



## R-Group Process

# CLEARING AS A WORK ROUND

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:26 and Matthew 7:3-5 (Consider using one or both of these verses in the Sacred Space process for the meeting.)

**Teaching:** Within R-Groups, clearing is an important strategy for maintaining a safe container in the group. However, it can also be a helpful tool to help us become safe people toward everyone in our lives.

Ask, *What happens if we remain “unclear” with others?* (Collect answers from the group. If any of the following are left out be sure to point them out before continuing).

- It leads to division
- It creates toxicity within us
- We are unaware
- Can kill the relationship
- We are left seeing the other person as the one with the problem
- We justify our judgments and feelings, potentially keeping us toxic
- We relate to others in immature ways
- Failure to own how we are showing up in life

*The communication model is a way for us to gain clarity in ourselves and can be used to foster a clear way of expressing thoughts, feelings and desires. Being clear leads to creating a spirit of openness, authenticity and honesty. In our group today, we are going to practice using this model. We are each going to think about someone, either inside or outside the group, with whom we are not clear and practice using the communication model to help us gain clarity for ourselves.*

*Because a clearing is about the person who is not clear, it is not always necessary for the other person (the one with whom the speaker is not clear) to be there. In fact, there are times and situations where it may be better to have someone stand in place of the other person, especially when the person clearing is still learning how to use the communication model. It should not be used as an attempt to get the other person to change, or as a means to finally say what we have been bottling up for a long time. If that were your motivation, it would be especially important to go through this model without that person present to gain clarity around your judgments (imaginings) and what you can own before talking with them.*

**The Process:** *Think of a person with whom you are unclear. If possible, think of a current situation. It does not need to be an intense issue (but it can be). If you cannot think of something current, think of a past situation.*

Ask for a volunteer to go first. As you lead the volunteer through the clearing model, it is your job to keep the person on point. During facts, keep them on target with the facts and call them back if they get ahead by naming imaginings or feelings. Keep the person from storytelling; encourage them to list (think bullet points not paragraphs) the details.

After the first person has gone, you can take a few moments to debrief with that person around what came up for them and what they are aware of after clearing. Also, check-in with the group concerning any questions or observations they have.

Ask for another volunteer to go next for clearing and another to volunteer to facilitate.

After everyone has been given a chance to use the Communication Model, debrief with the group:

- What did you observe about yourself as you went through the model?
- In what ways do you feel clearer after going through this model?
- What would using this model in your relationships allow in your life?
- What was coming up for you as you watched other people clear?

**Ways to use the Communication Model with someone who is not familiar with the model:**

- Go through the model on your own first. Remember, this is about you. Sometimes when you go through the model on your own you may find that it is not necessary to “clear” with that person.
- Journaling through the steps can be very helpful

- Practice with your R Group (like we did today)
- Find another person in your group and ask them to stand in for the person

**Conclusion:** *Consider your judgments (imaginings). This can be misused as a time to insult or hurt the other person. Remember, your attitude toward the person is to love. If your judgments toward them could be toxic or harmful to the person, have someone stand in for that person first. Then, when you talk to them, share only the imaginings that would be helpful for the person's understanding of the situation. Also, when talking to them, do not use the word "judgments." Stick to "I am imagining..."*

*If the situation is not current, it may be better to have someone stand in place of the person with whom you are unclear. However, if it is a current situation that needs to be addressed with the person consider the points above.*

*Following this model has the potential of freeing us from becoming "toxic." We become toxic when we do not keep our hearts clean of the weight and debris of hurts, judgments and feelings. When we let these things add up without effectively facing them and communicating about them, they poison our hearts and minds and our ability to connect with others in a mature and loving way. That is why Paul talks about "not letting the sun go down on your anger." In other words, deal with it now or as soon as it is appropriate.*

## COMMUNICATION MODEL

**FACTS:** Facts are the data relevant to the conversation. Facts are not the story, and it is not the interpretations or conclusions one might draw from the facts. These are objectively true statements. An example of facts would be: "We decided last month that we would spend only \$xxxx for our monthly budget. You overspent by \$300. Now we do not have enough for next month's budget."

**IMAGINATION/JUDGMENT:** These are thoughts, opinions and beliefs. They are my interpretation of the facts, the meaning I get from them. These interpretations may or may not be true. Start each statement with "I imagine..." because it helps to own that these are thoughts, not facts. Owning them as thoughts helps the listener to hear without being judged.

**FEELINGS:** Feelings are emotions. While there are many different feelings, they can usually be traced to five primary emotions: mad, sad, glad, fear and shame. Do not give qualifiers or justifiers. Resist the temptation to explain it away or diminish it. Not "I feel a little upset because you..." Just say "I feel angry and sad."

**WHAT I OWN:** A vital piece of being heard by another person is your capacity to take ownership of your part in the issue at hand. Are you able to own that you have done the same thing, or something similar? Go back to your judgments and consider how those might be true of you. “I own that I have been controlling in different circumstances and that this has hurt you.”

**WHAT I WANT:** It can often be helpful to simply express what you want in a particular situation. Be specific, “I want you to be a better wife” is not helpful. Rather “I want us to enjoy each other’s company” is more helpful. Consider what you want, both in the situation and in the relationship. Recognize the person may, or may not, give you what you want: be clear without controlling the other person’s response.