

[00:00:00] Okay, well, this week, we're going to try to walk through a few of the tools that are, um, kind of good addendums to the core tools. So there's three core things that we want to always teach, and that would be meeting emotion with emotion, assertiveness, and then conflict resolution or forgiveness, confession, forgiveness.

Those would be the three that we really always, in whatever context, we always want to get through those three. And then two that we found really, really helpful, um, are, that are kind of on top of those core ones. There are some levels still core, um, be that the idea of being able to problem solve effectively and it's called 10 steps to problem solving.

And we'll do that one first and we'll also, uh, do another one later on today. So conflict resolution, problem solving. I don't know how well you all experience this in the context of your, your [00:01:00] relationship or. Uh, work settings or whatever. It seems like problem solving is kind of a lost art in our culture.

I think this, this tool, and this, this one comes specifically, uh, from the Prepare and Rich booklet that you can order online if you want, but, or you can download from the, the, the Google page that I, I've shared with you guys. Um, and, and it's pretty much, this is what it looks like in the booklet. I think it's page 10 or 11.

I don't remember exactly what towards the end. You see this conflict resolution tool and fundamentally what it's trying to get to is, is our capacity to brainstorm and that's the linchpin of it. And that's the great part of it. But there's some things that I think really add connection and care and, and just a, uh, um, a sense of relational awareness and humility, wisdom that go around that, that problem solving tool that I think are really helpful in this tool.

[00:02:00] So we're going to, we're going to walk through this real briefly, how we, we would teach this. Sometimes we'll put this at the end of our skills class. Um, and sometimes we'll be able to do it one on one with couples. It can be really, really helpful, but there's pieces you want to be looking at and, and, and help coach people through so they don't just kind of fall into, well, let's share a couple ideas and then stop.

Let's really do the hard work of, of owning this and, and, and sharing our commitment to finding a solution to this. When we think about this particular conflict, it doesn't mean you're in a fight. Or the couple would be in a fight. It could just simply mean we haven't come to one mindedness yet. We, we have a

problem, a situation, a question we want to answer, a plan we want to make, it could be as simple as where do we want to go on vacation?

Or maybe even where do we want to go for dinner? We can't, we can't decide. And so this is a tool for, for helping people move towards being like minded or one [00:03:00] minded. Rather than just kind of thinking of one or two things and feeling hurt if it doesn't, you don't get your way or whatever it is. So it really is helpful.

Couples and parents of teens, lots of context where this has been a helpful relational tool. So we're just going to walk through one of the, one section at a time. And so I'll blow that up a little bit more. So the, each one of these has a specific purpose. Each one of these 10 steps and to, it's like anything else, if you want people to buy into taking this serious, being, being sober minded about it, bringing their heart to it, bringing a desire for relationship in it, having them help, helping them to understand what each step is for can be really helpful.

So the first place is a deal that, hey, this is a value to me that we would, we would find a place of one mind in this. We're going to set a time and a place for the discussion, even if it is right now, just go ahead and write that down on the, have them write that down on the sheet. [00:04:00] If it is going to be out in the future, some point, just put it on their calendars in their staff meeting, kind of meeting, just this, we're going to talk about this during that time.

So that declares a value on it. This is important enough for us. To achieve oneness, we're gonna, we're gonna make it official, we're gonna make it a meeting. Uh, the second one is to define the promise, be it, be as specific as you can. Oftentimes when there's a, something that doesn't feel settled in a relationship, it, we can see this whole big thing and not have a way to break it down into, to more manageable parts or parts we would want to try to, to, to do one thing at a time in.

So, as an example, bedtime could be this huge family conflict. Uh, finances could be this huge, uh, conflict within a family or, or any relationship, but if we can break that down into those specifics, the, the, I'm going to be sharing an example of one couple we walked through and how they broke it down, whether their finances were a challenge and say, [00:05:00] well, something more specific, and they both kind of settled on.

We don't know where our money goes. We have no, we have no record keeping. We have no system for keeping track of where we are spending money. So that became the problem. They didn't have any way to record what they were doing

with their money. And so that's where they began this, the, the specific problem rather than this huge problem of finances, which might mean long term saving and all the budget headings and all the different things you can debate.

