

# MIGHTY OAK MINISTRIES



*They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. (Isaiah 61:3)*

Pat J. Sikora

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## Communicating with Respect

*“I don’t get no respect!”*

Sadly, that familiar comment by comedian Rodney Dangerfield says more than we’d like about the way we communicate with one another, even within our families and church. While respect is the third core condition of healthy relationships, too many of us suffer from giving and receiving far less than we need.

*“Respect, which means communicating value or worth could be called the oxygen of human interaction; without it, our relationships suffocate and die.”*

*Dr. Gary Sweeten, Dave Ping, & Anne Clippard  
Listening for Heaven’s Sake*

Respect, according to Gary Sweeten in *Listening for Heaven’s Sake*, is simply *communicating value or worth*. He calls it the oxygen of human interaction, saying that without it, our re-

lationships suffocate and die. While empathy and warmth are important, Sweeten says that without respect, they can degenerate into manipulation and superficiality.

Unfortunately, too many of us have what seems to be an inherent need to look down on others in order to feel important ourselves. I remember my first job out of grad school. My boss had perfected this skill, making snide and cutting remarks about anyone who wasn’t present. *(continued on Page 2)*

## Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal With Challenging Group Members

Congratulations to **Mary Doherty** of Moss Beach, CA, winner of this month’s copy of *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal with Challenging Group Members*. Mary won simply by commenting on the *Why Didn't You Warn Me?* blog--twice!

### Win a Copy! Subscribers only

Now it’s your turn. Write a comment on my blog anytime in October and be entered in a drawing for a free copy of the book. More comments = more entries. I’ll draw a winner on November 1.

What do you have to lose! Not a subscriber? Easy. [Sign up here.](#)

Be sure to request the book at your local Christian bookstore or order online at [Mighty Oak Ministries](#). You can also order the other three books in the series. Want to read a sample? Go [here](#).



(Continued from Page 1) His own self-esteem was so low that he could only feel good about himself if he was making someone else look small. It was a terrible work environment!

Proverbs 18:21 says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” How true that is! Our words are more powerful than the sharpest sword, and unless used as carefully, they will do as much harm. Research has shown that toxic tongues can cause an immediate wounding of body, mind, and spirit. Respectful language and attitudes, on the other hand, are like a healing balm. Which are you communicating?

So what are some hallmarks of respect? Sweeten suggests the following acronym:

**Resist pat answers or manipulation:**

Don’t you hate it when you’ve agonized over a problem, only to have someone flip-pantly give you a quick sound bite on how to solve it? Most of us do. It’s insulting and demoralizing when someone tries to solve our problems for us, especially with a quick fix or formula response. Rather, respect listens to the whole story with an open mind and heart. Respect recognizes that each person has a God-given ability and responsibility to choose life for herself.

**Exercise personal self-responsibility:** It’s disrespectful to try to own another person’s problems. Of course we think we know what’s best, but chances are, we don’t have the whole story. Often, wounded people will try to get us to take on their problems so they don’t have to. Or on the other hand, we may take on problems that don’t belong to us out of our own need for importance or to avoid dealing with our own issues. But respect both allows and requires each person to be responsible for his or her

own issues, while graciously walking alongside and offering encouragement and support.

**Suspend critical judgments and conclusions about the other person:**

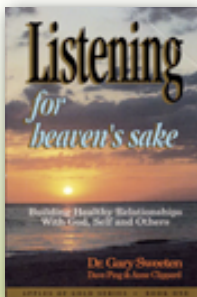
This is hard because social, ethnic, educational, religious, and even behavioral prejudices are usually deeply ingrained in us. We need to learn to identify them, then actively suspend them and extend grace instead.

**Pray and practice:** Practicing respect sounds easy, but it’s really the most challenging of the core conditions of communication. We need to develop a genuine interest in and concern for the other person. That takes hard work, practice, and more than a little prayer.

**Extend yourself appropriately:**

The key here is balance and honesty. It’s important to be graciously frank about what you can and can’t, will and won’t, do. Be honest with yourself and others about your limitations, whether those are time, money, expertise, or interest. Don’t take on more than you can handle. Doing so will simply let the other person down and create more problems. If you’re too tired or preoccupied to listen intently, say so and if appropriate, set a time when you can devote your full attention to the person. Clarify your limits.

**Consider confidentiality:** It’s easy to talk about another person, especially when you’re concerned or stumped, but don’t. The key here is to remember



**Want to Learn More about Communication?**

Gary Sweeten has taught me more about communication than any other person or class.

You can order **Listening for Heaven's Sake** directly from the publisher, [Equipping Ministries International](http://www.equippingministries.com).

If you didn't receive the FREE PDF download "Making Time for Prayer" when you signed up for the newsletter, you can get it [here](#).

that any information or communication belongs to the speaker. You don't have the right to violate confidentiality by sharing the information with anyone else, even as a prayer request, unless you have good reason to believe that the other person or someone else is in danger. Don't ask about a private situation in a public place.

**Take comments seriously:** It's easy to dismiss or minimize the comments or remarks of others, especially children and those we consider "less than" ourselves. We may cover our discomfort or disdain with joking, sarcasm, or other inappropriate attitudes. Here's where the *imago dei* concept can be important. Remember that this person is created in the image of God and loved by him.

Practice communicating with respect to everyone you meet and then pay attention to the results. You'll find yourself sought out as a confidant. Others will begin treating you with respect. And you'll find that your relationships are happier, more effective, and more godly.

Be sure to visit the *Why Didn't You Warn Me?* blog at <http://whydidntyouwarnme.com/blog/>

## Let's Take Another Look at Halloween

Fall is in the air and Halloween is just around the corner. How will your family and your church observe this increasingly popular holiday?

Pat's 37-page e-book, which addresses the origins and meaning of Halloween from a biblical perspective is available for immediate download at

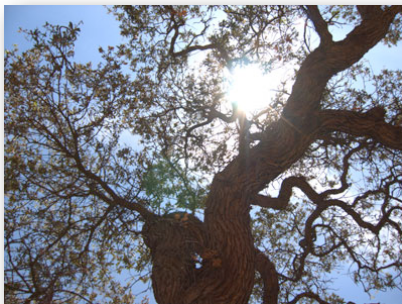
<http://mightyoakministries.com/products/leaves/books/letstakeanotherlookathalloween.html>.

An audio tape by the same title is available at

<http://mightyoakministries.com/pr>

[products/leaves/tapes/letstakeanotherlookathalloween.html](http://mightyoakministries.com/products/leaves/tapes/letstakeanotherlookathalloween.html).

We encourage you to consider this material before making your plans for October 31.



## Train your Leaders

A dozen people joined up for a book signing and mini-workshop

at *The Door Christian Bookstore* in San Carlos, CA on September 11. Then on October 1, we inspired and equipped the women ministry leaders at *Cornerstone Fellowship* in Livermore, CA.

Is it time to train your lay leaders for the fall? Equip and encourage them to effectively minister to the wounded and broken--or just plain folks.

Pat is available for an hour, a day, or a weekend. You can see a sample of topics [here](#). Or [contact us](#) and we can tailor something for your group.



**Pat J. Sikora** has been encouraging Christians for over 30 years. Her most recent book, *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal With Challenging Group Members*, gives small group leaders strategies for effectively serving the most challenging people in their groups. She ministers through Mighty Oak Ministries at [www.mightyoakministries.com](http://www.mightyoakministries.com) and *Why Didn't You Warn Me* at [www.whydidntyouwarnme.com](http://www.whydidntyouwarnme.com).

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