

## Relational Wisdom: Getting Upstream of Conflict

Relational wisdom—an enhanced form of emotional intelligence—is your ability to discern emotions and interests in yourself and in others, to interpret them in the light of Scripture, and to use these insights to manage your responses and relationships successfully. This workshop presents the neurological and theological basis for relational wisdom and provides tools that individuals can use to enhance their relational skills, improve job performance, reduce conflict at home, at church, and in the workplace, and enhance their witness for Christ.

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1. In essence, relational wisdom (RW) is the ability to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself ... better yet, as Jesus has loved you (Matt. 22:37-39; John 13:34-35).

**Living Out the Two Great Commandments**

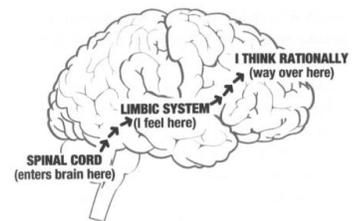
2. RW is a “*relational operating system*” (like Windows or Mac OS) that impacts every aspect of our lives, including worship, marital intimacy, church unity, and job performance and advancement.

- *Relationship trumps expertise* in most areas of life
- Soft skills (relational abilities) *magnify* or *diminish* the value of hard skills (technical expertise)



3. Life is all about relationship (Gen. 2:18; John 3:16, 4:1-42; 13:34-35, 17:20-23).

4. Relationships can be challenging, because they are often fueled by emotions, both positively and negatively (Matt. 14:14; Gen. 37:11, 28).



5. Amygdala hijacking: strong emotions trigger an impulsive reaction that is quickly regretted.

6. The Bible provides a powerfully effective way to deal with relationships and the emotions that fuel them. These truths may be organized into a discipleship paradigm called “*relational wisdom.*”

- **Relationships are three dimensional**
  - **God, Self, Others** (So do continual 360’s)
- **Relationships involve two dynamics**
  - Aware – What do I know? (Knowledge)
  - Engaging – What will I do? (Action)

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.\*\*

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,

as God in Christ forgave you.\*\*” (Eph. 4:30-32, ESV)



Definition

Relational wisdom is your ability to discern emotions, interests, and abilities in yourself and others, to interpret them in the light of God’s Word, and to use these insights to manage your responses and relationships successfully.

\*\* The gospel provides the motive, pattern and power for relational wisdom (Eph. 4:30-32; 5:1-2; Titus 2:14).

7. Relational wisdom involves six relationship-building and preserving skills or disciplines:

- **God-Awareness** (remember) is the ability to view all of life in the light of God’s character, works, and promises<sup>1</sup>
- **God-Engagement** (faithfulness) is the ability to trust, obey, and imitate God in a way that pleases and honors him<sup>2</sup>
- **Self-Awareness** (humility) is the ability to honestly discern your own emotions, interests, values, strengths, and weaknesses<sup>3</sup>
- **Self-Engagement** (discipline) is the ability to master your thoughts, emotions, words, and actions so that they advance God’s purposes<sup>4</sup>
- **Other-Awareness** (compassion) is the ability to understand and empathize with the experiences, emotions, and interests of others<sup>5</sup>
- **Other-Engagement** (service) is the ability to encourage, cooperate, and resolve differences with others in a mutually beneficial way<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. 16:12; Ps. 77:11-12; Ps. 111:2-3; Ps. 103; Rom. 8:28-39; Eph. 3:14-19; 2 Pet. 1:3-8 • <sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 3:6; Prov. 3:5-6; Matt. 25:21; John 14:15; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; Eph. 5:1-2 • <sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 5:5; Ps. 139:23-24; James 4:1-3; Mark 7:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:22 • <sup>4</sup> Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 16:24-25; John 8:29; Titus 2:11-12 • <sup>5</sup> Mark 6:34; Luke 10:30-37; 1 Pet. 3:8; Phil. 2:3-4 • <sup>6</sup> Mark 10:42-45; John 12:24-26; 1 Thess. 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:8-9

8. In real life, people live both inside and outside the circle (1 Sam. 17, 24; 2 Sam. 11).

9. Peacemaking, a special application of RW, is how we draw people back inside the circle (1 Sam. 25).

10. Relational wisdom is so simple a child can apply it, yet so complex you can spend the rest of your life developing it. You can start growing today by memorizing and practicing four simple acrostics.



### PRACTICE THE SOG PLAN

- **Serve** God (Do what pleases him)

- **Self-aware:** How am I feeling and acting?
- **Other-aware:** How are others feeling? How am I affecting them?
- **God-aware:** Where is God leading me?

### READ Yourself Accurately

- **Recognize** and **name** your emotions
- **Evaluate** their sources
- **Anticipate** the consequences of following them
- **Direct** them on a constructive course

### FOLLOW A TRUSTWORTHY GPS\*

\*God Positioning System

### SERVE EVERY PERSON YOU MEET

- **Glorify** God (Trust him absolutely)
- **Pursue** God (Seek him earnestly)

- **Smile** (Home, workplace, store, telephone)
- **Explore and Empathize** (Show interest and compassion)
- **Reconcile** (Be a peacemaker)
- **Value** (Express appreciation and respect)
- **Encourage** (Give heart, inspire, put wind under their wings)

11. God designed and empowers us to grow in relational wisdom as he sanctifies and transforms us, conforming us to the likeness of Christ (Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22-24; James 1:5; 2 Pet. 1:3-7).

- Change and growth take deliberate prayer and practice (Eph. 3:14-19; 1 Tim. 4:15)

### Additional Resources for Developing Relational Wisdom:

- *15 Training Options and Opportunities* ([www.rw360.org/training-options](http://www.rw360.org/training-options))
- *RW360 Blog* ([www.rw360.org/blog](http://www.rw360.org/blog))
- *Discovering Relational Wisdom 3.0 online course* ([www.rw-academy.org](http://www.rw-academy.org));