



SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Having Honest Conversations that Help Students Grow



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Eph. 4:11-16

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and **teachers**, to **equip the saints** for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to **mature manhood**, to the measure of the **stature of the fullness of Christ**, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to **grow up** in every way into him who is the head, into **Christ**, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**



Three Options When Faced with Difficult Conversations:

1. Avoidance
2. Face & Handle Poorly
3. Face & Handle Well



Why does “speaking the truth in love” matter?

- Model grace & love
- Gives opportunity for growth
- Offers eternal consequences



When difficult conversations are done poorly or neglected:

- Miss vital opportunities
- May communicate bad information
- Model poor behavior
- May alienate students and even do emotional/spiritual harm



1. Have the conversation in person (if possible).

- a. Body language matters
- b. Tone of voice matters
- c. Especially avoid texting/messaging if possible.



2. Establish a relational foundation

- a. Greater chance of success if a positive relationship already exists
- b. Personal interaction
- c. Investment



3. Bathe the conversation in prayer

- a. For self (our spirit, discernment)
- b. For student (understanding heart)
- c. For God's peace and presence



4. Check motives and do heart prep.

- a. Check purpose - the “why”
- b. Check objective - God’s glory and student’s good vs. winning.



5. Enter the conversation with respect and humility.

- a. Assume the best
- b. Stay open to new facts
- c. Aim for mutual good
- d. Be teachable
- e. Acknowledge any error



6. Listen - really listen

- a. Listen to understand (not just to respond)
- b. Listen for their underlying message
- c. Ask clarifying questions
- d. Maintain listening posture
- e. Refuse defensiveness



7. Communicate clearly

- a. Choose words carefully
- b. Moderate vocal tone
- c. Stay calm (voice & actions)
- d. Check face/posture
- e. Be kind
- f. Stay on track
- g. Check for understanding



8. Show Love

- a. Choose to love
- b. Stay other-oriented
- c. Look below the surface
- d. Reap benefits



With the help and enabling of the Holy Spirit, difficult conversations can become gateways to healed relationships, loving discipleship, and the ultimate good of everyone involved.

