

Carey Theological College
APPL 625: Interpersonal Skills and Conflict Resolution
Winter 2020

Professor: Dan Russell, DMin.
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Date: Jan. 6 – Mar. 13, 2020
3 Graduate Credits (127.5 hours)

While every effort has been made to be accurate as of November 22, 2019, syllabi produced before the beginning of class are subject to change

Course Description

Effective leadership in the 21st century draws heavily on the “soft skills” of interpersonal management, emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, leading teams. Faith-based contexts (church, agency, mission) may be blessed by goodwill and a mutual mission, but without the ability to negotiate the inevitable differences in perspective and workstyles, goals will be thwarted.

Drawing upon biblical theology, Christian ethics, social psychology and current leadership theory and praxis, the student will have opportunity to reflect upon key leadership skills in their own context. Issues reviewed will include individual workstyles, conflict management, coaching, power and humility, emotional intelligence, organization culture, effective teams and delegation.

Course Goal

To understand vital management “soft” skills, discerning and developing how one needs to grow, resulting in more effective Spirit-led leadership in churches and faith-based organizations.

Course Outcomes

After completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Employ an integrative approach towards biblical theology, social psychology and emotional intelligence competencies, developing a robust faith-based emotional management framework.
2. Discern healthy and dysfunctional patterns in conflict and group dynamics, consider your own capability and resources, and thus seek to grow and apply these principles in your context, toward the ends of both organizational effectiveness and personal growth.
3. Draw upon the emotional management skills required to excel in personal and group contexts in church, mission and other life circumstances, led by the Spirit of God.

Instructor Biography



Teaching on conflict and emotional intelligence competencies is a recipe for failure. We are all very human. As I write I'm reflecting on a recent interpersonal situation in my workplace that I handled poorly. Lord, have mercy.

At the same time, I am incredibly grateful for what I have learned in these areas, and those closest to me share that I have grown in these regards. There is hope for us all! For me, as a kind-hearted person, the biggest challenge has been to learn to be firm and wise in conflict management. The good news is that we are not alone in these matters – our Lord is with us via his empowering Spirit, and our loved ones are cheering us on, with words of wisdom and support.

I have been happily married for 35 years to Karen, one of the wisest people I know. Our three kids are now adults, pursuing their various journeys with gusto. They love people well, bring us much joy, and challenge our old thinking, which is great!

I obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree (UBC) and worked for five years as a junior manager with General Motors of Canada, a great opportunity to learn professional approaches to management. Following this I completed a Masters of Christian Studies at Regent College (Counselling and Family Systems) and Karen and I flew off to Austria where we were missionaries in a Christian conference and study centre for 14 years. There I cut my teeth as a young leader making many mistakes as part of our leadership team. I realized with some re-occurring leadership challenges that I needed to get a better handle on this leadership thing.

As I prayed about this, I sensed the Lord calling me to bring my two worlds together, the business management experience with a Family Systems lens, as faith-based organizations often function with family dynamics. This led to my DMin at Carey Theological College, in which my focus was on faith-based organizational dynamics, considering how leadership functions in times of transition, through a family systems perspective.

Returning to Canada, I have been employed at Union Gospel Mission for 13 years, a wonderful organization caring for those struggling with poverty, homelessness and addiction, in the name of Christ. I serve as the Director of Programs and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. There are about 120 people working in my department and a budget of about ten million; I need to flex my leadership muscles every day, whether I want to or not! I teach leadership seminars to our managers and supervisors here.

For better or worse I have found myself in leadership roles for over 25 years. I have served as an elder and Chairperson of our elders, and chaired pastoral search committees at our wonderful church, Emmanuel Christian Community, in Richmond.

A few things I love (in addition to chocolate!): my family, great talks with my wife and kids, going for walks along the beach, nice long quiet times and writing in my journal, working out problems at work, smiling and encouraging others, laughter and fun of any variety, games that combine both luck and skill, occasional golf and street hockey, when my old body allows, a wonderful worship service. I love visiting friends, here in Canada and in Europe, and often unwind watching sports.

