

Relationship Skill #3: Healthy Conflict

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“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”
(Proverbs 27:17)

When it comes to relationships, conflict is inevitable. Conflict happens whenever two or more independent people attempt to work together but have differing opinions, perspectives, or desires. These differences are what push the group beyond the capacity of any single person. And the result of reconciling those differences is growth and improvement.

The first challenge in developing the skill of healthy conflict is recognizing the benefits of working through these disagreements. Conflict is necessary to increase the capacity of the relationship and team. If there are no differing opinions or ideas, then one or more members of the team are unnecessary because they aren't adding anything unique to the group. Learning to see differing views as an opportunity to learn and grow will help us lean into healthy conflict.

Many people avoid conflict because they see it as a bad thing. They may believe that people who love each other will always agree or that unity in the Body of Christ should look like uniformity. However, without conflict nothing will even change or improve. So if we really care about “the countenance of (our) friend,” we won't avoid conflict, we will learn to do it well.