



## Enhancing Relational Skills and Reducing Conflict in a Public School

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## Introduction

Education is all about relationships with students, parents, teachers and administrators, each of whom can make an educator's job either a joy or an ordeal.

Therefore, one of the wisest investments educators can make is to enhance their relational skills by learning relational wisdom (RW), which is values-based form of [emotional intelligence](#). These skills can be applied on multiple fronts every day, enabling educators to:

- **Serve** challenging students who bring a lifetime of trauma and broken relationships into the classroom,
- **Respond** to critical parents patiently and build relationships of mutual respect and cooperation,
- **Influence** inexperienced or difficult staff members and inspire them to upgrade their own relational skills,
- **Get upstream** of conflict on all of these fronts and devote more of your time to the joy of teaching,
- **Fulfill continuing education requirements** with training that improves both their professional and personal lives,
- **Go home** with less stress in the evening, where you can use these same skills to nurture a stronger family.

Schools can actually experience a **double benefit** by encouraging their teachers and support staff to develop relational skills they can use both at school and at home.

Studies indicate that when educators have positive home lives, they are more relaxed and focused when they come to work. As a result, they are typically happier with their co-workers and supervisors and find their work to be more fulfilling, productive and enjoyable.

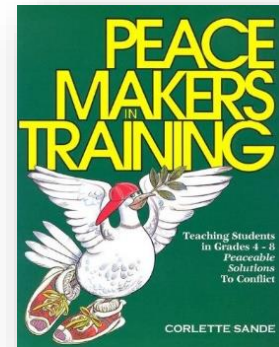
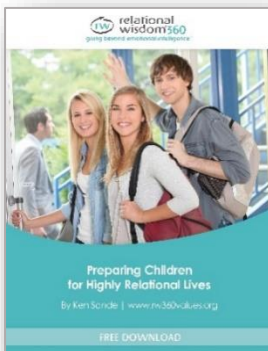
This results in more cohesive, innovative and effective teams, as well as lower absenteeism, conflict, burnout and staff turnover, all of which lead to a peaceful, cohesive, creative, productive and enjoyable academic environment.

For more detailed information on the studies that illustrate these benefits, see [Employers Reap a Double Benefit with RW Training](#) and [Academic Studies on How RW/EI Can Reduce Teacher Stress and Burnout](#).

Go to [www.rw360values.org/publicschool](http://www.rw360values.org/publicschool)  
for a pdf with active links

## A. Educational Resources

1. [RW360 Smartphone App](#) – Provides immediate access to hundreds of RW and peacemaking articles and videos (Free)
2. [RW360 Blog](#) – Practical applications of RW and peacemaking (Free)
3. [Preparing Children for Highly Relational Lives](#) (Free download)
4. [Exploring Relational Wisdom 3.0 – Online Course](#) (qualifies for [6 to 12 hours of continuing education credit](#) in many states) Regular cost: \$49  
- 10% discount for school staff (code: “teacher10”) = **\$44.10**  
- 50% discount for all students (code: “student50”) = **\$24.50**
5. [Exploring Relational Wisdom 3.0 – Live In-Service](#) (6 hrs CEU credit in many states)
6. [RW Pamphlets](#) (for students and parents)
7. [Peacemakers in Training](#) (Complete Curriculum for 3-6 graders)



## B. School-Wide Strategies for Administrators

1. Recommend the *Exploring Relational Wisdom 3.0* online course or live in-service for [continuing education](#) to shape your entire school culture, promote core relational values, and improve relational and conflict resolution skills.

To promote this training, download this [poster](#) and add additional information relevant to your school or state in the text box at the bottom.

2. Subscribe to the *RW Blog* and *use select posts and articles for discussions in staff meetings*, or send select blog links to staff through your school newsletter.