Instructor Course Welcome and Assumptions

Welcome to our course on interpersonal skills and conflict resolution. I look forward to getting to know you and learning from each of you.

Interpersonal skills. Conflict. Teamwork. The easy stuff, eh! Ha! Leadership is challenging enough, without our personal differences and emotions getting in the way.

The good news is that we can develop proficiencies in these areas, which greatly assist us in our leadership roles. Pastors, mission workers, and leaders of all types will be confronted regularly through all manner of challenges, many of which are emotionally charged. How do we navigate these shoals without crashing too often into the rocks? How can we create pools of calm water in which to work through the inevitable differences with grace and truth? These sentences are much easier to write than to live. We need wisdom, practical skills, the Spirit's direct intervention.

We'll draw on a wide cross section of material in the course bibliography, from business, psychology and faith contexts. All truth is God's truth; we learn from the best, always careful to filter any business models through the grid of Scripture and Christian understanding.

It will be fun to discuss these subjects together. I am assuming you are all mature and capable adults who will take this course seriously. I expect you to do the readings, and to engage meaningfully in the online discussion forums. Plan carefully to give yourself time to think and interact with the material carefully. You don't need to agree with me or others, and I appreciate new points of view. But you do need to explain and support your opinions.

I will do my best to be timely in my responses, and seek to provide both group and personal feedback, though I will not comment on every individual post. Feel free to ask questions or challenge perspectives along the way. If you have read a great book or learned something you want to share, share it with us!

Let's help each other out. If someone else asks a question you can answer, feel free! You can also write me an email directly offline anytime. And if you are in the area and would like to meet, let's do that.

Learning together is a gift. I look forward to getting to know you and learning from each other.

Required Readings

During the course, the student will read and reflect on the following resources. The Leadership Manual (Russell course pack and a few other articles) will be posted online.

Note: The Brené Brown *Dare to Lead* text and the two assessment tools will need to be purchased by students. If you have difficulty accessing the assessment tools, please contact both Dan Russell and the Teaching & Learning team to discuss potential solutions (drussell@carey-edu.ca and teachingandlearning@carey-edu.ca)

Required texts and assessments (in this order):

Brown, Brené. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*. New York: Random House, 2018. 298 pages.

Keis, Ken. Personal Style Indicator (PSI) survey (booklet or online version). 19 pages.
<https://www.crgleader.com/assessments/personal-style-indicator.html>

Thomas, Kenneth and Ralph H. Kilmann. *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*. 2007. 16 pages.

<https://shop.psychometrics.com/collections/thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode-instrument-tki-1/products/thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode-self-scorable?variant=1200630695>

Note: The below texts are available through the Carey EBSCO eBook library

Hartwig, Ryan and Warren Bird. *Teams that Thrive: Five Disciplines of Collaborative Church Leadership*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 268 pages.

Runde, Craig E. and Tim A. Flanagan. *Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader – How You and Your Organization Can Manage Conflict Effectively, 2nd Ed.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013. 301 pages.

Russell, Dan. Interpersonal skills, conflict resolution manual (Course Pack) for APPL 625, posted online (approximately 130 pages).

Sande, Ken and Kevin Johnson. *Resolving Everyday Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 116 pages.

Note: You are advised to make sufficient notes on your reading to use in your online discussions and in your writing assignments.

