

Reconciliation (Participant's Copy)

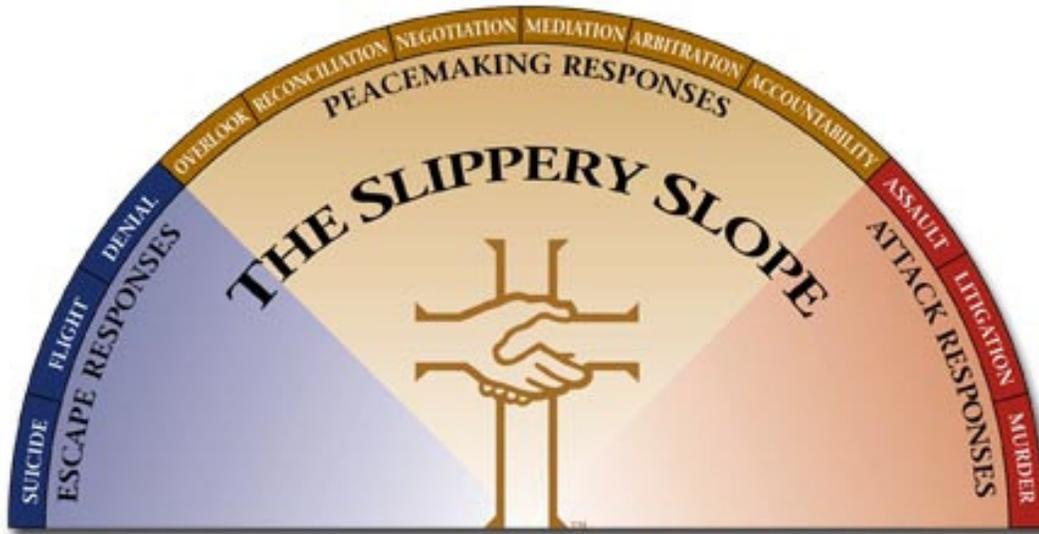


Diagram taken from Peacemaker Ministries, www.peacemakerministries.org. Material below modified from Peacemaker Ministries.

Escape Responses

The three responses found on the left side of the slippery slope are commonly used by people who are more interested in avoiding or getting away from a conflict than resolving it.

1. **Suicide**—When people lose all hope of resolving a conflict, for instance with their _____, they may seek to escape the situation (or make a desperate cry for help) by attempting to take their own lives. Suicide is never a right way to deal with conflict (see Matt. 27:1-5).
2. **Flight**—Another way to escape from a conflict is to run away. This could mean _____ a person, ending a friendship, starting over somewhere else, quitting a job, filing for divorce, etc. Flight may be legitimate in extreme situations where one's life is threatened (see 1 Sam.19:9-10), but in most cases it only _____ a proper solution to the problem (see Gen.16:6-8).
3. **Denial**—One way to escape from a conflict is to _____ that no problem exists. Another way is to refuse to do what should be done to resolve a conflict properly. These responses bring only temporary relief and usually make matters worse (see 1 Sam. 2:22-25).

Peacemaking Responses

Personal Peacemaking: Personal peacemaking responses are carried out in private between the parties themselves. Although it is appropriate for one or both parties to seek advice on how to implement these responses, they should normally try to resolve their differences one-on-one before asking others to intervene in the dispute.

4. **Overlook an offense**—Many annoyances are so insignificant that they should be resolved by quietly and deliberately overlooking an offense. "*A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense*" (Prov. 19:11). Overlooking an offense is a form of _____, and involves a deliberate decision not to talk about it, dwell on it, or let it grow into pent-up bitterness or anger.
5. **Reconciliation**—If an offense is too serious to overlook or has damaged our _____, we need to resolve personal or relational issues through confession, loving correction, and forgiveness. "*[If] your brother has something against you ... go and be reconciled*" (Matt. 5:23-24). "*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently*" (Gal. 6:1; see Matt. 18:15). "*Forgive as the Lord forgave you*" (Col. 3:13).

- 6. Negotiation**—Even if we successfully resolve *relational* issues, we may still need to work through *other* issues related to guidelines for future interactions, present boundaries, or even compensation for past damage. This should be done by you and the other person reaching an _____ that satisfies the legitimate needs of each side. *"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others"* (Phil. 2:4).

