

# Relational Intelligence 101

## The Laws of Relationships

### The Law of Expectation - Part 2

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#### Main Passage

##### Philemon 1:4-25

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, <sup>6</sup> that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

##### Paul's Plea for Onesimus

<sup>8</sup> Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, <sup>9</sup> yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— <sup>10</sup> I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, <sup>11</sup> who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

<sup>12</sup> I am sending him back. **You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart,** <sup>13</sup> whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. <sup>14</sup> But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

<sup>15</sup> For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, <sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me. <sup>18</sup> But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. <sup>20</sup> Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. <sup>22</sup> But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

##### Final Greetings

<sup>23</sup> Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, <sup>24</sup> as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.

<sup>25</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

## The Background of The Letter

Paul writes to his friend Philemon who lived in Colossae regarding a slave named Onesimus who had run away and either stolen or damaged his property.

Philemon was a wealthy Christian who clearly owned slaves at the time. Paul and Philemon were in close personal and mutual respect in their relationship. He had come to know Christ through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. At some point, Onesimus encountered Paul and he led him to faith in Christ as well. Eventually Paul sends him back to his friend Philemon with a letter on his behalf.

The entire book of Philemon is predicated upon an appeal. Paul appeals to his friend Philemon on behalf of his spiritual son Onesimus - *“yet I appeal to you on the basis of love”* (vs 9-10).

The effectiveness of the appeal is based upon how much trust and credibility has been stored up within the relationship – *“so if you consider me a partner”* (vs 17).

It is more important, now than ever, that we place a high priority on the importance of relational intelligence, especially with the increasing restrictions, pressures, and mental health issues on the rise. The one thing we have the most control of is our attitude and our outlook.

In this letter, the Apostle Paul masterfully communicates with his brother and friend and intercedes on behalf of his spiritual son. The letter was never to be an attempt at manipulation or coercion but rather to express the love of God and the expectation that Paul had of his spiritual brother Philemon. Consider the breakdown of the letter, the principles that Paul uses, and the various phases of communication with respect to the law of expectations.

## The Five Stages

### 1. The Affirmation Stage (vs 4-7)

- a) Establish honour, appreciation, and thanks for the individual
  - *“Your love has given me great joy and encouragement”* (vs 4)
- b) Choose your approach wisely: A direct and bold approach is **NOT always** the best policy
  - i. Paul chooses to approach with humility and out of relationship rather than force and compulsion
  - ii. Paul operates out of meekness, because he could have compelled his friend to do what he wanted out of his authority in Christ
    - *“therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you”* (vs 8-9)
  - iii. Consider your audience: When communicating to peers, superiors and those in authority an appeal is much more palatable
  - iv. Begin with information, encourage and identify the things you value within the individual or individuals
    - This must always be genuine and sincere it is not a matter of manipulating people.

## 2. Let Us Collaborate Stage (vs 8-13)

- a) Explain your position, investment and passion:
  - “I am sending him...who is my very heart...back to you” (vs 12)
- b) Be specific in your appeal
  - i. Clarity and accuracy are absolutely critical in the collaboration stage
  - ii. Ensure that you are on the same page about what you are actually talking about
  - iii. Many times people argue about things and they are not arguing about the same thing or the immediate issue
  - iv. “Welcome him as you would welcome me” (vs 17)
- c) **The law of permission and favor:** Have you been given the opportunity to speak into the person’s life and into the situation?
  - i. You cannot proceed with any dialogue or resolution unless the law of permission is in place
  - ii. The greater the issue and the challenge, the greater the relational capital that must be in place in order to deal with it – there is a direct correlation between these two matters.

## 3. Choices Have to be Made Stage (vs 14)

- a) Allow the individual an opportunity to respond in graciousness
- b) The challenges before both parties have to be clearly laid out
- c) Try to get consent on common ground
- d) Clarify what has been agreed upon
- e) Provide people with the grace and opportunity to digest what is being discussed and what is required
  - “so that any favour you do may be spontaneous and not forced” (vs 14).

## 4. The Challenge Stage (vs 15-20)

- a) The challenge must always be to do the right thing no matter how hard it may be or what the cost may be
  - i. Be clear that there will be difficulties and possible challenges along with expectations - there is no use or good in sugar-coating anything
    - Do not leave out information that is critical within this stage - be as clear as possible - over communicate if you have to
    - Identify one or more person(s) involved to take on a greater amount of responsibility
    - Full disclosure at this stage is absolutely critical - do not leave out certain details or things that are absolutely pertinent to what is being discussed
  - ii. Relationship must be established in this stage. Paul said, “If you consider me to be a brother and a partner”
  - iii. Explain the possible benefit to the other party involved
    - “perhaps the reason he was separated from you...but better than a slave but as a dear brother” (vs 15-20)
- b) Commit yourself to the solution
  - i. Be willing and able to do whatever it takes - take 100% responsibility
  - ii. The Bible says, “But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change...” (Psalm 15:4)
    - “if he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me” (vs 18).

## 5. The Confidence Stage (vs 21-22)

- a) Express your confidence in/about the person you are making the appeal to
- b) Paul communicated his love and absolute confidence and trust that his friend would do the right thing for him and for God
  - i. Confidence must always be sincere and genuine; it is never an opportunity to manipulate or take advantage of an individual
  - ii. We should never take advantage of people that are merciful or willing to give us grace
  - iii. "...confident of your obedience, I write to you knowing that you will do even more than I ask" (vs 21-22).

### Expectations

The truth is, we all have expectations, some are spoken while others silent. Some expectations are communicated while others are left uncommunicated. It is unfair to hold someone accountable to expectations that have not been clearly expressed, as well, do not hold expectations of others that you do not have of yourself.

### Definitions

**Appeal:** a request or reference to some person or authority for a decision, corroboration or judgment/the power or ability to attract, interest, amuse, or stimulate the mind or emotions/to ask for aid, support, mercy, sympathy, or the like; to make an earnest entreaty.

### Quotes

*When people show you who they really are, believe them.*

*Do not place greater expectations on others, than you have for yourself.*

*The greater the issue, the greater the need for relational capital.*

*Do not proceed with dialogue unless the "law of permission" is firmly in place.*

*It is unfair to hold people accountable to expectations that have not been clearly communicated.*

### Questions & Discussion

- 1) What are some of the expectations you have of people? Have you communicated them? Are they reasonable?
- 2) Describe a time when there were expectations placed on you that you could simply not fulfill. How did you handle that?
- 3) How can the letter to Philemon be manipulated if the wrong motives are used?
- 4) Describe and discuss the various stages. What does this look in real life? How can we apply them effectively?
- 5) How should we deal with failed expectations? In other words, if things do not turn out the way we anticipated they should have, what should the next steps be?

- 6) How do your emotions and past experiences come into play when it comes to expectations?
- 7) What kind of expectations does God have of us as believers? What does the Bible communicate?
- 8) What expectations does the Bible say we should have of God? List 10.