Course Outline-Schedule

Week	Topic of Discussion	Assigned Readings and Tasks
Week 1	Laying the Foundation Introduction and Foundation: A Theology of Conflict and Interpersonal Relationships Model – EIMA Case Study – Acts 15	Reading: Brené Brown, xi to 182 (end of Part 1). Video – Russell, Introduction Link: Russell, “A Theology of Getting Along” (posted) Ponder: What is most important to me when it comes to living and working well together? Discussion question: With this initial introduction in mind, and/or Brené Brown’s great insights, how is God stirring you? How do you need to grow in this course?
Week 2	Personal Posture in Conflict Humility, Maturity, Grace, Determination	Reading: Brené Brown, 183 to 298 (end). Russell, Personal Posture - How I Clothe Myself (posted) Ponder: What’s my conflict attire? What clothing do I wear that helps or hinders me when conflicts arise? What garments would Brené Brown have me wear? Discussion question: What are the limitations, if any, to the Christian “soft skills” of humility, maturity and grace, when it comes to our posture in conflict?
Week 3	You’re Not Like Me! Temperament and Workstyle	Reading: Ken Sande, 1-116 (entire book; in preparation for assignment due the end of Week 4). Russell, Temperament and Work Styles (posted)

	<p>Myers-Briggs Personal Style Indicator (PSI) Enneagram</p>	<p>Personal Style Indicator (PSI) assessment If you haven't previously done this, take an Enneagram test. Link: https://tests.enneagraminstitute.com/ Ponder: Who am I when it comes to working with others? What aspects of my temperament and work style are most prevalent? Discussion question: Discuss what you have learned about yourself from the PSI and Enneagram material. How do you deal with others interpersonally in your work? What are your particular challenges as you face conflict? What do you need to change or be aware of?</p>
Week 4	<p>It's not fun right now! Conflict and Process Biblical View of Conflict: Due, Feb. 1st</p>	<p>No reading (or read Sande, if you have not yet). Russell, Conflict and Process (posted) Ponder: What are the best ways to handle conflict, in your experience? No discussion question.</p>
Week 5	<p>Still not fun! Conflict and Process, Part 2 Thomas-Kilmann</p>	<p>Reading: Runde & Flanagan, Chapters 1-4 (to page 96). Russell, Conflict Management (posted) Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument Ponder: How do you normally approach conflict? Discussion question: There is some value in each of the Thomas-Kilmann conflict approaches. Choose one style (outside of collaboration), and argue how faith-based leadership teams need to grow in this approach.</p>
Week 6	<p>Family Systems and Conflict Patterns, triangles, anxiety Change and hope Scriptural models</p>	<p>Reading: Runde & Flanagan, Chapters 5-6 (pgs 97-222) Russell, Conflict and Family Systems (posted) Ponder: How does the organization system in your faith-based context contribute to the conflict management dynamics? Discussion question: <i>According to family systems theory, what really causes conflict to erupt in the church is not the content concerns (though these may well be legitimate) but anxiety-inducing changes in the church system.</i> Interact with this comment.</p>
Week 7	<p>Context and Difference Our starting places are not the same Gender perspectives Cultural differences Conflict Competent Review, due Feb. 22nd</p>	<p>Reading: Runde & Flanagan, Chapters 7-8, Epilogue (pgs 223-301) Russell, Context and Difference in Conflict (posted) Ponder: What is your starting place? How does this relate to the starting places of those on our team? How can you be more aware and supportive of others? No discussion question.</p>

Week 8	Emotional Intelligence Feedback Self-awareness	Reading: Hartwig and Bird, Chapters 1-6 (pgs 1-96) Russell, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict (posted) Ponder: What emotions do you experience during conflict? How do you handle these? Discussion question: <i>Conflict creates emotional turmoil, one way or another. Emotional competence is, therefore, the key to success in conflict management. Everything else is secondary.</i> Discuss.
Week 9	Effective Teams Working on it together Healthy Meetings	Reading: Hartwig and Bird, Chapters 7-10 (pgs 97-184) Russell, Effective Teams – Accomplishing More Together (posted) Ponder: What has been your experience of leadership teams? How have they accomplished more than the sum of the parts? Discussion question: Who speaks for God? When making decisions as a leadership team, how do you know whether someone’s words are divinely inspired or simply her/his perspective? How you do discern God’s leading as a team?
Week 10	What do you think? Listening and Coaching	Reading: Hartwig and Bird, Chapters 11-14 (pgs 185-271) Russell, Coaching (posted) Ponder: How effective are you at listening and coaching others, putting aside your own convictions? Discussion question: Poorly implemented, coaching can be used to abdicate our leadership, avoid conflict and not hold staff members accountable. Perhaps that’s why many polite Christian Canadians are attracted to this approach! Discuss and support your views, including steps to overcome these potential pitfalls.
	A Theology and Praxis of Interpersonal Relationships, due March 20th	

ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Important: All materials should be submitted electronically to the professor online via Canvas and personal correspondence can be addressed to drussell@carey-edu.ca.

Various Theories: Students will notice the focus on Family Systems Theory, Emotional Intelligence and leadership theory in general. You are encouraged to read widely in these areas, as they will assist your ministries greatly.

Contacting the Professor: I am pretty easy to reach and am happy to meet throughout the semester, via email or in person. If you are in the Vancouver area, I would be happy to take you out for a coffee.

Course Navigation: Discussion Forums

Online Discussions and Unit Postings (40% of grade. Due: Every Wednesday and Saturday)

Students are expected to participate in all online discussions and class activities. The discussion for each week takes an average of 3-4 hours to complete (8 discussions; no online discussions in Weeks 4 and 7). Students who do not post in a timely way will receive 0 for the week's posting.

Students are expected to respond to the discussion questions by midnight of every Wednesday and respond to peer-discussions of each unit by Saturday at noon. Each student is required to integrate readings into the discussion and interact with one other student's response for each unit. The web-based discussion exercise is designed for students to engage in serious reflection with the posted course notes reading assignments.

Textbook readings are assigned as closely as possible with the topic of relevance, and generally in chronological order. They are weighted more heavily toward the beginning of the course. Students are encouraged to look ahead at the reading schedule and plan their reading accordingly.

To manage the amount of online reading and your mutual workload, your postings should be no more than 250-300 words in length. The response to peer submissions should be approximately 100-200 words each.

Evaluating Online Discussions

The online discussion exercise is designed for students to engage an online community for learning and discovery. Discussions will be graded on the depth of thinking, the quality of challenge to thinking and learning, the ability to integrate reading materials with life applications as well as Biblical theology, and fresh insights that enrich the community experience. Student postings are intended to be concise, with each sentence filled with content; shorter submissions are welcome. It is fine to agree with and affirm another student's work, but you need to articulate your reasoning for agreement. One does not need to submit ground-breaking revelations, but simply support your position.

Both your "Initiating Post" and your "Responding Posts" are to be academically referenced while reflecting your understanding of the reading /theory and how the theory works out in praxis. Full references are not required; last name and page number will suffice.

Assignments

1. Biblical View of Conflict Reflection (15 % of grade)

Due noon on Saturday, February 1st

After reading Sande's book, work through the Questions for Reflection and Discussion in the Appendix at the back of the book. Then, reflect on your own thinking about a Biblical approach to conflict management for leaders. Write a 4 page (double-spaced) academic style paper (at least 2-3 references per page), considering these questions:

- How do you view conflict – as something to avoid, an obstacle to conquer or an opportunity to do good? Explain.
- In what ways have you used Sande's 4G approach to conflict in a leadership role? What were the results?
- With Sande's principles and chapter titles in mind, present your view of the key principles (at least 3-4) of conflict management from the point of view of Scripture. What do you think is particularly important?
- Describe how you would like to see yourself grow in terms of these principles.

Remember to be concise. I don't need long, flowing descriptions – you only have four pages, so focus on what is most important to you. The point of this paper is to simply reflect on conflict from a Biblical perspective, with your own personal experiences and growth areas in mind. You will not be able to review all the possible Biblical principles. I understand that.

2. Conflict Competent Leader Self-Reflection (20% of grade)

Due noon Saturday, February 22nd

Utilizing the *Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader* book, *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*, and *Hot Buttons Test*, write a 6 page academic self-reflection paper that describes what you know to be true about yourself as a leader in conflict management situations. Provide examples as you can.

