



Get Beneath The Surface GroupWords

Getting beneath the surface. This is what Ken Durham calls it in his excellent book, **Speaking From The Heart**. It's a book about communication and, as such, has wonderful insights and application for Small Groups. Here are some of his tips for "Getting beneath the surface."

Encourage Others To Talk ...

Find out about their interests, opinions and feelings. Learn to be an encouraging listener. Develop and demonstrate a deeper interest in others.

Learn People's Names ...

My name is an important part of who I am. And visitors and group members, along with their family members, will be honored when you make an effort to remember and use their names.

When People Are Defensive, Don't Attack ...

This will only build the wall higher, the last thing we need in a Small Group setting. Instead, try to calm them down and build a bridge.

Create Opportunities for Un-pressured Conversation ...

This is for extended ministry, outside the Small Group. Let people know that you want to be with them. "Let's go for a walk." or "When can we get together and talk?"

Always Keep a Confidence ...

Respect the privacy of others when they open up to you. Nothing discourages open communication like gossip.

Don't Be Argumentative ...

When others begin to reveal their personal opinions and feelings, you will not always agree. But there is a way to state a differing view without trying to "win" the argument. As it has been said, "Learn to disagree, agreeably."

Don't Force People to Self-Disclose ...

Many are not ready for this level of openness. If pushed, they will quickly retreat. In the group this means they will become silent. Move to deeper levels slowly and carefully. Admit your own faults and fears.

It is not unspiritual to admit weaknesses or struggles. Just read the Psalms, Jeremiah, Paul, or Jesus. And being open yourself will only encourage others to be open.