

## Lesson 13: Self Change Skill

Mystery #5: What would make it possible for me to really change?

### I. Why learn this skill?

- a. I am not perfect. I make mistakes, I err in my judgment, I intentionally say things that wound others and I can be pretty self-focused. I need to **change** my own wrong behavior.
- b. One of the **purposes** of a relationship is to motivate me (out of love and respect for my loved one and out of obedience to God) to change selfish and annoying habits.
- c. Assuming appropriate **responsibility** for my poor or hurtful patterns of behavior makes room for the grace and mercy of God to enable me to change.
- d. What I need to exemplify in my behavior and specifically in my **communications**, are the character traits that reflect Christ and those things which flow out from the fruit of the Spirit in me.
- e. The Self Change skill can help us to **follow through** on a change that we have agreed to make. In so doing we are taking responsibility for self and being accountable to another.
- f. Since “change” takes time, in order to keep our commitment, we need to have a very specific **plan** so that we know what things we need to do and how we are going to do them.
- g. This skill helps us remember our commitments and provides a way to get help from our **partner** without their having to nag or get angry with our lack of progress.
- h. Ultimately, such a process will lead to certain victory in the knowledge that we have kept our promise and that we are continuing our efforts to live in Christ **honoring** ways in our important relationships.

### II. Scriptures that support this skill

- a. We are in a state of **continuous** spiritual growth. *Phil 3:12 I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be. LB*
- b. Taking personal responsibility for our own actions/words is **wise**. *Proverbs 14:1 A wise woman builds her house, while a foolish woman tears her down by her own efforts. LB*
- c. Self improvement is a **joint effort** between the Holy Spirit and the person needing change. *Psalm 101:2 I will try to walk a blameless path, but how I need your help, especially in my own home, where I long to act as I should. LB*
- d. Recognition that I need to make changes in my communication may be **tangible** evidence that God is pruning me for my good and His glory. *John 15:1,2 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit NKJV*
- e. On a practical level it is **foolish** to neglect our own communication lapses. *Proverbs 11:29 LB The fool who provokes his family to anger and resentment will finally have nothing worthwhile left*
- f. The **proof** of our walking according to the Spirit will be seen in our communication with others. *Gal 5:22,23,25 But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control...let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. LB*
- g. Godly communication reflects our love of Christ and by making changes in the way we communicate we are **obedient** to Christ. *John 14:15 If you love me, show it by doing what I've told you. I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. TMSG*
- h. We are **duty** bound as believers to correct our relationship problems. *This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.” Matt 5:23,24 TMSG*
- i. It is always in our own best interests to heed the constructive **criticism** of others and make changes that need to be made. *Proverbs 15:31,32 If you profit from constructive criticism you will be elected to the wise men's hall of fame. But to reject criticism is to harm yourself and your own best interests. LB*

### III. What needs to change?

- a. Start by taking an honest inventory of the things that you do or fail to do in your communication patterns with others. For each statement below rate yourself; 1-5. 1= poor to never; 5= consistently.
- b. The lower number scores (1-3) indicate an immediate need for correction. Scores between 4-5 indicate possible strength areas.

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- 1. I make time several times per week to express my appreciation for my spouse/friend. 1.2.3.4.5
- 2. When we are talking face to face about an issue I start the discussion by remembering something good about the person and or the relationship. 1.2.3.4.5
- 3. I avoid being judgmental in tone or words. 1.2.3.4.5
- 4. I talk openly about my feelings and all that is important to me. 1.2.3.4.5
- 5. When I want something from them I ask for what I want clearly and specifically. 1.2.3.4.5
- 6. I avoid trigger words in my conversations. 1.2.3.4.5
- 7. I manage my own tone of voice and am respectful at all times. 1.2.3.4.5
- 8. When talking with my spouse or other I take time to think about what is going on with them as we talk. I listen for their thoughts, concerns, desires, and feelings about things. 1.2.3.4.5
- 9. I ask appropriate questions to really try to understand their point of view. 1.2.3.4.5
- 10. I seek to understand how they feel about things that we talk about. 1.2.3.4.5
- 11. I seek to understand what the other person wants and to help them achieve it when I can. 1.2.3.4.5
- 12. I demonstrate that I understand by naming the feelings they have and by paraphrasing or restating what they have said. 1.2.3.4.5
- 13. I am gracious and cooperative even when negative emotions start to arise in me. 1.2.3.4.5
- 14. I plan for ways to practice using my relationship skills. 1.2.3.4.5
- 15. I look for new ways to continue building our relationship. 1.2.3.4.5
- 16. I am quick to identify when something comes up that we need to talk about or when a problem needs to be resolved. 1.2.3.4.5
- 17. When we are solving a problem I work to identify the core concerns of each of us so that we can both get what we want in the resolution of it. 1.2.3.4.5
- 18. I am quick to forgive when my spouse/other offends or hurts my feelings inadvertently. 1.2.3.4.5

**IV. Application**

- a. Total your responses to the communication survey. TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_
- b. If your score is between 18-36 you have a serious need for self change.
- c. If your score is between 37-54 you have a moderate need for self change.
- d. If your score is between 55-72 you have several strengths; keeping growing.
- e. If your score is between 73-90 you are either blind or delusional, or both. Have your spouse or friend rate you for a dose of reality.

**NEXT WEEK: HOW TO CHANGE COMMUNICATION WEAKNESSES TO STRENGTHS**