Let's take this one little bite at a time bite of the apple and say we want to understand where our money is going. Okay, so Third step there on there is to list the ways that you each contribute to the problem This can be pretty easy to figure out but this is a place of humility where if we're honest There's things that we do or don't do That are, are part of what's going on in, in, in problem solving.

I remember one time Cindy and I were talking about this issue of having a Christmas at our [00:06:00] house and, and, and some of our kids that were out of town couldn't make it in, and they were, they were doing all this planning about doing it in later January and having this Christmas time. And for me, I had this, my, uh, in the, in the work I do pastorally.

It's Christmas Day, Christmas Eve, that season is one of the very few times of the year I can almost guarantee, unless it is a flat out emergency, nobody's going to call me. Nobody's going to step in. So I have this kind of sacred place where I can enjoy taking those days where the whole city, the whole country kind of tends to just slow down and just really reflect on Advent kind of thoughts and just really enjoy.

The gift of Jesus coming. And, and so it's hard for me to call anything else Christmas, but those two days, and so we sat down and started talking through this and, and she, we were asking, she was asking, we're at this step and I said, honey, [00:07:00] I just don't see why I have a problem. I don't see how I'm contributing to this.

The, uh, I just want to have Christmas on Christmas. And she looked at me very gently and calmly and said, That's the whole problem that we're experiencing. Because nobody can make it on those days. So, and I go, yep, you're right. I am actually the whole problem. I'm trying to hold the line. And so there's this place of humility where we can each admit.

Oh, yeah, I guess I am, you know, either trying to resist something or I've been lazy or I've been inattentive. There's something each of us does whenever there's a, there's a problem to be solved or something I'll work on. So, so this is a place to really bring humility. that we each want to acknowledge that it's not someone else's fault.

It's we probably each have um, opportunities to participate in the wrongness of it. Um, step four is list past attempts to resolve the issue that were not successful. And so this would be a time to say we haven't completely ignored this. This, this may be, in my opinion, [00:08:00] this may be The, the least important step, but it can be an encouraging step because it says, well, we have tried this and, and this is what was wrong with it.

You're not going to judge those past attempts because they may show back up as potential things to try again, but to just let yourselves know what we haven't completely ignored this and, and, and also the gifts in the frame of mind of what we have tried to do to, to get past this issue. The five is, is the critical piece and it's, it's 10 steps.

I'm sorry, just the way these slides break out. Five of the steps are on each of these two slides, but, but, but to really force yourself to fill out 10 things, most human beings are in a frame of mind, unless you're really good at problem solving, just the way most people would think is you think of one or two things, and then you're done, and you never really kind of move into that creative part of your brain and think what else, what else are possible things, and so the diligence, the discipline to [00:09:00] just keep naming Even ridiculous things kind of helps force us into a way of thinking and the training for preparing rich.

There's a couple on there that, uh, they had this pretty serious problem. They were trying to walk through of where they were going to live after they get married. And, and it was like a month and a half away from their marriage. And, and, and they were just kind of ignoring it, just like, we're not going to talk about it because every time we talk about it, we get in a fight.

And so that was the example of how to use this tool that they showed on that video. And so, um, I'll probably try to get a link to that, by the way, in some of the examples. Uh, because they did a really good job of explaining this tool, um, and showing you a modeling of how it works. But when they actually got out of their rut of, I want to live here, you want to live there, and started saying things crazy, kind of, out there, They actually, you could, you could watch it.

It was, it was like, you could touch it on the video where they go, Oh, they just moved into creative [00:10:00] thinking. And, and, and, and they actually came up with an idea that was probably a pretty good option that they were just stuck. They wouldn't have ever come to it if they hadn't have kind of forced themselves to be in that, in the, in that way of thinking, um, into that creative way of thinking.

So you, you build the ten, and some of them may be crazy. And that's okay. That's, that's all a part of trying to get into this creative flow. And you take those 10 ideas, and then you discuss and evaluate each of those possible solutions. And, and if you can't, just be as objective as possible and not be in that no mode.

One of the things that kills brainstorming, and you have to be really careful of, is not judging them as you're saying them. And, and, and some people are that way. My wife tends to be that way where she, she wants to debate and discuss each thing as it comes up rather than just let the creative process flow.

