

Take it to the Cross

Take it to the cross is a tool for conflict resolution, leading couples or anyone in conflict through a process which opens communication, enhances **understanding**, and creates a **structure** for movement toward proposal and **agreement**.

There are two reasons for the name. First, the cross is a symbol of reconciliation. Peace comes at a cost, and we must be willing to die to self if we are to experience oneness. Secondly, the steps of this tool are laid out on the ground in the shape of a cross [optional].

Essentials: time, focus on one issue, reflective listening.

Those in conflict begin by setting aside a time to address their issue. They agree upon ground rules such as sticking to one issue at a time, speaking only when you have the floor and reflective listening. No problem solving session should last longer than an hour.

The speaker, the person who raised the issue should go first, standing while the listener sits nearby. Or the pair can sit facing each other. Either way they should try to look at each other in the eyes.

The speaker states the **issue** clearly and succinctly. Next the speaker tells the listener his or her **desire** in regard to this issue, followed by relevant **thoughts** and **feelings**. A **proposal** is made and the speaker ends by making a brief statement of **commitment** to the process and the relationship. After the speaker finishes his/her comments at each step the listener reflects the speaker.

Steps Summarized:

1. What I want to address – the **issue**
2. What I **want** – my desire, ideal or hope
3. What I **think** – my rational thoughts
4. What I **feel** – express feelings
5. What I **propose** – plan of action
6. Where I stand – my **commitment** to you

Each step should include the following:

- A. Stating - The Speaker states his/her perspective. No longer than 30 seconds for the sake of reflection. The listener [or mediator] can keep time.
- B. Reflecting - The Listener reflects. Restating or paraphrasing with empathy the speaker's statement.
- C. Confirming - The Speaker confirms if the reflection was generally accurate. If not, the speaker restates briefly the part that the Listener missed.

When the first speaker is done going through each step, the roles are **reversed**. The new speaker proceeds to restate the issue, then express his/her desire, thoughts, and feelings followed by an alternate proposal and statement of commitment.

Two or three rounds may be required to reach agreement on a proposal. At times it may be helpful to set aside the issue for a limited time for prayer or further exploration of the issue. Sometimes, involvement of the third party may be helpful. In any case the couple should **write down** what was agreed upon. They should sign and date it, placing it where it can be referred to at a later time.

This simple tool has generated enormously positive feedback, and has proven useful with children and in work settings in addition to its effectiveness with couples.

[Adapted by Jay Myers from Paul Looney. See book - *Take it to the Cross for Couples: From Conflict to Connection* by Paul Looney, M.D.]

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AGREEMENT

Write down what was agreed upon in your conversation.

1. Goal – Our goal to accomplish by a date:

By the date of _____ / _____ / _____

2. One party's specific action steps.

I, _____ will do: _____

By the date of _____ / _____ / _____

3. The other party's specific action steps.

I, _____ will do: _____

By the date of _____ / _____ / _____

Signed: _____ / _____ / _____
Today's Date