve conflicts in this community and each one reads it in front of the others.
- 2.4** Share in community the reasons why you joined the congregation and the reasons why it is worthwhile to continue.

- **3. Active listening**

Active listening is the way we can truly listen. It is about listening not just to the words, but to understand what is going on in the other person. It is the prerequisite for empathy.

We recommend the following exercises:

Intrapersonal Skills

- 3.1** Work during the week on paying attention to what they tell me. Listening to everything without judging and trying to understand people, that is, what they are telling me with their verbal and non-verbal language, we should not assume, it is always better to ask, for example: do you mean this? It seems to me that what you need is an advice/hug... does it make sense to you?
- 3.2** Invite the Holy Spirit to help me listen to the sisters as God listens to them. We read Proverbs 18:13 and become aware of how we begin to formulate the answer in our head before we listen.

Interpersonal Skills

- 3.3** Form groups of 3 people where one person expresses something about a topic, the second person listens actively and the third person observes. Each person plays the 3 roles and then they share with each other how they felt and what they discover about themselves and the others.

- **4. You are a unique person**

This means that your contribution is valuable to the process, but no one will value what you do not value. It is a dynamic attitude that implies recognizing your abilities to put them at the service of the community and simultaneously recognizing those of others.

A very important value at this point is that you do not change, deny or devalue your essence. God thought of you from eternity and invited you to the mission, therefore each one must be considered as valuable and indispensable to the process. There is no poor opinion or ability that is inferior. Each person is a gift from God.

Intrapersonal Skills

4.1 In the community we play ivory statues. We sing to the ivory statues 1, 2 and 3 like this and we stay still for 5 minutes, without talking. The one who moves first has a punishment which is a service to the others. At the end we share how much work it is for us to stop motorically and linguistically. I work that week on stopping at least once a day, for 5 minutes in order to train self-control.

4.2 Think before you speak. What would you say to a person you have a problem with or are angry with? Write it down. Then review what you wrote and write it down in a more evangelical and assertive way.

Interpersonal Skills

4.3 Write a eulogy about yourself and read it together. Share how I felt and what I became aware of with respect to myself and the others.

- **5. Expressing feelings and thoughts**

In this line of recognizing oneself as a unique gift from God, is the power to give expression to that gift.

Let us point out a few things:

I am a gift of God for humanity, that is, I have a particular way of being, of seeing life, of knowing God and of giving myself to others in charity that no one else has.

It is not about “this is me and do as you wish”. That is a haughty and arrogant attitude that instead of expressing the gift, justifies my mistakes in front of me and blocks communication and acceptance of others.

It is about finding my essence, because in God's plan that is my contribution to humanity, in general to the mission and specifically to my congregation and my community.

Intrapersonal Skills

5.1 Separar Separate the wheat from the chaff: Meditate on the quotation Lk 3:17, what is wheat in my person, what is valuable? What is chaff, what is superficial or even destructive in my person? Why do I cling to the chaff and not want to burn it? What is it good for?

Write these answers on separate sheets of paper and when it is clear and you want to do it, burn the chaff and offer it to Jesus as a holocaust of purification.

5.2 Remember the cycle of emotion and try this week to identify at all times how you feel and why, that is, where is the root of your emotion, what triggered it..

5.3 According to the circle of needs, identify your needs and try to satisfy them where there is what you need. Remember, elms do not bear pears.

Interpersonal Skills

5.4 Watch a movie together: The King's Speech or Rain Man or Stepmom. Discuss as a community the abilities or disabilities shown by the characters to express their emotions.

- **6. Be reliable and trustworthy**

Trust is not only a virtue, but also a human need. In order to be able to relate to people, it is indispensable to trust in God, in myself and in others. You may ask, where do you buy that?

The truth is that the only way to trust is through knowledge. You trust God when you know him and realize that he is immutable.

You trust yourself when you know yourself and what you are capable of for better or worse; and you also know your limits: what you can't handle. That knowledge also leads you to be reliable.

You trust other people as long as you know them, their limits and scope. That makes them reliable.

Trust cannot be blind because then you are going to be disappointed. Invariably you or the other person is going to do something that doesn't match your idealized idea of who the other person is and that leads you to feel hurt and therefore close yourself off to communication because that person "failed you".

The truth is that you made an unreal version of God, of the other or of you, that at some point broke down and you have a hard time facing reality. But it is only in reality that you can develop a solid trust.

Intrapersonal Skills

6.1 Meditate on Question 9: On the Immutability of God by St. Thomas Aquinas (Tomásdeaquino.org) and ask yourself if you trust in God. You can also meditate on the book of St. Alphonsus Liguori: Conformity to the Will of God. To review your ability to trust in Him.

6.2 Observe myself and the sisters to identify what we are reliable in, that is, what are the skills and qualities of each one, we are not good at everything.