And so she spent a good chunk of our married life, um, [00:11:00] banished from all of our brainstorming sessions. Uh, we'd bring her in later to help us evaluate, but, but, um, she just, just had to discuss it and debate it. And no, that's a bad idea. And so the whole point of that is step six is the time to do that. All right.

So what is good or bad about this solution or this. This opportunity to try to walk through and so to discuss and evaluate, evaluate each of those possible solutions and trying not to be, well, that was my idea. So I'm going to defend that one. Um, and talk about how useful and appropriate. each suggestion might deal.

You might eliminate five of them. That's being ridiculous and unworkable. You might, you might eliminate eight or nine of them and only one remaining. It doesn't matter. As long as you, you spend the time talking about, could this work? Would this work? Okay. So out of the possible ones, and there may be more than one possible thing.

Well, yeah, that could work. That could, that could be a good solution. You, you'd agree on one. On [00:12:00] one of those, on a solution, specific solution to try and you, and you, you step into that and, and that's the, that's the seventh step. Well, which one do we want to try?

This is where again, we, we work towards connection and care for one another. As we each agree on a piece of, of the pie or a piece of the puzzle that we're going to try to, to, to go forward. As I mentioned that the couple we were working with. They wanted to work out, uh, uh, some system for tracking their money.

And so, uh, the wife decided, okay, I'm going to really be disciplined in saving all of my receipts. And if I, if I don't, they were actually from, uh, outside the

country. And so receipts weren't a big deal. So it was, it was, it was a bigger deal for her to keep track of than it would be maybe in the living in the U S where you just, you know, have a big pile of receipts.

Uh, she actually had to learn to record things. that she spent as she was shopping. And so that was her side. And then the husband agreed he was going to do some research, either do [00:13:00] some research and find a budgeting tool or recording tool for finances or build an Excel sheet. So his part was to create a longterm tracking to take that data that she had, um, and somehow put it in a way that it was retrievable and useful to them.

Um, and so that was what they said. That's what we're going to try to accomplish here. That, and then the step nine is, this is probably the one that gets missed the most when we're trying to create new patterns, new rhythms, new, new systems in, in our, um, life and, and remembering that our, our, our lives are in part as families, we are economic units.

We have, we have systems of business and calendar and finance that need to be managed and And there's lots of decisions to be made. And sometimes we don't treat it that way. We treat it as this very casual relationship. We should just, you know, it's just kind of unstructured. But sometimes that devalues some of the important decisions that really bring life and make life, setting up those rhythms, setting up those [00:14:00] systems, really make it much easier to spend time, um, and reduce stress and make it easier to live and care and connection.

Because all those important things, we know they're being taken care of. We have a, there's a way to record that and keep track of it. It's not out of control. So, this ninth step, by setting up a meeting to discuss your progress, that really says, okay, we're going to, we're going to be, we're going to be diligent with this.

We're going to build in a little checkpoint down the road. The, the, when you do this is primarily driven by Um, the timeliness of when you need to have it, uh, have it completed. So if it's dealing with like that finance scenario, you, you might check back in, you know, once a month for three months. How's it going?

How are we doing? And every, every month you'd have a review. Yep, I'm getting this down. This is what I found. Here's what the data is starting to show on where we're spending money. And you discuss, is this working for us? If you're talking about where are we going to go on vacation, [00:15:00] vacation is one month away, well then how quickly you reset a schedule to, to talk about

progress on research you might be doing on, on destination sites or setting a budget or whatever it might be, finding child care.

Whatever it might be to make your, you know, your trip go well, it's, it's driven by the timeliness of it, not some magic date that you need to do this once a month. Well, you need a decision in a week, you might want to have to check back in two days and see how we're doing. So that number nine is driven by the timeliness of the decision that needs to be made.

And then ten is just to really praise and offer that encouragement to, to kind of practice the, the, the discipline, the proactive. Relational care, expressing appreciation, and, and seeing that someone is making an effort and really encouraging one another as they, so, so appreciating and encouraging, doing both of those as, because it is hard to form a new habit.

It is, it's, it's difficult to, to move from, um, something that [00:16:00] is not present to something that is fully formed and, and, and a new rhythm of life or understanding of something. So, um, don't neglect those. And so the 10 are really important to kind of hold out before you. And we really encourage couples to do this just, just as a way of practice, uh, to train ourselves, to think this way that I, and those are very proverbial kind of steps of, of praising one another, taking it serious.