### Workplace Examples

- [A Disastrous Employee](#)
- [Really Nice Pants](#)
- [RW Training Strengthens Both Families and Businesses](#)
- [Three Qualities that Improve Every Relationship](#)
- [Falsely Accused](#)
- [Lincoln's Relational Wisdom](#)
- [The Last Human Freedom](#)

### Student Engagement Examples

- [I Am Home](#)
- [Dolphins vs. Eagles](#)
- [Have You Ever Been This Kind?](#)
- [Raising Emotionally Stunted Boys](#)
- [Raising Empathetic Children](#)
- [The Three Faces of Fear](#)
- Additional workplace and student posts on this page

3. At the beginning of every school year, host a *special presentation to parents* where you use the [RW Smartphone App](#) and [RW pamphlet](#) to introduce them to the concept of relational wisdom and explain your commitment to practice these principles with both students and parents. Encourage parents to do the same, both at home and when they come to school to meet with teachers.
4. If you have a *regular newsletter or communication to parents*, include links to select RW Blogs throughout the year (see A.2 above) to remind them of RW concepts they can reinforce at home and apply when meeting with teachers.
5. During staff meetings or professional development sessions, divide teachers into small groups and have them discuss how they would apply RW to specific [Challenging Relational Scenarios](#), which will prepare them to respond constructively when problems arise in real life.

6. Whenever you are guiding people through conflict or moving your team to accept changes, deliberately seek to provide [The Three P's of Satisfaction](#):
  - Process Satisfaction
  - Personal satisfaction
  - Product (result) satisfaction
7. Defuse [potentially explosive meetings](#) with staff or parents by specifically defining the issue or problem you need to address and then ask people to share their perspectives by answering these six questions:
  - Briefly stated, how do you feel because of this problem?
  - What have you done that might have contributed to this problem?
  - What steps have you already taken to make things better?
  - What are you now willing to do to help resolve this problem?
  - What do you suggest others do to help resolve this problem?
8. Add *Exploring Relational Wisdom 3.0* to your curriculum as an *elective or required course for all high school students* so that when they graduate, they have developed the relational skills needed to succeed in [job interviews](#), the [workplace](#), friendships and marriage (see [Preparing Children for Highly Relational Lives](#)).

### C. Personal and Classroom Strategies for Teachers

1. Subscribe to the *RW Blog* for *weekly insights on applying relational wisdom*.
2. Use the *Exploring Relational Wisdom 3.0* online course for *personal skill development and continuing education (CEU)* requirements. Studying in a group enhances the learning experience.
3. Send an [RW pamphlet](#) home to parents and explain that you will be teaching and applying these concepts in your classroom. Invite parents to model and reinforce these principles at home.
4. When conflicts arise, use them as opportunities to model and teach [peacemaking principles](#) to your students and their parents.
5. For grade school children, teach portions of *Peacemakers in Training* at the beginning of the year and then briefly reinforce the principles each week.
6. Set up a "*Peace Table*" in your grade school classroom where students can go to work through conflicts. Stock the table with laminated summaries of key peacemaking principles.
7. For older students, use select *RW Blogs* (see A.2 above) to set the stage for classroom discussions on relational issues.
8. Encourage students to find and share *compelling stories from the news, on social media or in movies* that illustrate the value of relational wisdom or emotional

intelligence. Have students vote on which story is the most compelling, and give extra class credit to the student who submitted the winning story.

9. Teach and focus on a specific [RW acrostic](#) each month.
10. [Use peacemaking skills](#), such as reflecting, asking clarifying questions, listening, etc., during difficult conversations with parents or administrators.
11. Use the “*explosive meeting*” questions listed above (B.6) when talking with distraught students or parents.
12. Set up *private study groups for the online course* and invite interested students to study RW together, with you serving as moderator (students receive automatic 50% discounts).

#### D. Strategies for Students with Relational Weaknesses or Patterns of Conflict

1. Ask the student to *read relevant RW Blogs*, answer the reflection questions and apply the principles to his or her life.
2. Create a *special study group for the online course* for the student (or a group of similarly struggling students), with a teacher or staff member acting as group moderator, and guide the student(s) through the course, adding relevant questions, articles or case studies for the students to process.

#### E. Strategies for Gifted and Mature Students

1. Identify *students who are especially gifted or mature* in their relational skills and encourage them to go through the online *Exploring Relational Wisdom 3.0* course as sophomores or juniors. If they continue to demonstrate relational maturity, ask them to *moderate groups* of younger students who are going through the online course.
2. Train mature students with conflict coaching and mediation skills so they can serve as “*peer mediators*” and assist other students in resolving conflict.

As you discover additional ways to teach and practice relational wisdom in your school or classroom, please let us know so that we can add your ideas to this list!

[mail@rw360.org](mailto:mail@rw360.org).

Go to [www.rw360.org/christianschool](http://www.rw360.org/christianschool)  
for a similar booklet for Christian schools.

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