Interpersonal Skills

6.3 Write down when I have been brave enough to face my fears. Share my writing with the community. Share how I feel and what I learned.

6.4 Share with the community the aspects in which I am trustworthy. Discover each sister's characteristics that make her trustworthy. Share how I feel and what I learned.

- **7. Being empathetic**

We have all heard that empathy is putting yourself in the other person's shoes. But it doesn't do any good to put yourself in the other person's shoes. What I really need is to understand how they feel, what they need, how they see life and how they see themselves and me. It is really about taking, for a moment, even if only in my head, the existential position of the other person.

Being empathetic has two great fruits: the first is to stop being the center of the universe and to realize that from other places there are different perspectives.

Secondly, it allows me to broaden my view of what is happening in order to understand the other person rather than judge him or her.

If we are empathetic, we stop being critical and become compassionate and merciful, i.e., I understand that their actions have a story behind them, a unique characteristic of their personality and a learning process specific to their life experience.

Intrapersonal Skills

7.1 Find a way this week to get out of my selfish center and empathize with at least one person every day.

Interpersonal Skills

7.2 Sharing the film "The Chorus" Identifying what achieves empathy in the group. How needy am I of empathy? With whom do I fail to empathize and why? What do I notice?

- **8. Comunicación asertiva**

Learning to say what I want to say, to whom I need to say it, so that the other can understand it and I can raise it with charity.

Intrapersonal Skills

8.1 Before expressing what I think or feel, it is convenient for me to make 3 essays: 1. Whatever comes out of my chest, however it comes out. 2. To rewrite what I wrote in a better way 3. Revise the wording so that it is clear and charitable.

It is recommended to use the sandwich technique: describe the event objectively, validate the other person by making him/her see that we understand his/her good intention, state how the event made me or makes me feel and finally propose a solution.

Interpersonal Skills

8.2 In groups of 3 make an example of assertive communication. One raises something she wants to say, the other listens and responds and the third says different ways to approach communication in a more assertive way. Remember that in assertive communication it is always important to speak from the self, that is, from what happens to me and what happens to me with that fact and also seeks to propose solutions.

- **9. Respect and Responsibility**

These are the two core values in any interpersonal relationship.

Respect is the ability to allow the exercise of freedom to all the people involved in the relationship. We cannot impose, only propose. Because this is what God has done historically.

Responsibility refers to the ability to answer for the consequences of my actions.

Intrapersonal Skills

9.1 Pensar: Thinking: what happens to me when someone does something I don't agree with.

How blackmailing or manipulative am I in my relationships to get the other person to do what I want.

Do I allow others to periodically disrespect me? Why? Do I take responsibility for my actions or do I evade my responsibility?

Interpersonal Skills

9.2 In groups of two stand facing each other and place your palms against each other. One pushes saying yes and the other saying no. Be aware that this leads to a dead end.

9.3 Reflect with the community on the responsibilities that we fail to fulfill at home, emphasizing not to look for a responsible but to understand the reasons why this happens and then share possible solutions.

- **10. Being grateful**

An important part of considering a person as a mature adult is that he/she develops the virtue of gratitude. The adolescent is self-centered and goes through life with the attitude of deserving everything that is given to him. The adult is humble and walks with gratitude because he discovers in everything he receives the providence of God and the generosity of his brother.

Intrapersonal Skills

10.1 Recognize that everything you have is a gift from God. Write a letter of thanks to the community and read it in front of everyone.

Interpersonal Skills

10.2 Watch this video and comment on it in community

<https://youtu.be/HMSeDifs5Xc?si=OcQjbi1iSHYleUfl>

Tip: we can share by saying what we learned from the video, what we thought, what we observed, how it made us feel, what reflection it gives to my life and to the community.

- **11. Learning to negotiate**

In order to establish a community it is necessary to learn to negotiate and this always implies giving in. It is important that we do not see this as a loss but as an opportunity to strengthen our fraternal life, as well as to generate growth and well-being in the community.

To negotiate it is necessary to give equal value to the feelings and thoughts of each person, in order to achieve a balance in satisfying the needs of all members of the community.

Intrapersonal Skills

11.1 Become aware of how I feel in this particular house and what is not helping me to build fraternity. What needs am I not being able to meet?

Interpersonal Skills

11.2 Share in community what we need and negotiate so that everyone's needs can be satisfied. Remember that needs are vital, whims can be dispensed with and I will not die. Here we are referring to needs not whims. And it will be valued in view of community improvement.

- **12. Learn to love**

God is Love. So to the extent that we are one with Him we can learn to be one with others.

Intrapersonal Skills

Reflect on 1 Cor 13:1-13 with emphasis on realizing who God is and who I am.

Interpersonal Skills

12.1 Reflect on Romans 12:6-21 and share in community.



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