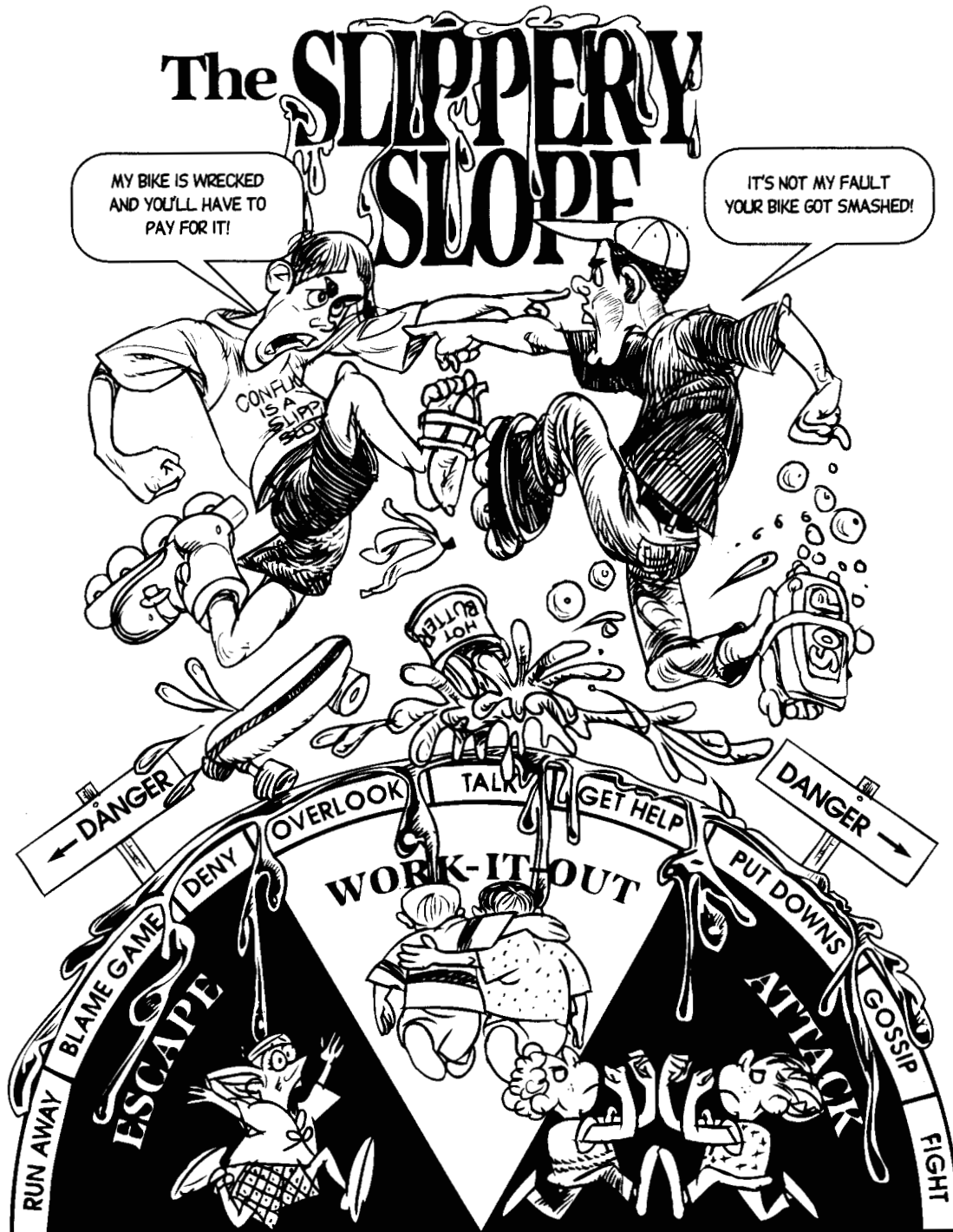


The Slippery Slope

by Corlette Sande

Illustrations by Russ Flint. From *The Young Peacemaker*, Billings, Montana: Peacemaker Ministries, 1997.



CONFLICT IS A SLIPPERY SLOPE
There is Danger Ahead If You Slip.

PEACE
FAKING

CONFLICT? I'M NOT HAVING A CONFLICT.

1. ESCAPE

The Escape Responses are used to get away from conflict instead of trying to resolve it. These responses usually prolong conflict.

Denial

Pretending that a conflict does not exist, or refusing to do what we can to work it out is always a wrong response to conflict.

HEY, JAMES, GREAT DAY FOR A BIKE RIDE DONTCHA THINK?

HAW HAW!

I'LL NEVER
TRUST
HIM AGAIN!

YEAH, SURE, GREAT

HE STILL
THINKS ITS
MY FAULT
HIS BIKE
GOT
WRECKED.

YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE
CAREFUL!

Blame Game

Instead of taking responsibility for our choices, we try to escape their consequences by blaming others for the problem, pretending we did nothing wrong, covering up what we did, or lying about our contribution to a conflict. This is never a responsible way to handle conflict, nor does it resolve problems.

WELL,
YOU'RE THE ONE
WHO LEFT IT
IN THE
PARKING LOT.

Run Away

Running away from the person we are quarreling with is only acceptable if there is physical danger. Otherwise this response only prolongs problems.

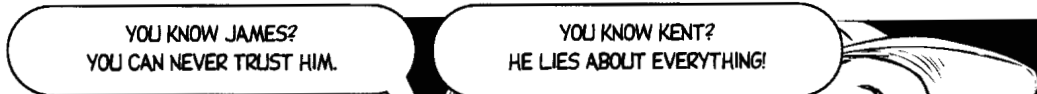




The Attack Responses are used to put pressure on others to get our own way. These responses usually damage relationships.

Put Downs

We attack others with harsh and cruel words when conflict arises. This response usually stirs up anger in the other person, and is always a wrong response to conflict.



Gossip

We talk about people behind their backs in order to damage their reputation or to get others on our side. Gossip is hurtful and is always a wrong response to a conflict.



Fight

We use physical force to get our own way. This is almost always a wrong response to conflict. (This response is proper only if you have to protect yourself or another person from being injured by an attacker.)



PEACE
MAKING



3. WORK-IT-OUT



The Work-It-Out Responses are used to find constructive solutions to conflicts. These responses usually help to preserve relationships.

Overlook an Offense

You deal with the offense by yourself. You simply decide to forgive a wrong action against you and walk away from a conflict. Perhaps you think this is the same as denial, but forgiveness is the key here. The person who overlooks another's offenses will continue to have a growing, healthy, relationship with him or her. "Don't sweat the small stuff!" If you cannot overlook a problem, you should use one of the other work-it-out responses (Prov. 19:11; 12:16; 17:14; Col. 3:13; 1 Peter 4:8).



LOOK, KENT, MARY LOU
AND JEFF'S BIKES WERE WRECKED TOO.



Talk-It-Out

A conflict is resolved by going directly to the other person to talk it out together. This can include confessing your own wrongs and confronting the other person's wrongs in a kind way. This response should be used if you cannot overlook what the other person did, and the problem is hurting your relationship (Matt. 18:15; 5:23-24; see also Prov. 28:13; Gal. 6:1-3).



CONFLICT
IS A
SLIPPERY
SLOPE