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*The Christian Leaders Communication Skill (2023)*

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## **Leadership Effectiveness Training Support Model**

**by Thomas Gordon**

### **Introduction**

Christian leadership and communication skills play a crucial role in establishing a solid foundation for the development of individuals and communities. Leadership inspired by Christian values brings a profound spiritual dimension, while effective communication skills enable leaders to guide, inspire, and unite those around them. As a leadership paradigm, the Christian approach emphasizes ethics, honesty, and care for others. Concepts such as service, humility, and social justice form the basis for Christian leaders in carrying out their leadership duties. Meanwhile, good communication skills pave the way for Christian leaders to convey visions, values, and messages that promote spiritual growth and harmony within their led groups.

In this context, a deep understanding of how Christian leadership and communication skills complement each other becomes crucial. This article will explore some elements of Thomas Gordon's theory on "Leader Effectiveness Training," highlighting the essential values that guide leaders in decision-making and interactions with group members. Additionally, we will focus on teachers as leaders, tracing the role of communication skills in shaping strong relationships between leaders and group members, and their impact on achieving common goals.

By understanding and integrating the concepts of Christian leadership with effective communication skills, leaders can create an environment that supports spiritual growth, personal development, and the achievement of shared goals. Thus, Christian leaders become not only guides in the spiritual realm but also agents of positive change in the real world through authentic and inspirational communication

## **Discussion**

Gordon is remembered as a psychologist who pioneered conflict resolution methods and communication skills for parents, organizational leaders, teachers, youth, and others. He strongly believed that what he taught about communication skills and conflict resolution could enhance leadership skills, for instance, in schools, homes, workplaces, and even in churches (Gordon, 1975).

These skills encompass messages, active listening, and conflict resolution. Initially applied in the 1950s, these skills were further developed in 1962 when he introduced Parent Effectiveness Training (PET). This theory gained worldwide adoption due to its ability to highlight the role of parents in educating their children (Gordon, 1975). As times evolved, there arose a need to recognize the rights of teachers in the learning process. In response to this demand, Gordon attempted to develop a theory of leadership that adapts to the existing situations

The introduction of the course theory is intended to equip teachers with essential communication and conflict resolution skills needed in fulfilling their roles. This course, also known as a support program, is implemented in many regions worldwide and aims to eliminate punitive disciplinary practices and coercive or authoritarian teaching in the classroom (Gordon, 1975).

Gordon's designed model aims to contribute to the quality of the teacher-student relationship and assist students in realizing their teacher's needs. It offers skills required by teachers to develop high-quality relationships with students, thereby reducing conflicts and creating more effective teaching and learning time (Gordon, nd). This model is a four-step teaching process, with each step designed to engage participants to enhance learning. The steps include structuring, involvement, the learning process, and application (Gordon, nd). Each step aims to increase the teacher's involvement as a class leader in active learning and enhance communication and conflict management skills.

To help reduce unacceptable student behavior through the use of rewards and punishments, problem ownership skills, and the use of alternative conflict resolution methods (Gordon, 1977). This is achieved through the use of the I-Message strategy outlined in LET. I-Messages are designed to increase students' awareness of respecting the teacher's needs (Gordon, 1977). I-Messages are a non-judgmental or blaming way of communicating with students, informing them that specific behaviors pose problems

for the teacher. This motivates students to change behaviors that hinder teachers from meeting their needs (Gordon, nd).

The model from this theory also offers solutions to cases where conflicts between teachers and students extend beyond the 'self' perspective. These solutions are referred to as Conflict Resolution (Gordon, 1975). This approach employs a win-win or non-competitive approach compared to the use of traditional power struggles that result in retaliation, resentment, and fractured relationships. This is achieved through a six-step process, consisting of stating facts, expressing feelings with emphasis, describing and understanding feelings, describing the conflict from separate perspectives, making requests, and reaching an agreement (Gurcan and Tekin). Applying these steps enables cooperation and the formulation of acceptable solutions, creating a win-win situation for both teachers and students.

In the school environment in general, it can be used to create sustainable relationships between students and teachers while ensuring that their needs are met. This can be achieved through student involvement in setting procedures and rules. Thus, students provide input they believe fulfills their needs, while teachers integrate this input by considering their needs. This ensures mutual agreement, fostering behavioral development. Additionally, the model can be applied if teachers are honest with students. By doing so, students will better understand their teachers and become aware of behaviors that may be considered disrespectful by them.

The implementation of this model can also involve discussions about teacher concerns with students (Gurcan and Tekin). This creates a communication forum where teachers express their feelings about a behavior and how they expect students to behave, fostering a sustainable teacher-student relationship. Finally, it is crucial to help students function in the classroom for the successful application of this model. This allows students to communicate their problems and expectations while enabling teachers to understand and balance their needs with those of the students.

The application of this model has limited variations, which may be related to the cultural and traditional beliefs in different regions around the world. For example, from the perspective of Saudi Arabia, this model might face limitations in terms of power and authority dynamics, as well as educational values. However, in recent years, many Arab countries have made efforts to develop comprehensive educational

programs, recognizing the crucial role of education in socioeconomic growth. This suggests that implementing the theory in schools can contribute to enhancing education. This can be achieved through raising awareness about the importance of understanding, communication, and conflict resolution among parents, teachers, and students if educational goals are to be achieved. Teachers, as leaders in these regions, should create win-win situations to enhance communication, conflict resolution, and management, ultimately improving the learning environment.

## **Conclusion**

The exploration of Thomas Gordon's "Leader Effectiveness Training" underscores the essential values that steer leaders in decision-making and interactions within their groups. Recognizing teachers as leaders, this analysis emphasizes the pivotal role of communication skills in cultivating strong relationships and influencing the attainment of common objectives.

By merging the principles of Christian leadership with effective communication, leaders can cultivate an environment conducive to spiritual growth, personal development, and the realization of shared aspirations. In this way, Christian leaders transcend their roles as spiritual guides to become catalysts of positive change in the tangible world through authentic and inspirational communication. Ultimately, the fusion of Christian principles and communication proficiency propels leaders toward a transformative impact on both the spiritual and earthly realms.

Thomas Gordon's contributions to psychology, particularly in conflict resolution and communication skills, have left a lasting impact on various spheres of society. His emphasis on empowering parents, teachers, leaders, and individuals with effective communication tools has transcended cultural and temporal boundaries. The practical application of Gordon's theories through courses and support programs, such as "Leader Effectiveness Training," equips teachers with essential communication and conflict resolution skills. This model, designed to enhance teacher-student relationships and foster a conducive learning environment, operates on a four-step teaching process emphasizing engagement, learning, and application.

The I-Message strategy within Gordon's framework addresses student behavior by increasing awareness and understanding. This non-judgmental approach facilitates constructive communication, motivating students to adjust behaviors that may hinder teachers from meeting their needs. Moreover, the Conflict Resolution model in Gordon's theory offers a win-win approach to conflicts between teachers and students. The six-step process advocates cooperation and mutually agreed-upon solutions, promoting a harmonious teacher-student relationship.

While the application of Gordon's model has demonstrated effectiveness, it acknowledges cultural and regional variations. The model's adaptability is evident, with efforts in Arab countries to integrate these principles into comprehensive educational programs. This reflects the global recognition of the significance of education in socioeconomic development. In summary, Thomas Gordon's legacy extends beyond psychological theory to practical applications that enhance interpersonal relationships, particularly in educational settings. The integration of effective communication, conflict resolution, and leadership skills empowers individuals and communities, fostering growth and harmony. As education continues to play a pivotal role in societal advancement, Gordon's contributions remain relevant and impactful.

## Reference

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