Ideally, you will present a case study (real example) of a situation, preferably at work, in which you dealt with a conflict, and which illustrates some of these principles. The presenting circumstance needs to be sufficiently comprehensive and complex to apply the course theology and theory.

If you are in the midst of a current challenging or conflict situation, I would encourage you to attempt to achieve reconciliation and resolution of the conflict, with your new knowledge of your normal approach and what might be most useful based on this theory.

Once the intervention has taken place (currently or in the past), reflect on what transpired, with reference to the theory, and your understanding of your normal approach.

Note: if the intervention is or was unsuccessful or partly unsuccessful, be honest about this. Serious issues are not easily resolved! I am less concerned with immediate success (though I pray the Lord will bless your efforts) and more interested in each of you learning through the process.

3. Concluding Integration: A Theology of Conflict and Interpersonal Relationship (25% of grade)

Due: Midnight Friday, March 20th

Write a paper of approximately 8-10 pages in length (double-spaced) integrating the readings and other learnings and formatted in an academically acceptable style.

This paper is to establish your personal primary convictions about conflict and interpersonal skills, particularly in light of who you are, and your context for life and ministry.

The paper can include:

- Your particular challenges dealing with conflict and difficult decisions, including a brief explanation as to why these are your particular challenges. Remember your Myers-Briggs, PSI and Enneagram results.
- The history and particular challenges of your context (church, agency or mission).
- In light of the above and the course material, what are the most relevant issues and pitfalls for you and your context?
- Respond to these - What are the primary values and commitments you will cultivate regarding conflict resolution and working well with others? Your theology of getting along well! This will be a major section of your paper.
- Another way of considering this: What truths about interpersonal skills and conflict management do you believe the church in general needs to better understand, that as a leader you are called to now pass on?

Note: Again, I am looking for academic references throughout this paper.

Planning: Leaders plan! You are advised to write this paper as you move through the course collecting ideas for the various sections rather than writing the paper entirely at the course conclusion. As you read the course tests, you are advised to take active notes for use in this paper.

Time Investment and Evaluation

Activity/Assignment	Hours	Grade %
Reading (1160 pages, noted above)	50	
Online Discussion and Unit Posting (8 units)	27.5	40%
Biblical View of Conflict Reflection	12	15%
Conflict Competent Self-Reflection Paper	18	20%
Concluding Integration: A Theology of Conflict	20	25%
Total	127.5	100%

Evaluation Methods and Criteria

Grade class	Descriptors	Letter grades	Detail	%
A class work Excellent, superior work	Effectively and exceptionally accomplishes all course outcomes and objectives. Work produced is excellent quality, publishable, and beneficial to all. Shows exceptional growth/mastery. Exceptionally creativity and originality in approach to the subject.	A+	Exceptional A-class work	100-98
		A	Consistent A-class work	97-94
		A-	Generally A-class work, some lapses and areas for refinement	93-90
B class work Good solid work	Accomplishes all course outcomes and objectives. Work produced is good quality, publishable after some revision, and beneficial to peers and fellow students. Growth/mastery of course material is good. Shows creativity and originality in approach to subject.	B+	Primarily B-class, superior to some areas	89-87
		B	Consistent B-class work	86-84
		B-	Generally B-class work, some lapses and areas for refinement	83-80
C class work Passible but needs to improve	Accomplishes enough course outcomes and objectives to be passible. Work produced is not recommended for dissemination unless qualified. Growth/mastery is basic, but encouraged to repeat the course. Shows hints of creativity and originality, but not consistent.	C+	Primarily C-class, better in some areas	79-77
		C	Consistent C-class work	76-74
		C-	Generally C-class work, but this is based on generous interpretation. Elements that fall significantly short, marginally passable.	73-70

F class work Unpassible	Fails to accomplish course outcomes and objectives. Work should not be disseminated under any condition. Little to no growth/mastery of course material. Fails to show creativity or originality in approach to the subject.	F	Generally unpassible work.	69-0
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Bibliography

There will be a more extensive bibliography provided as a separate document during the course, for those who wish to do further research or study in any particular area.

