

Stay on Your Side of the Net

Use it when... you need to tell a brother something hard.

“Wounds from a friend can be trusted.”

Proverbs 27:6

Picture a tennis net between you and the man across the table. Every exchange has three parts:

HIS SIDE	THE NET	YOUR SIDE
What he meant	What he said or did	What it did in you
His motives. Only he knows them.	His behavior. You both saw it.	The impact. Only you know it.

The rule: speak only about the net and your own side. Guess at why he did it and you are over the net — he will argue instead of hear.

OVER THE NET	YOUR SIDE
“You don’t really want this.”	“That’s the third Monday you’ve said ‘not yet.’ I’m concerned, because I want this for you.”
“You’re avoiding it.”	“When you read your Rule, I lost you. It sounded written for someone else.”

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THE SENTENCE

When you (what I saw or heard), **I** (what it did in me).

FOUR MOVES

- **Ask first.** “Would it be a bad idea if I told you what I noticed?”
- **Say it while it is small.** A small thing said in February saves a hard conversation in May.
- **Then go back to listening.** His reasons are his to tell. Ask: “What’s going on for you?”
- **Take it the same way.** When it comes back to you, say “Tell me more,” not “Here’s why.”

FIRST USE

The Monday your triad reviews each man’s Rule: “Can you really do this in two minutes?”

THIS SKILL’S PRACTICES S7 Name the value you see • S8 The Barnabas Turn • S12 One level deeper • S14 Say the blessing

More in the Toolkit: 3 • Speak Truly & Encourage

Adapted from Bradford & Robin, Connect (2021), from Stanford’s Interpersonal Dynamics course.

WhyzMen • Rewire Retirement • Card T4 • r4

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