

The Leadership Principle of Confrontation

“A soft answer turns away wrath.” Proverbs 15:1



By John E. Schrock, Businessman

Underline the key concepts found in this principle.

When we are confronted by someone, our natural tendencies are to get defensive and argumentative. It's because we don't want to be proven wrong. To be wrong is considered humbling, and it hurts our pride. So we defend our position even when we know we are wrong or have exaggerated the truth. No one is always right in every situation. Yet, all of us are usually partly right. It is this “partly right” which gets us into trouble. This is why:

1. Since we know we are at least partly right, we open our mouth and freely give our opinions.
2. Once we have spoken our opinions, we are committed to defend our position. It is not easy to admit that we are wrong.

We cannot have good communication without good relationships. Good relationships give us the right to communicate our opinion without conflict. Poor communication destroys relationships, wastes a lot of time and energy, and hinders us in resolving problems.

Yes, we may win the argument, but lose the battle or the point we were trying to make, and possibly lose a friend in the process. When we have disagreements—which we all have—it is not only important to “agree with the adversary quickly” (Matthew 5:25), but equally important to manage and control the tone of our voice. A “soft answer” turns away wrath. When our response is soft and gentle, our opponents will respect us and consider our

point of view. This gives us a chance to continue the discussion. It is amazing how powerful words are in the hands of those who know how to use them. The words “I'm sorry” are powerful, but when they come from a soft, sensitive tongue, they are disarming. A s-o-f-t s-l-o-w answer is more powerful than tanks and guns.

There are three questions we should ask ourselves before we get into a debate:

1. How enlightened am I on the subject? Don't show a boastful, over confident attitude, but rather downplay your knowledge and maybe they will be surprised.
2. How much control do I have over my emotions? Refuse to let your anger control you, breath deep before you respond on the defense.
3. Do I know when to say, “You may be right!” or “That's an interesting point!”? All good communicators know how to humble themselves. And it's not wrong to say “I don't know” or “I'm not sure.”

The way we use and handle words may determine war or peace, friends or enemies, and failure or success in life. We must remember that it is better to get a part of something than nothing at all. The man who “knows that he knows” does not have to scream or get loud and abrasive. If he does, it may be a sign of his insecurity. It can be very embarrassing to be wrong at the top of our voice.

We can avoid a lot of problems and be more productive by giving soft answers to those who are arrogant and abrasive. When discussions create more heat than light, it is time to return a soft answer and let others embarrass themselves with their loudness. We should never walk away without establishing a respectful closure.

This principle is part of the one year character development program:

Foundations For Achievement.

Thoughts to Ponder:

The best way to win is to forget to keep score.

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed