

4 Styles of Confrontation

1. **The Passive Style:** The avoider confronts indirectly by using silence or nonspecific language to communicate needs and desires. (Psalm 39:1–3)
Goal: Avoid confrontation to ensure self-protection
Disadvantages: Produces no long-term solution and leads to bigger problems
2. **The Aggressive Style:** The attacker confronts by overtly attacking the character of the other person in order to gain power. (Psalm 56:2)
Goal: Gain power and control through anger or force
Disadvantages: Produces only short-term solutions and makes enemies by hurting feelings
3. **The Passive-Aggressive Style:** The ambusher confronts by covertly ambushing the other person as a power play. (Psalm 64:2–4)
Goal: Avoid direct responses and accountability while “getting even”
Disadvantages: Produces no solutions and expresses destructive anger in indirect ways
4. **The Assertive Style:** The activator confronts by directly affirming the truth that positive change needs to take place. (1 Samuel 24:9–10, 12)
Goal: Present the facts, correct untruths, and change behavior
Advantages: Produces effective solutions and builds long-term trust and respect

*“The LORD is my light
and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the
stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?”*
(Psalm 27:1)

The 12 Commandments of Confrontation

1. **God declares you are ...** to show respect and are to be treated with respect. (1 Peter 2:17)
2. **God declares you are ...** to speak truthfully from your heart and others are to speak truthfully to you. (Ephesians 4:25)
3. **God declares you are ...** to listen to others and others should listen to you. (James 1:19)
4. **God declares you are ...** to express appropriate anger and to have anger appropriately expressed toward you. (Ephesians 4:26)
5. **God declares you are ...** to both give and receive only justifiable rebukes. (Proverbs 15:31)
6. **God declares you are ...** to value and protect your conscience by treating others in a Christlike way. (Acts 24:16)
7. **God declares you are ...** to say *no* to selfish or self-serving motives or actions. (Titus 2:12)
8. **God declares you are ...** to remove yourself from an any hostile or harmful confrontation. (Proverbs 22:24)
9. **God declares you are ...** to bring opposing parties together to determine what is the real truth. (Proverbs 18:17)
10. **God declares you are ...** to both seek and give emotional and spiritual support. (Hebrews 10:24–25)
11. **God declares you are ...** to appeal to a higher authority when necessary. (Acts 25:11)
12. **God declares you are ...** to confront and to be confronted with all wisdom. (Colossians 3:16)

When Should You Confront?

- **When someone is in danger**
God opposes all abusive behavior, whether it is self-inflicted or inflicted on others. You need to intervene when you see any behavior that puts people in harm's way. (Proverbs 24:11–12)
- **When a relationship is threatened**
Relationships are vulnerable to damaging words or actions. You need to confront when necessary to preserve the relationship. (Philippians 4:2–3)
- **When division exists within a group**
God calls us to unity, agreement, and peace. He charges us to guard and protect these precious relationships. (Romans 14:19)
- **When someone sins against you**
God gives you a clear directive to confront anyone who does something to you that clearly violates God's will in regard to how you are to be treated. (Matthew 18:15)
- **When you are offended**
Confronting in humility and expressing your concern provides the other person the opportunity to be sensitive to you in the future and to avoid offending you by discontinuing the offensive actions. (Ephesians 4:2–3)
- **When someone is caught in a sin**
At times you will see sin in others to which they are blind. While guarding against the possibility of the same sin in your own life, God wants to use you to expose the sin and help the one trapped to overcome it. (Ezekiel 3:18)
- **When others are offended**
In cases of prejudice, injustice, or violence toward those unable to defend themselves, God expects you to take up their cause and speak out against the wrong done to them. (Galatians 2:11–13)

When Should You Not Confront?

- **When you are not the right person to confront**
If you are not the one offended or not responsible for the one offended, you may not be the one who should confront. (Proverbs 26:17)
- **When it's not the right time to confront**
It may not be the right time or your heart may not be right. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7)
- **When you are uncertain of the facts**
Be sure you are fully informed of what is happening. (Proverbs 18:13)
- **When you are committing the same sin**
First correct your own behavior. Then you can help correct the behavior of someone else. (Matthew 7:3–5)

- **When your motive is purely to satisfy your own rights, not to benefit the other person**
A “my rights” attitude will only damage the spirit of a positive confrontation. (Philippians 2:3–4)
- **When the person you want to confront has a habit of foolishness and quarreling**
Avoid confronting people who are unwilling to recognize their offense. (2 Timothy 2:23–24)
- **When setting aside your rights will benefit an unbeliever**
Jesus modeled suffering for righteousness' sake and exhorts you to endure unjust hardship for the sake of exposing God's character to the unbeliever. Allow room for God to work in another's heart by showing restraint. (1 Peter 2:19, 21)
- **When confrontation will be ineffective and reprisal severe**
You may not be able to effectively confront a person who has a violent temper and who is likely to exact severe retribution on you or on someone you love. (Proverbs 9:7)

How to Conduct a Crisis Confrontation for Chronic Problems

- **Pray for wisdom** and understanding from the Lord. (Proverbs 2:6)
- **Educate yourself** regarding the offender's particular addiction or besetting sin. (Proverbs 18:15)
- **Enlist the aid** of key people affected by the offender's harmful behavior—people who are willing to confront. (Proverbs 14:25)
- **Hold a first meeting** in absolute confidentiality (and without the offender present), in which these key people rehearse what they will say, how they will say it, and the order in which they will speak when confronting. (Proverbs 29:20)
- **Hold a second meeting** (with the offender present) where one at a time each key confronter communicates genuine care for the offender and then shares the rehearsed confrontations. (Proverbs 15:4)

Key Verses to Memorize

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
(Galatians 6:1–2)

Key Passage to Read

Matthew 18:15–17

How to Confront Assertively

Only one of the four following approaches addresses the behavior problem and, at the same time, preserves the relationship. ...

*“There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.”*

(Proverbs 14:12)

- **The Passive Approach** (“Running away—staying away”): If you avoid confrontation because of fear, you resign yourself to take the position of: *I lose, you win.* (Proverbs 9:8)
Instead ... Face your offender and set boundaries for the relationship.
- **The Aggressive Approach** (“My way or the highway”): If your confrontation turns into an attack because you must be in charge, you take the position of: *I win, you lose!* (Romans 12:19)
Instead ... Seek to understand the deeper needs of your offender represented by wrong behavior.

- **The Passive-Aggressive Approach** (“Have it your way—but you’ll pay”): If you ambush the character of another person because you feel powerless and fear rejection, you take the position of: *I lose, but you lose too!* (Proverbs 13:1)
Instead ... Avoid the trap of undermining the character of another rather than confronting directly.
- **The Assertive Approach** (“God’s way—the best way”): When you assertively confront because you care about the relationship, thereby offering hope for a change in behavior, you take the position of: *We both win!* (1 Corinthians 1:10)
Realize ... The reward of an assertive confrontation is greater trust and respect, which results in a deeper and more satisfying relationship. Confrontation is a means for greater unity in the body of Christ.

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