

Aligning Conversations

We have been hearing, particularly through the five-fold series on the pastor, about how we _____ have a role in both being _____ and _____ others.

We will all be called to show leadership at times by having aligning conversations – conversations that seek to _____ or _____ behaviour that is not consistent with the maturing process. This behaviour will be harming the person's growth and may also be impacting more widely on the Body.

These conversations are not the _____ of those in formal leadership roles. We will all be called to be on the giving and receiving end of these at times. It is important for our growth that we are _____ to engage in this on both sides.

The posture from which aligning conversations must come

1. Be led by the Holy Spirit – on what, when and how to have these conversations.

Just because you can see an issue doesn't necessarily mean that it is right for you to raise it. Likewise, being _____ about raising it, doesn't necessarily mean it is right not to.

2. The motivation must always be the _____ – for the person and the wider Body or group. We are to speak the truth _____ love.

Ephesians 4:14-16

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 is a good place to go to check your motives are aligned with the Father's heart

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Verse 16 makes it clear that there is a role for all of us in _____ one another. It is preceded by a description of the posture we are to have towards one another.

Having an aligning conversation

While the posture will always be the same (above) – the ‘how’ will vary. We need to be _____ on the Holy Spirit and not respond in the way that seems right to us.

Sometimes sharing a _____ from our own lives or asking a _____ will be the way to unlock the issue.

If you sense to raise the issue _____, some guidelines are:

- Words matter – speak to the behaviour and its impacts, not to the person’s identity. E.g. ‘I’ve noticed that you haven’t been contributing at discipleship group’ as opposed to ‘you are disengaged’.
- Be prepared to listen, don’t assume you have the whole picture or that the conversation will go the way you expect it to. Continue to rely on the Holy Spirit’s leading.
- Respect the other person’s choice – if they don’t wish to continue the conversation at that time, respect that, and seek their agreement to revisit at another time. Some people need time to process and regroup when dealing with challenging issues or require the message from multiple people before they are prepared to face the issue.
- Don’t judge the quality of the conversation by the other person’s response. Your role is to faithfully do as you were asked, not to attain the final result.

Helping people take responsibility

A common _____ to people moving forward is that they do not want to _____ for their behaviour. When an aligning conversation arises, they may look to instead deflect with _____ for why they are powerless to change, _____ (or you), or _____ the impact of their behaviour.

We can only move forward when we acknowledge the issue. To support people to take responsibility for moving forward, it is useful to:

- Remind them of the ‘why’ (shared purpose) and how their behaviour is working against that
- Be empathetic and listen, but don’t further disempower them by buying into excuses
- Instead, support them to come to a place where they are thinking ‘what can I do to move forward?’