PWOC LDP
Leadership Development Program

TOPIC: UNOFFENDABLE HEART

The Bottom-Line Up Front: When working closely as a Board, offenses are inevitable, but remaining offended is a choice. Allowing bitterness to sit in the heart brings devastating spiritual consequences and poor working relationships. The leader is invited into the love of Christ that forgives and releases offense.

Introduction (5 minutes) *Check the box next to the quote that best resonates with how you experience offense in your own heart. Share your thoughts with someone you are sitting near.*

- ☐ [The word "offense,"] *originally referred to the part of a trap to which BAIT was attached. Hence, the word describes laying a trap in someone's way. In the New Testament, it often describes an entrapment used by the enemy. Offense is a tool of the devil to bring people into captivity.* —John Bevere
- ☐ *People will offend us either by what they do, or by what they do not do. Either way, life offers us daily opportunities to be offended.* —Mark Batterson
- ☐ *Being offended is to get so upset with someone that you hold a grudge against them or retaliate actively or passively.* —Frank Viola
- ☐ It is said that people don't stumble over boulders; they stumble over stones: *Those relatively small things; the personality of someone in authority bothers us and soon we are offended; a friend or family member fails to meet our expectations and we take an offense into our soul.* —Francis Frangipane
- ☐ *If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were rising against me, I could hide. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship at the house of God, as we walked about among the worshipers.* —King David, Psalm 55:12-14 (NIV)

1. Discussion (5 minutes): Think of some probable consequences of holding onto offense within our Board relationships. *If available, use a whiteboard or chart paper to record answers. Consider the items below as you discuss.*

- Relationship with Christ
- Belief about others
- Behavior
- Gossip
- Trust
- Unity
- Teamwork
- Reputation
- Atmosphere

2. Read the following Scriptures together (7 minutes)**:** Draw out the antonyms, *the antidotes* to the consequences of holding onto offense. *Write the antonyms/ antidotes next to the corresponding negative terms from the first discussion.*

- **Proverbs 17:9** *Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.*
- **Proverbs 19:11** *A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.*
- **Romans 12:17-18** *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*
- **Ephesians 4:26-27** *In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*
- **Ephesians 4:29-32** *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*
- **Philippians 4:6-7** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
- **2 Timothy 2:24-26** *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*
- **1 Peter 2:22-23** *'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

3. Draw Conclusions (5 minutes): Which do we prefer—offense or antidotes? How can we get there? *Discuss. Close in Prayer. You may want to give a minute of silence at the end for individuals to talk to God about their own offenses.*

4. Homework—The Process of Laying Down Offenses: Psalm 119:165 holds the promise, *Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.* The KJV translates this: "nothing offends them."

If you are holding on to an offense, consider these next steps:

1) Recognize you are hurt; "I'm fine" will not help the process (Psalm 139).
2) Pray and perhaps fast (Isaiah 58:6).
3) Speak, write, and even sing your willingness to forgive.
4) Search the Scriptures for examples of those who forgave others.
    a. Joseph and his Brothers (Genesis 50:19-21)
    b. The Father of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31)
    c. Jesus on the Cross (Luke 23:34)
5) Bless the offender (Matthew 5:44; Psalm 35:11-14).
6) Pray for reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-20).

> *"We pray, 'Lord, I want to change.' To answer our prayer, He sometimes puts us in situations that perfectly offend us. The offense itself awakens our need for grace. Thus, the Lord precipitates change by first offending the area of our soul He desires to transform. He does not expect us to merely survive this adversity, but to become Christ-like in it. Ask Joseph in the Old Testament: the 'land of offense' became the land of his anointing and power. Listen, my friends: the destiny of man unfolds or dies at the junction of offense. How we handle offense is the key to our tomorrow."*
>
> *—Francis Frangipane*

Prayer for Laying Down Offense:

My dear Savior and Lord, forgive me for being easily offended and for carrying offenses. Right now, I choose to lay them down at the foot of the Cross. I say with Christ, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Grant me the new creation heart that can walk as Jesus walked through a world of offenses without stumbling. I want to see everything as an opportunity to pray, everything as an opportunity to become like Christ. Lord, help me to interpret offenses as opportunities that lead to transformations.

Grant me, O Lord Jesus, the pulse and beat of YOUR Unoffendable Heart. In Christ's Holy Name, AMEN.

For Further Study:

- *The Bait of Satan* by John Bevere
- *The Three Battlegrounds* by Francis Frangipane
- *The Freedom of Forgiveness* by John MacArthur
- *When You Can't Say "I Forgive You"* by Grace Ketterman, MD and David Hazard
- *When Forgiveness Doesn't Make Sense* by Robert Jefress
- *Total Forgiveness* by R.T. Kendall