Showing each other honor of taking responsibility for our part to, to, to do it in such a way that it's not this, this huge, massive burden, but to bring it down to a manageable decision that needs to be made or conflict to be solved. It can be more related to conflict, but oftentimes the things that rob us of joy in conflict are things we just haven't done the hard work of, of getting on the same page and developing a system that works for both of us.

So that's, that's the idea of this tool. And I, I'd love [00:17:00] to spend a little time discussing what, what that, how that, how that lands for you, questions you might have regarding. I

guess the, the couple of times that we've used it, I really appreciate this tool. I do like the, even just starting with the ways we've contributed that place of humility is really an awesome start. Uh, I was just curious, Pat, I, I have some kind of ideas even on there, but. How would you connect this to the bigger framework of relational needs?

How do you see this kind of tying into that framework? Um, well, I think anything that causes conflict is probably pressing on something that's important

to us. And whether that's our, our knowing our temperament. So someone who would be more prone to like organization [00:18:00] and feels less Um, settled, less secure without organization.

I think our capacity to work and develop systems says, I care about how you receive this. I care about what's important to you. If, as an example, like something like you're getting the kids down in a, in an organized manner, that could be really speaking to the need for support and structure that, uh, or organization.

So I think there's, anytime there's conflict, there's, in relationship or, or a problem to be solved, there's probably something. It doesn't feel particularly cared for or connected. And so it may be a case by case situation, for sure. Um, to know specifically what that problem, what need that problem might be dealing with.

But I think that's a piece of it. Then I also think there's a piece of showing respect for one another, knowing each other, what is bothering you, how can we work together. And then learning to do that together, doing that in a state of [00:19:00] connection, rather than, I mean, most of us would have some form of rhythm if we're not in agreement, either we, either we, it gets sparky and we argue about it, or we put it on the shelf and ignore it and nothing gets done.

Those would be the two most common ways that couples would say, we're not like minded, we're not connected. And so this is kind of pushes us out of those normal patterns and gives us a way to walk through hard conversations. Without creating those sparks and giving us hope so we don't feel like we need to run and hide and just, you know, say, no, I'm not going to deal with it.

Um, so I think it's an overall tool that can give us hope getting out of bad rhythms and move forward in that sense of being connected. So that's how I would see it fitting into the whole, if we can't solve problems effectively. So this is a form of communication as well, not just conflict resolution.

How do we talk to each other when we're not seeing things eye to eye? We don't see it the same yet. How can we move that direction to, to move towards oneness and say, [00:20:00] relationship is more important than the problem. So I think those are big, big reasons to see it as an integral tool in, in moving towards connection and relational care.

I don't know if you've seen it before. I, I really appreciated, uh, I don't know if Pete Scazzaro came up with it, but this tool called the Ladder of Integrity, and

it's just, I don't know, it's like I, the purpose of it is to sort through what's really important to us before we even enter into a discussion.

I feel like that's kind of important to kind of sift through the emotions and get to what do we really value? What are we, you know? What's are we just fighting because we want to fight or is there [00:21:00] something really that's important to us? And I appreciate what you're saying there like if there is conflict there is something important there.

That's what's triggering that. Yeah Yeah, if you think about I'd love if you could send a link I'd love to see what that is sounds like a great tool One thing that's interesting in I don't know if I've mentioned it in any of your hearing or not One of things that's really interesting even in political debates That that idea of what's important to me So as Americans, as Westerners, at least the majority, the vast majority of Americans, if you said, you listed out the top 10 things that are important to you as an American, the primary difference would not be what's on that list of top 10 things.

It's just in their order of priority. We all care about mostly the same things, but some of them greatly diverge in the order of priority as Americans. Obviously there's people [00:22:00] on the extreme edges that would, that would not be true. I'm seeking the great. The great majority in the middle that makes up the most of the country, we share the same values.

We just wouldn't prioritize them the same. So sometimes it's that same thing in a relationship. We would both say this is important to me, but right now this feels more important. And so I'm going to start grabbing that and neglect this. I just think that whole idea of what's more important here, the relationship or the problem.