Assisted Peacemaking: If the parties cannot resolve a dispute through personal peacemaking, they should pursue one of the *assisted responses*. This will require that they seek help from other people in their church or community.

- 7. Mediation**—If two people cannot reach an agreement in private, they should ask one or more objective outside people to meet with them to help them _____ more effectively and explore possible solutions. *"If he will not listen [to you], take one or two others along"* (Matt. 18:16). These mediators may ask questions and give advice, but they have no authority to force you to accept a particular solution.
- 8. Arbitration**—When you and an opponent cannot come to a voluntary agreement on a material issue, you may appoint one or more arbitrators to listen to your arguments and render a binding _____ to settle the issue. *"If you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church"* (1 Cor. 6:4).
- 9. Accountability**—If a person who professes to be a Christian refuses to be reconciled and do what is right, Jesus commands his or her church leaders to formally intervene to hold him or her accountable to Scripture and to promote _____, justice, and forgiveness: *"If he refuses to listen [to others], tell it to the church"* (Matt. 18:17).

Attack Responses

The three responses found on the right side of the slippery slope are often used by people who are more interested in winning a conflict than in preserving a relationship.

- 10. Assault**—Some people try to overcome another person by bullying or intimidating them, usually through gossip, _____ building, fighting, group violence, or vandalizing that person's stuff.
- 11. Litigation**—In the adult world, some conflicts may legitimately be taken before a civil judge (see Acts 24:1-26:32; Rom. 13:1-5), but lawsuits usually damage relationships, diminish our Christian witness, and often fail to achieve complete _____. This is why Christians are commanded to make every effort to settle their differences within the church rather than the civil courts (see Matt. 5:25-26; 1 Cor. 6:1-8).
- 12. Murder**—In extreme cases, people may be so _____ to win a dispute that they will try to kill those who oppose them (see Acts 7:54-58). While most people would not actually kill someone, we should never forget that we stand guilty of murder in God's eyes when we harbor anger or contempt in our hearts toward others (see 1 John 3:15; Matt. 5:21-22).

The escape responses only postpone a proper solution to a problem. Attack responses usually damage relationships and make conflicts worse. Therefore, you should generally try first to deal with conflict personally and privately by using one of the first three conciliation responses (overlooking, discussion, or negotiation).

Reconciliation (Leader's Copy)

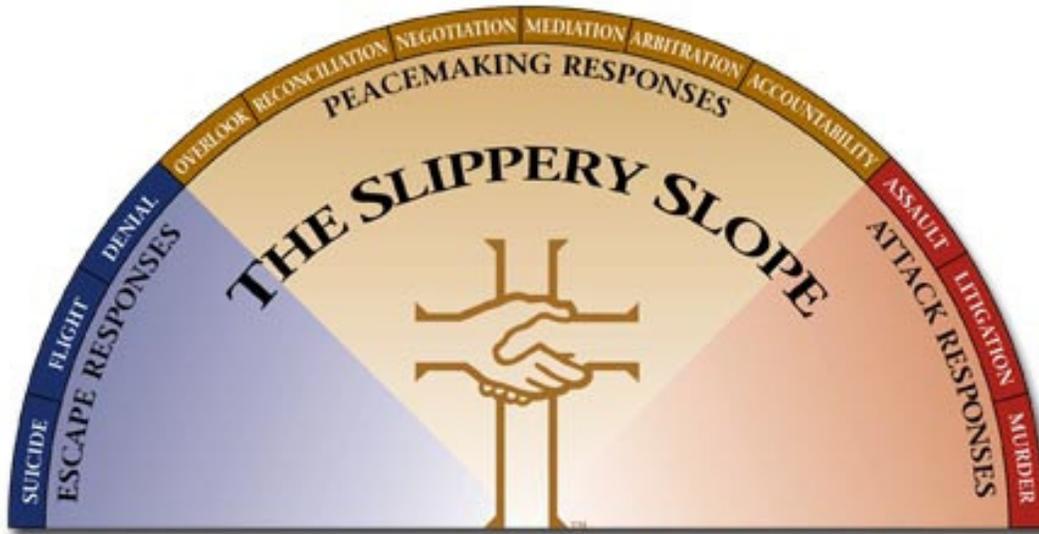


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