

The Urantia Book Fellowship



Expanding Spiritual Awareness

Empathetic Conflict Resolution Policy

I. POLICY: It is the policy of the Urantia Fellowship to seek conflict resolution wherever and whenever possible to the end of promoting unity while respecting individual diversity. (1 see footnotes)

The first intention of this policy is to facilitate cooperative teamwork, and effective and efficient decision making during any and all Fellowship meetings or group gatherings. A second intention is to be a reflection of brotherly and fatherly love between individuals as we go about sharing the Urantia Book Revelation. (2)

II. PROCEDURE: The procedure has three stages that may be utilized each using an empathetic conflict resolution process: "The Father in heaven loves his children, and therefore should you learn to love one another; the Father in heaven forgives you your sins; therefore should you learn to forgive one another. If your brother sins against you, go to him and with tact and patience show him his fault. And do all this between you and him alone. If he will listen to you, then have you won your brother. But if your brother will not hear you, if he persists in the error of his way, go again to him, taking with you one or two mutual friends that you may thus have two or even three witnesses to confirm your testimony and establish the fact that you have dealt justly and mercifully with your offending brother. Now if he refuses to hear your brethren, you may tell the whole story to the congregation, and then, if he refuses to hear the brotherhood, let them take such action as they deem wise; let such an unruly member become an outcast from the kingdom." (3)

Stage 1: Individual Meeting: The parties in conflict agree to meet one-on-one with the intention of resolving their conflict privately using the Empathic Guidelines attached;

Stage 2: Mediator (Conciliator): If the conflict remains, the parties can meet with an experienced conciliator; chosen by the Judicial Committee and agreed upon by both sides; (4)

Stage 3: Judicial Process: If the conflict remains both parties will move to the final Stage and agree to comply with the resolution of an arbitration committee of three. These three arbiters will be as follows: one arbiter will be selected by each of the two parties involved; and a committee chairperson will be agreed upon from within the Judicial Committee. Both parties will submit a written document to the Committee for review describing the facts pertinent to their grievance. A decision will be rendered within 30 days of document reception. (5)

III. GUIDELINES:

- A. Confidentiality; "Confiding Trust" (11)
- B. Focus on one problem at a time;
- C. Focus on behavior and/or a systems problem, rather than the person;
- D. Separate when angry for an agreed upon time to calm down and determine the cause of anger before resuming the conflict resolution process. Many times anger is rooted in anxiety, shame and hurt. "... anger is like a stone hurled into a hornet's nest."(6)
- E. Use prayer and worship throughout the process, affirming that it is my will that God's will be done. (7)
- F. Attitudes that Foster Empathy:
 - 1. Respect an individual's personality and free will. "The disciples early learned that the Master had a profound respect and sympathetic regard for every human being he met ..." and he taught that the "...loss of self respect often ends in paralysis of the will." (8)
 - 2. Have faith in each other with a fatherly attitude. "...always looking for the best in man." (9)
 - 3. Seek to understand each other's motives and feelings. "If once you understand your neighbor, you will become tolerant, and this tolerance will grow into friendship and ripen into love." (10)
 - 4. Recognize the importance of "Forgiving Tolerance." (11)
 - 5. Embrace self-forgetfulness and self-control. "Self-mastery is the measure of man's moral nature and the indicator of his spiritual development." (12)
 - 6. Use humor. "One of the functions of humor is to help all of us take ourselves less seriously. Humor is the divine antidote for the exaltation of ego." (13)
- G. Techniques of Empathetic Communication: "Nothing ever seemed so important to Jesus as the individual human who chanced to be in his immediate presence." (14)
 - 1. Each party takes turns doing the following:
 - a. Speaker uses "I" messages – "I think...", "I feel...", "I need...". "You" messages implies blame or shame.
 - b. Listener remains silent with an attentive quiet mind.
 - c. When Speaker is finished, the Listener restates Speaker's message and feelings to the Speaker's satisfaction. Listener clearly understands the other person's perspective and can honestly say, "That makes sense."
 - d. The Listener then becomes the Speaker and the process is repeated.
 - 2. Negotiate "Our Way" or "Win-Win" Solutions:
 - a. Brainstorm solutions while understanding and affirming each other's ideas, e.g., "That's a good point!"
 - b. Each person commits to making at least one positive change to improve future interactions.
 - c. Agree on one solution – power sharing.
 - 3. Share a prayer and do at least one thing for the other person that reflects loving kindness. (15)

Footnotes

References from The Urantia Book include Paper:Section.Paragraph

(1) 182:1.8 134:2.1

(2) 47:6.3 140:3

(3) 159:1.3

(4) 25:3.7, 138:6.4

(5) CONSTITUTION OF THE FELLOWSHIP, Section 11.9. The Judicial Committee: The Judicial Committee shall be the supreme arbitrating body of THE FELLOWSHIP, but, except as otherwise provided, their determinations and decisions shall be subject to the veto of, or modification by, the Executive Committee within the time allowed by the By-laws of THE FELLOWSHIP. The jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee shall extend to all matters pertaining to the affairs of THE FELLOWSHIP and to all differences between Local Societies or between any Local Society and any member thereof or between any members or groups of members. The Judicial Committee shall, upon the request of any officer of THE FELLOWSHIP, any Councilor, or the Chairman of any Departmental Committee, render opinions on any matters involving a construction of this Constitution, of the By-laws of THE FELLOWSHIP, and of the Rules of the Executive Committee. A permanent record of such opinions shall be preserved.

(6) 48:7.18, 48:7.19, 48:7.28

(7) 196:0.10; 91:9; 160:1.10-12, 118:8.11

(8) 159:3.2-7; 170:4.3

(9) 196:2.9; 133:2; 140:5

(10) 100:4.4; 171:7

(11) 193:2.2

(12) 143:2; 52:6.6

(13) 48:4.15

(14) 138:8.9

Adopted by General Council August 2012