



## SECTION IV – LESSON #16

**SUMMARY**

This lesson builds on the foundation of the last, placing particular emphasis on the relational dynamics that comprise a part of the root of most problems, as well as teaching how we can both identify and address these relational issues.

**MAIN LESSON IDEAS:**

- Clear agreements, and their maintenance, are the foundation of a relationally healthy organization.
- Mediating and helping to resolve the relational dimensions of problems calls us up to our priestly roles in Christ.

# The Relational Nature of Problem Solving

by Dennis Peacocke

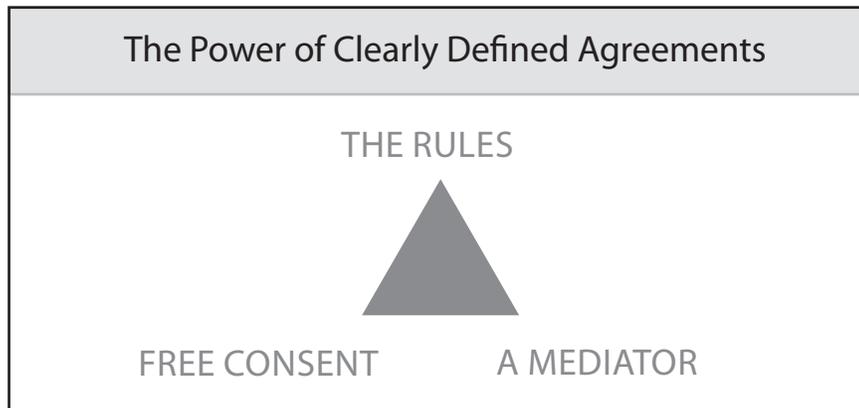
*A man's product reflects how he feels about the people with whom he is working.*

## I. Preventative problem solving:

### A. The nature of agreements

1. A large number of relational problems are the result of undefined or poorly defined agreements and expectations (the concept of “round words” and the reason for their use).
2. Agreements require clearly defined, mutually understood terms of trade and services.
3. Only clearly defined agreements can withstand significant pressure. All agreements are bridges of trust, and business is built on trust – internally and externally.
4. Agreements should stand on the terms or definitions of the initially defined responsibilities, *requiring neither emotional bribes, manipulation, nor threats.*
5. The ethics (non-negotiable standards) must be clearly sorted out from the spirit of the agreement (latitudes of personal methodology).

6. "Sins" are revealed when the terms of agreement are clearly spelled out. Remember our analysis of Paul's teaching in Romans chapter seven; it is critical.
7. The authority of the mediator can create a powerful threefold cord (Ecc. 4:12).



8. Whatever there is in us (sin) that does not want to define or respond to clear definitions and accountability is the enemy of achieving our goals.
- B. The potential responses of pressure on an agreement –
1. Reconfirmation of the agreement by all parties
  2. One or more parties now see the agreement differently
  3. The desire to reinterpret the agreement reveals a change in one or more of the parties
  4. Mutual redefinition of the agreement
- C. The power of leadership – establishing vision
1. Leadership has to do with creating vision and objectives for a group, and eliciting proper responses and agreements from the participants.
  2. Good leadership keeps the vision in front of the participants (Deut. 6:7-9) and helps the participants stay willing to abide by their clearly defined agreements.
  3. Good leaders must reinforce that vision and keep the agreements healthy and alive so that each individual knows the organization's goals and his or her specific role in achieving those goals. This is your best problem-preventing measure (Prov. 29:18).
  4. This reinforcement makes possible both an "eat your problems" atmosphere, and a creative work environment.

- II. Some of the issues of “pastoral” concern (Remember, all managers are, in fact, pastoring people to some degree.)
- A. As much as is possible (if the agreements are clear), the authority figure (“pastor”) should maintain the neutral position of mediating the principles of disputed agreements or goals.
1. It is very difficult to solve a problem if you are involved in it. Principles and agreements must be the primary focus rather than personality pressure.
  2. The best leaders keep the vision and agreements in focus and refuse to have their personality drawn into the problem.
  3. Spiritual forgiveness precedes conceptual clarity. Christian problem solvers are first of all priests. All Christian-led businesses should operate out of the basic principles of Matthew 18:15-18.
- B. Good pastoral problem-solvers have the ability to identify and reveal (in a nonthreatening way) the vested interests and agendas of the parties involved.
- The ability to identify and reveal, in a nonthreatening way, the vested interests and agendas of the parties involved is essential.
- C. Relational oversight requires a clear understanding of the issue of “polarity” and its dynamic in problem solving (bringing peace between “lions and tigers”).
1. “Polarity” is the phenomenon experienced between different people, types, or engiftments. For example: male-female; north-south; optimist- pessimist; prophet-pastor; mercy-discipline; law-grace.
  2. In God, peace and completion are the fruit of successful resolutions of polarity issues (v. “problems”) through godly government (Isa. 9:7).
  3. The major issues involved in bringing creativity and productivity out of polarity are as follows:
    - a. We have a real need for full-orbed, creative input and its fruit.
    - b. People benefit from opposite perspectives and engiftments.
    - c. We must instill in the people a greater fear of missing God (or the company’s goal) than a simple dislike for one another’s personality.
    - d. Secure leaders look for results, not positions.
    - e. High-level leadership releases more inherent counsel than direct commands.
    - f. Good leaders promote problem solvers, not people with potential!