Recommended Reading

- Augsburger, David W. *Caring Enough to Confront – How to Transform Conflict with Compassion and Grace*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018.
- . *Conflict Mediation Across Cultures – Pathways and Patterns*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992.
- Brown, Brené. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead*. New York: Avery, 2012.
- Cloud, Henry. *Necessary Endings*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.
- . *Boundaries for Leaders*. New York: HarperCollins, 2013.
- Fisher, R. , William Ury and Bruce Patton. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. 3rd ed.; New York: Penguin, 2011.
- Goldsmith, Marshall. *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. New York: Hyperion, 2007.
- Harvard Business Review. *Everyday Emotional Intelligence – Big Ideas and Practical Advice on How to Be Human at Work*. Boston: HBR Press, 2018.
- Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- . *Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable...About Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business*. San Francisco: John Wiley, 2004.
- Levi, Daniel. *Group Dynamics for Teams, 3rd Ed*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2011.
- Linhart, Terry. *The Self-Aware Leader – Discovering Your Blind Spots to Reach Your Ministry Potential*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017.
- Patterson, Kerry, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler. *Crucial Accountability*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2013.
- Patterson, Kerry, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler. *Crucial Conversation: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High, 2nd Ed*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012.
- Sande, Ken. *The Peace Maker – A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict, 3rd Ed*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- Scott, Susan. *Fierce Conversations – Achieving Success at Work and in Life, One Conversation at a Time*. New York: New American Library, 2017.

Stabile, Suzanne. *The Path Between Us – An Enneagram Journey to Healthy Relationships*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

Stanier, Michael Bungay. *The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever*. Toronto: Box of Crayons, 2016.

Stone, Douglas and Sheila Heen. *Thanks for the Feedback*. New York: Viking, 2014.

Academic Policies

Please see the **Carey Academic Catalog** for more details:

<http://www.carey-edu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Academic-Catalog-2016-2017-FINAL.pdf>

Course Attendance

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions to fulfil degree requirements. This includes on-line webinars and/or live-streamed portions of courses.

Carey Grading Scale

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for details on the Carey grading scale.

Course Withdrawal Policy

A student who withdraws after the period for which tuition refunds are available within the first half of the course will receive a “W” on their transcript. Beyond those dates, they will receive an “F.”

Extensions

Extensions for course work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If an extension will make it impossible for the professor to submit the final grade no later than one month following the final assignment, the student must petition the Registrar’s Office. If the Registrar’s Office grants such a request, the final extension deadlines will be clearly established. Work granted an extension may receive a grade reduction of up to one-third of the final mark.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship. Students are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas. Academic dishonesty is acting in a manner to gain unearned academic credit. Examples of academic dishonesty are:

- Plagiarizing by misrepresenting the work of another person (in whole or in part) as a student’s own work or failing to give credit for either wording or ideas that belong to another.
- Submitting the same material for credit in more than one course (whether the earlier submission was at Carey or another institution).
- Using unauthorized aids of any sort in examinations, completing work in unauthorized collaboration with others, or the unauthorized recording and use of class lectures.

Penalty for a lack of academic integrity may include a failing grade in the assignment, examination or course, depending on the severity of the offense. All students are responsible for knowing and practicing academic integrity and must become familiar with the plagiarism student resource at:

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/academic-integrity/>.

Gender Language

As language usage changes, the church must discern where its language must change in order to bear faithful witness to the gospel. Modern English usage has moved away from using masculine terms to refer to groups that include women. Using of such terms in worship, writing, or conversation miscommunicates the invitation of the gospel and the nature of the church. Assignments that don’t conform to the gender language policy will be returned to the student for resubmissions.

See the Carey Academic Catalogue for more details on this policy.