

Episode 12:

Conflict Without Combat: A conversation with Ken Howard on conflict, reconciliation, and family unity



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In this episode, the StoryLens team sits down with Marriage and Family Therapist, Ken Howard, to examine one of the most consequential distinctions in family relationships: the difference between conflict and combat.

Featuring:

John Christensen
Cameron Bond



Guest:

Ken Howard
Marriage and Family Therapist

The conversation covers:

1. Why dysfunctional patterns transmit across generations without awareness
2. How unresolved wounds accumulate into relational fractures
3. Why reconciliation, not just forgiveness, is what actually rebuilds trust.

Building Relational Skills

- The capacity for healthy conflict is a skill developed through practice. It is not inherited or innate.
- High achievers who acknowledge a relational blind spot have the same capacity to address it that made them successful elsewhere.
- **Families that build the skill of healthy conflict become more durable, not more fragile.**

The Cost of Avoiding Hard Conversations

- Unresolved wounds accumulate over time, producing diminished trust, avoidant behavior, and compounding frustration.
- **Emotional pain that goes unaddressed does not stay contained; it finds expression.**
- Relational repair requires courage, honesty, and the willingness to be wrong.

Forgiveness vs. Reconciliation

- Forgiveness cancels the relational debt. It is a decision, not a process.
- Reconciliation rebuilds trust through demonstrated behavioral change over time.
- **Both are necessary. Neither substitutes for the other.**

Conflict vs. Combat

- Combat seeks victory. There is always a winner and a loser.
- **Conflict seeks connection.**
- Healthy conflict produces understanding and strengthens trust in the process.

Hidden Lessons in Families

- Family systems transmit behavioral patterns to younger generations without explicit instruction.
- **Latent learning shapes how people handle emotions and disagreements before they are old enough to recognize it.**
- Without awareness, unhealthy patterns repeat across generations.



Notable Quotes

“Combat creates winners and losers. Conflict creates connection.”

-Ken Howard

“If you had the power to build something unhealthy, you have the power to build something healthy.”

-Ken Howard

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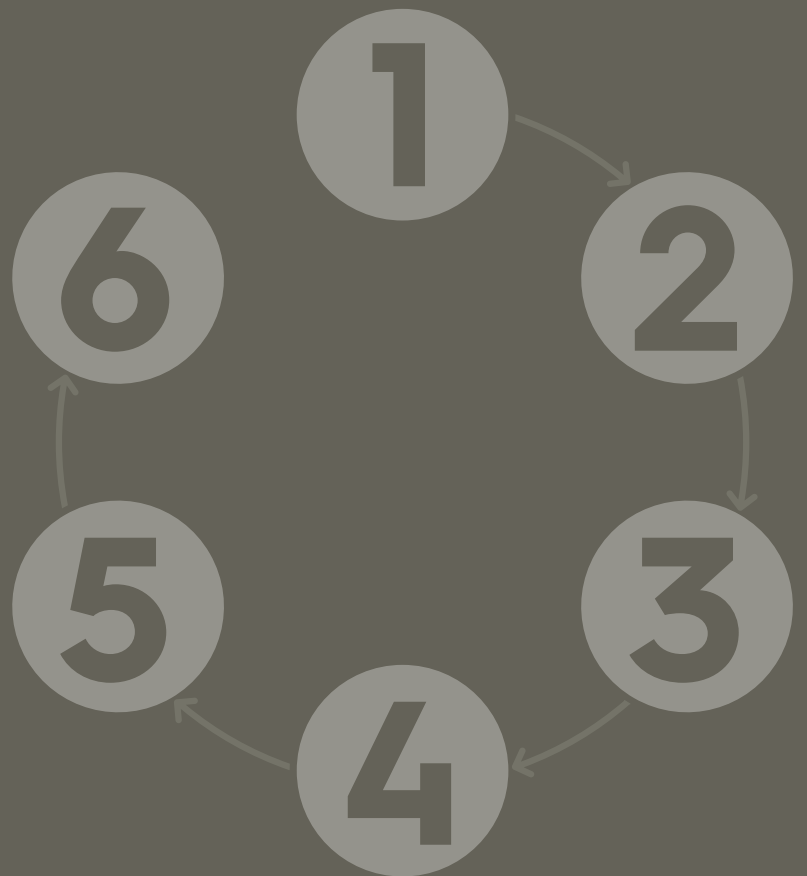
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featuring the

Conflict Cycle

with Ken Howard
Marriage and Family Therapist

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Episode 12
Conflict Cycle

Turn reactive conflict toward understanding, repair, and restoration.

Print, take notes and discuss each step in the cycle together, step by step, focusing on understanding, repair and restored connection.

