



# CONNECTION KILLERS

## CONNECTION KILLERS, PART 1: SHUTTING OUT, DRAGGING IN

God wants us to connect better with others by avoiding common disconnects that hurt relationships. Whether you're sometimes your own worst enemy or you occasionally send the wrong message, we all can tend to kill connections and relationships. If you want stronger connections, understanding of how/why we sabotage relationships, and the overcoming strategies? Then buckle up!

**BIG IDEA: If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe some of the connection killers that were in your home as you were growing up.
2. What changes have you seen over the past years about people's attitude toward deep, committed relationships?
3. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Romans 12:9-10, 16-18:*

*<sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. <sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! <sup>18</sup> If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12:9-10, 16, 18*
4. Describe the difference between a sincere love and an insincere love in the following relationships. What does sincere love look like and what does insincere love look like?
  - A friendship
  - A Professional relationship
  - A Marriage
  - A parenting relationship
5. Kim said, "Stonewalling is shutting people out." Has anyone ever given you the silent treatment? Have you ever felt on the outside? Talk about that with the group.
6. John Gottman's research says, "When a spouse chooses to stonewall the other spouse, that is the second biggest behavior that can predict divorce with a 90% accuracy. Do you or your spouse use stonewalling? What about your parents?"

*Stonewalling can be as obvious as a hand up with palm out, indicating "I'm done," or as subtle as turning or walking away. Some people will suddenly become preoccupied or frigid, while others may just become busy doing something else. Whatever the evasive maneuver is, if you feel like you can't get any open communication, then there is a good chance you're getting stonewalled.*
7. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Proverbs 18:19.*

*It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. His anger shuts you out like iron bars. Proverbs 18:19 (TLB)*
8. Why when we offend someone is it going to be like a long, hard uphill battle to rebuild that relationship? Do you feel the relationship can ever go back to the way it was? Why or why not?



9. Read the following passages and paraphrase them in your own words. How would our relationships be different if we followed God’s advice? What would you have to change

*The start of an argument is like the first break in a dam; stop it before it goes any further.*  
Proverbs 17:14 (TEV)

*Hatred stirs up trouble; love overlooks the wrongs that others do.*  
Proverbs 10:12 (CEV)

*Love forgets mistakes; nagging about them parts the best of friends.*  
Proverbs 17:9 (TLB)

*Never abandon a friend—either yours or your father’s. When disaster strikes, you won’t have to ask your brother for assistance. It’s better to go to a neighbor than to a brother who lives far away.*  
Proverbs 27:10 (NLT)

*Giving an honest answer is a sign of true friendship.*  
Proverbs 24:26 (CEV)

*An open rebuke is better than hidden love! Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.*  
Proverbs 27:5-6 (NLT)

*Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*  
Colossians 3:13 (TLB)

10. Kim said there are 3 iron bars that shut people out with Stonewalling: *unresponsiveness, running away, and being preoccupied*. Do you do any of these three?
11. If *Stonewalling is shutting people out, then triangulation is dragging others in*. With your Bible or Bible App, read Proverbs 26:17.

*Yanking a dog’s ears is no more foolish than interfering in an argument that isn’t any of your business.*  
Proverbs 26:17 (TLB)

12. What are some of the reasons Kim gave for people to triangulate and drag others into conflict?
13. Kim said, “*The solution to stonewalling, triangulation, and almost any other connection killer is found in Matthew 18.*” With your Bible or Bible App, read Matthew 18:15-17:

*<sup>15</sup> “If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. <sup>16</sup> But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.*

Matthew 18:15-17 (NLT)

14. Kim said, “Whether we offend someone or someone offends us, God never lets us off the hook to reconcile the relationship.” Why do you think that God never lets us off the hook?
15. How do you feel when you hear the word “confrontation”?
16. Which of these words describes why you are most typically averse to confronting someone?
17. As followers of Jesus, God’s overarching command for us is to treat others as our heavenly Father has treated us. How does confrontation play a part in following that command?
18. As an adult, have you ever been confronted about something by someone who took a big risk bringing it to your attention? If so, how did it go? If not, would you be better off today if someone had?

## MOVING FORWARD

One person who will never stonewall you is God. He always has the communication lines open and welcomes your prayers. You don’t need a formal request or to wait in a queue. Anytime you want to talk, he is there to listen and welcomes it. When we open our hearts and let others in, we strengthen our connections and defeat stonewalling.

Pray: “God, help me put down the walls in my relationships so that our hearts can come through and guide our actions to connect to one another.”