

The Home as a Training Center

Communication As Both Content and Context

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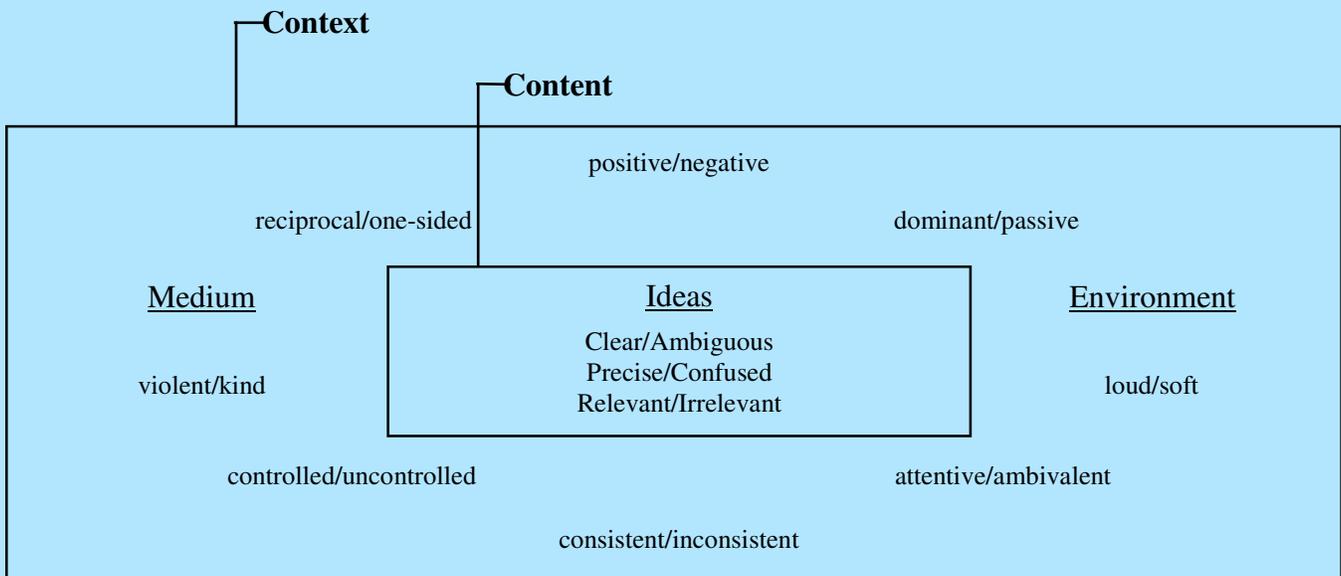
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Did he say what I think he said? Is that what she really meant or was she implying something else? Such is the confusion created by “communication background noise.” What is said is sometimes not what is heard, because communication involves much more than the simple transfer of words from speaker to listener. In fact, communication involves both the content of ideas as well as the context through which ideas are transmitted.

Content is the message. Context is the medium. Together they form the process and product of communication. They are inseparable. Neither is more important than the other in the exchange of information.

The following diagram may help to illustrate the interdependence between the content and context of communication.



Both modern research and God’s word indicate that both factors are necessary for quality communication. In fact, the Apostle Paul taught both aspects while writing to the Church in Ephesus. We can learn from his inspired writing that simply speaking our minds may not solve anything. Instead, we must give careful attention to the entire manner in which we attempt to communicate our thoughts and feelings.

The outline on the next page will help you see the principles of communication found in Ephesians 4:25-27,29-32. On the left you will find the **Scripture** verses diagrammed from the New International Version. On the right you will see the corresponding **Principles**. Read through the passage of scripture. Notice the principles as you go. Be sure you “get it” as you read each point. Use the Application section for discussion.

Scripture

Principles

- 25) Therefore.....speak truthfully to his neighbor —————▶ I. Communication must always be truthful.
 each of you must |
 put off falsehood and | for we are all members of one body —————▶ Why? Because deceit destroys relationships.

- 26) In your anger do not sin —————▶ II. Communication must be delivered with emotional self-control.
 do not let the sun go down while you are still angry —|
 27) and do not give the devil a foothold —————▶ Why? Because Satan will use emotional panic to his advantage.

- 29) Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths —————▶ III. Communication must always be constructive.
 but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs —————▶ Why? Because constructive communication helps others, while
 that it may benefit those who listen —————▶ destructive communication only hinders them.

- 30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God —————▶ IV. Communication must be influenced by our desire to please God.
 with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption —————▶ Why? Because we owe our very salvation to Him.

- 31) Get rid of all bitterness —————▶ V. Communication must never be violent or abusive.
 rage and —————|
 anger —————|
 brawling and —————|
 slander —————|
 along with every form of malice —————|

- 32) Be kind.....to one another —————▶ VI. Communication must be influenced by our desire to be Christlike.
 and compassionate —————|
 forgiving each other —————|
 just as in Christ God forgave you —————▶ Why? Because we have received from Jesus far more than we can ever give to others.

Application

For principles I-VI, ask the question, “Do we have a problem with this?”

Use the question as a starting point to discuss any strengths and weaknesses.

So, now consider what would it be like if we

always communicated truthfully?

always communicated with emotional self-control?

always communicated constructively?

always communicated from a desire to please God?

always communicated without hostility?

always communicated in a Christlike fashion?

It would be peaceful. Our relationships would be less stressful. Our past would be worth remembering. Our future would be more hopeful.

It would be dynamic. Our personal development would never grow stale. We would seldom regress from loss of friendships or other relationships. Others would mature by following our communication patterns.

It would be like a piece of heaven. Others would appreciate us. We would appreciate ourselves.

However, no one — except the Lord — communicates perfectly. So we must accept the reality of our tendency toward communication blunders. We must also accept it in others. But that should be as far as we go. After that we should pursue excellence

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