And if we can agree that connection is the goal and the problems get solved are secondary. Then I think it puts us in that same frame of mind in valuing, um, the ordering our values or defining our values, but I'd love to see that tool. Sounds really good.

Other thoughts, questions? Seems like this, uh, tool, Pat, I'm assuming, um, you know, though it's a tool for [00:23:00] discussing things that cause conflict, um, you would use a different, Uh, maybe the different page on the actual resolving current conflicts so that you can talk about sources of conflict or something like that.

Yep. Yeah. Yeah. The confession and forgiveness piece is the, is kind of the conflict resolution that most of us really creates the long term hurts and wounds and bitterness and stuff. And we'll hopefully do that next week. Um, that's walking through the confession and forgiveness and.

I like the brainstorm section there. I do think we've, we've had a brainstorming and shooting down ideas before they make it to the next phase. I like, I like getting them on the table. I think it's helpful. We could take them off pretty easily, but getting them on is a good thing. Sometimes it's a wrestle to get them up there.[00:24:00]

Yeah, Pat, uh, really quick. You mentioned to an example with your wife, uh, you know, wanting to sometimes shoot those things down, uh, those ideas before they made the list. Um, how it, I mean, just thinking through this, there's got to be more women, uh, or even men and out there in the world who will do the same.

How do you go about, you know, like saying, hey, um, we can't have you a part of this process until, until the ideas are down, you know, like, is she still okay with that or how have you guys navigated those waters? Um, well, I, I, I think there's an education process because sometimes that's, People are already in that way of thinking that, well, we're going to try to find a solution as we go rather than what is this, what is the goal of this process is to think creatively to throw ideas up there.

Most [00:25:00] people, by and large, can, can be coached to that place. And if they can't say, well, we'd love to have you step back in when it's time to evaluate these. Just to help them understand that that does the know and the the sense of feeling judged immediately does squelch creativity and and that's just a Intellectual emotional fact if I throw out an idea and you go that's stupid Ah, you just you just press down my capacity to think creatively and so coaching people in that understanding It's not just my preferences we do this We're really trying to stimulate gift and thinking and faith and creative, creative, uh, energy here.

And there are pieces of that that are critical and that need not be met with judgment. So it's, I think it's a coaching thing. And obviously Cindy's in a good place where she's okay. She understands that. So we, we let her back in.

[00:26:00] Um, most of the time she, she can, she can, uh, refrain from, from saying no, but that's her instinct.

And that's how I share ideas with her, and I've come to the point, one on one with her, that I know the first thing I'm going to get when I share an idea is a bucket of water. And, and she's going to tell me why that's scary, or something, and, and I just go, okay, yeah, go ahead, yeah. And then she settles down, because her first reaction is more fearful, and says, okay, let's think it through.

But she has to have that, that, I have to grant her the freedom in her personhood to express that fear or that, those, those concerns, and then she's able to coach her own heart back to that place. So you just have to know who you're dealing with and what the level of relationship is. But I would not hesitate to stop a brainstorming session and go, let's go over again the rules here.

And why it's not just, I don't like people saying, no, we can't do this without creative safety. We can't do this effectively without people [00:27:00] feeling safe to share crazy ideas.

And even in that coaching that, how do you, I guess my fear is that, you know, I don't know, casting some kind of judgment on the person or hurting them. And then they don't want to be a part of it anymore. Like. How do you navigate that where your wife's not just her and or others in like Coming back to this is why it's important, or is that just part of it?

I think in anything affirming and the goal here is not to, to limit. The goal is to try to cooperate and just, I would just start by clarifying the goal, not correcting. Okay. Remember everybody that the goal here is to just get any [00:28:00] creative, crazy idea up here. You will have a chance to evaluate all this.

And so hang on to those thoughts. Those are going to be important at the next stage. And so it'd be more of a leading them to the stages. Rather than saying, Hey, stop it, you're, but at some point, if someone was really disruptive, which is rare, most people get it. After Cindy just decided we didn't actually banish her, she just said, I don't wanna be in there.

If I can't react with fear and tell me when the list is done, then I'll come in. Um,

so I think it's coaching and where you're going, why you're going there, and, and we really want that input and that, and that value of what they're seeing, just not right in this moment. So I think it's a way to celebrate what they're trying to bring. It's just, let's, can we wait just a minute on that?