**Standard Talks Outlines:**

**The Four Rs**

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*So, now let’s look at WED in typical action. These basic steps provide an outline and reference points that apply to virtually all situations in which conflict or potential conflict requires positive cultural leadership. You can remember them as the “Four Rs”: Reflect, Remind, Restrict, Reintegrate.*

1. **Reflect**. First, ask yourself if the perceived wrongdoing should be addressed. Respond, don’t react. **Remind yourself first of your own commitment to practice of the Guidelines and leading by example.**
   1. Is it really wrongdoing? Has a Behavioral Guideline really been violated? Sometimes our own state of mind leads us to be more critical than we should be. **Remember: Never seek control, never punish, always avoid adversarial dynamic, and stay positive!**
   2. Wrongdoing that is not malicious or intentional is sometimes best ignored, at least temporarily.

Ex. You notice a group member referring to another as *“Stupid”* (this could be someone speaking to you or even themselves). You feel an immediate urge to criticize the namecaller. After some Reflection, you realize that you’re still angry at the namecaller for something he/she did previously. It seems to have been said in jest and without any obviously intended offense, so perhaps the namecalling is relatively harmless. You decide to let it go and monitor the situation.

* 1. On the other hand, never ignore behavior that you believe reflects a person’s unhealthy habit, even if on the surface the behavior seems trivial. **Remember: WED is about replacing less healthy habits with more healthy habits. This occurs through discontinuing the practice of unhealthy habits and practicing The Guidelines! We must lead by example!** Use this Reflection time to Remind yourself of that (Remind yourself before Reminding others!). You want to respond (choice-based), not react (impulse-based), so that you may avoid introducing control, inducing distrust, punishing, or participating in an adversarial dynamic.

Ex. Although the word *“Stupid”* is relatively mild, and there seems to be no *obviously* intended offense, you believe that in this instance, the use of the term may represent some real disrespect, and attempt to embarrass. So, you move to the next “R” – Remind.

1. **Remind**. If you believe the wrongdoing should be addressed, Remind – that is, lead yourself and the group, back toward the “mind of the group practice” as described in the Guidelines. **Remember: resist any urge to control by criticizing, lecturing, or ordering.** **Instead, use humble questions**:

*Ex. “Sorry to interrupt, I don’t want to be a bother, but I think you might have hurt (group member) by calling him/her, stupid. What do you think?”*

* 1. This implies a gentle suspicion of wrongdoing (or depending on your tone and body language can be an outright criticism). But most importantly it displays a belief in, and expectation of, the person’s capacity to accept responsibility without further external guidance. It triangulates the discussion, turning it toward The Guidelines and away from a potential adversarial dynamic between you and the person you are questioning (i.e., ego-conflict).
  2. Any genuine and sufficient expression of responsibility (including apology where appropriate, see Apology Poster) should be praised, and attempts should be made to ease discomfort.

*Ex. “ Oh, that’s ok, it’s not really a big deal. I’m really glad you are so able to practice The Guidelines. Is there something you’d like to do to help make things better?”*

Reinforcing this healthy practice will make it more likely to become a habit. You may ask the name caller if he/she believes he/she should apologize, but be careful not to undermine the name caller’s success by continuing with a critical tone. Even if this the millionth time we’ve gone over the same issue, we must remain positively hopeful in the potential growth of each group member!

* 1. Any *appropriate* rejection of the implied wrongdoing should be praised, and either accepted (with apology, if your implication may have been offensive), or politely explored further.

*Ex. “Oh, thanks for explaining it to me so politely, now I get it. I’m sorry if I seemed too critical.”*

*Or*

*“Well, thanks for talking to me about this politely, but I still don’t understand…can you help me?”*

By always expressing your concern only with reference to The Guidelines, in a way consistent with The Guidelines, and in the form of **humble questions**, you reduce the ability of the accused to displace attention from his/her behavior to yours, and thereby reduce the possibility for ego-conflict. This does not mean that you may never show your emotion. In fact, it is important to be genuine. When, in the course of questioning the behavior of another, your behavior possibly strays from The Guidelines, it is an excellent opportunity to model responsibility, apology and self-forgiveness.

*Ex. “I’m sorry if I’ve offended you. I feel like I’m getting frustrated and not practicing The Guidelines as I should. I promise to do better. Can we please continue?”*

* 1. Any *inappropriate* reaction to the implied wrongdoing should be met with a refocus on the inappropriate reaction to your question. In this way, we never allow the historic “facts” of the dispute to become more important than our practice in the moment. **Remember:** **Our priority always remains practicing The Guidelines.**

*Ex. “Why are you speaking to me with that tone (or ignoring me, or giving me that angry look, etc.)? Have I done something to offend you? I’m sorry if I have. I’m just concerned you may not be practicing The Guidelines. Remember about avoiding offensive language like it says in (2.a.). Can you please help me understand?”*

Until there is a resolution of the ego-conflict resulting from the reaction to your reasonable question – until you “**get on the same team**” – a successful resolution of the original issue is highly unlikely. Remember to keep triangulating focus with The Guidelines, both in review of the behavior of yourself as well as others.

e. If you believe the dissenting member will not presently commit to practicing The Guidelines, there must be a temporary separation. The dissenting member should be calmly asked to remove him/herself to a safe location until sufficient resources are available to further review the conflict. Alternately, the leader may choose to remove him/herself (and any other members of the group) away from the dissenting member if appropriate (safe, non-enabling of the dissenting member, etc.). If the dissenting member will not separate voluntarily, they may be required to go to a safe location, like a bedroom.

1. **Restrict**. If a dissenting member will not separate voluntarily, or when required, or sufficiently proves his/her non-commitment to practicing The Guidelines, he/she must be Restricted. The consequences of this choice are that he/she looses access to the group and may not expect group privileges or resources (other than those necessary for safety and health). **Remember:** **Restriction is not punishment! It is a display of the group’s respect for the autonomy of the dissenting member to choose not to practice The Guidelines, and simultaneously, a display of the group’s non-negotiable commitment to practicing The Guidelines.**
2. As calmly and lovingly as possible, simply state that the dissenting member is “Restricted” and must go to a separate place from which he/she may not access the group or enjoy any group privileges. This is a place selected by and prepared by group leader(s). In a family, this generally looks like a child in an isolated space, without cell phone, computer, TV, music devices, or any other group resource aside from those necessary for safety and health. (Yes, those things are virtually always group resources. Even if some of those items may have been gifted to, or bought with their own money, it is highly unusual for a child to have paid for the electricity needed to run them. Also, trust is a group privilege, and the use of these entertainment/escapist devices may, in some cases, be rightly considered of questionable influence, especially in light of the dissention). Remember, this is not a punishment, though it will likely feel punishing to the Restricted member. (This is primarily due to the intolerable nature of Restriction deeply encoded in the human brain from hundreds of thousands of years of evolution as a gregarious animal. That is, humans are naturally selected to feel intolerant of Restriction due to the fact that in the EEA, Restriction nearly always meant death. Secondarily, Restriction feels punishing due to the unpleasant nature of being deprived the group’s special, material provision). Restriction is a display of the group’s respect for the autonomy of the Restricted member. Seeing how we are not seeking control, we must allow members to choose to reject The Behavioral Guidelines. However, The Guidelines have been adopted by the group as non-negotiable, so if one chooses not to practice with the group, the group has not only the right, but the duty to protect itself from the potentially negative influences of the Restricted member’s behavioral practices. Also, in order to promote the greatest educational benefit, the Restricted member must be allowed to feel the full weight and consequences of his/her decision to leave the group. When Restricting someone, it can be hard to avoid punishing. Red flags include taking just one or several “privileges” or other items away, or setting a time limit on the Restriction. Again, remember, punishment is antithetical to WED! By removing all, instead of some group resources, we are simply conserving all resources within the group and providing the Restricted member the most complete and realistic experience with which to consider his/her decision to leave the group; we are avoiding enabling as well as punishing. We prove our commitment to not punishing by readily accepting the Restricted member back into the group as immediately as practically possible upon his/her genuinely expressed recommitment to practicing The Guidelines (Reintegration – the fourth “R”). There must be no minimum time-limit. (In an adult group, the person Restricting the other may have to leave the setting and demand not to be contacted until the Restricted member is recommitted to The Guidelines).
3. If the member refuses to move to a separate space, or is in other ways non-compliant with Restriction, he/she remains Restricted. Other members do their best to ignore him/her, deny all group privileges and resources (again, excepting where safety and health is concerned). If his/her behavior becomes threatening, he /she may need to be physically escorted to and/or restrained in a safe place. (For all but the most physically unimposing and very young, this is a job for the medical personnel or police…remember, physical intervention is virtually always a violation of our commitment to avoid control, and adversarial dynamic!)
4. If at any point, the dissenting member expresses a genuine commitment to practicing The Behavioral Guidelines, he/she should receive a Reintegration meeting as soon as practically possible. Remember, we are never to punish or seek to control – only to care for each other – which we accomplish through the maintenance of our positive culture. Important discussions about the facts and meaning of the conflict can always be addressed in time.
5. Make sure to communicate that the separation is not punitive, is hopefully temporary, and that you look forward to the opportunity to Reintegrate the dissenting member back into the group as soon as possible. We may temporarily close a door on group members, but they need to know that they hold the key!
6. The dissenting member should be expected to voluntarily seek reintegration by appropriately asking for a Reintegration meeting. Ideally this occurs with the entire group, but more often, for practical reasons, with the appropriate leader(s).
7. If the person with whom you are in conflict is another adult, voluntarily separate (to whatever degree possible, while attending first to your responsibilities). Seek mediation/counseling from an appropriate source if the conflict persists.
8. **Reintegrate.** Reintegrate the Restricted member, and celebrate their return. **Remember: Reintegration is every member’s right. Its function is only to confirm the Restricted member’s genuine commitment to practicing The Guidelines.**
   1. In preparation for the reintegration meeting, think about how you could have shown greater leadership. Begin all meetings with a genuine apology. After all, improved leadership may prevent any particular conflict.
   2. Ask the Restricted member to review The Guidelines first to explore and indicate any ways leaders and others may have violated The Guidelines. Go slowly and carefully! Strong leaders invite criticism! Help with the exploration and stress how important it is for leaders to understand their potential mistakes so they can be better leaders. Take as much time as necessary to fully exhaust any and all of the Restricted members feelings of mistreatment. Make a full apology for any possible wrongdoing.
   3. Then in a way consistent with The Guidelines, ask the Restricted member to review The Guidelines to explore his/her own potential violations. Gently ask for specific examples of violations (who, what, where, when, how, etc.).
   4. When the exploration is complete, gently inquire about what the Restricted member feels and thinks about these violations and what they may like to do about those thoughts and feelings. If necessary and appropriate, gently introduce the idea, and prompt toward apology.
   5. Discuss and assist in the process of true apology (see Apology Poster). Focus especially on an effective plan of restitution.
   6. Explore the possibility of better application of The Guidelines. Invite questions, comments, criticisms, and any other thoughts and feelings.
   7. Finish by confirming mutual commitment to practicing The Guidelines, take any other appropriate course of action (e.g., assist with restitution), and welcome the member back into the group in the most appropriately complete, warm and loving way.

*“The Tao that can be articulated is not necessarily the eternal Tao.”*