

# When Three Essential Skills Are Missing

KAITLYN DONIHUE'S MONTHLY UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2021



Dear Friend,

Last month during a JFA outreach event at Wichita State University in Kansas, I watched as a guy and gal stood a little ways away from our display conferring with one another. They seemed to be evaluating our display from a distance. After several minutes, they approached me and demanded to know who we were and why we were on their campus.

I explained that we come from the pro-life perspective but that we were on their campus to engage students in conversations and that we want to hear students out even if they have a different perspective. Their dislike of pro-life people in general and of me in particular was obvious as they told me that pro-life people don't care about children suffering in foster care and women suffering in poverty or other terrible situations.



Over and over I tried to find common ground and ask questions to show them that I genuinely cared about them and their concerns. Over and over they rejected the common

ground I was trying to build, telling me I didn't really care and describing for me what they were sure I actually believed. It was a difficult and miserable conversation to be a part of, mostly because of all the assumptions they had about me before I even had the chance to open my mouth.



Conversations like this one remind me why it is so important for us as pro-life people to choose to give pro-choice people the benefit of the doubt. We need to resist the urge to assume we know what they believe. Instead, we need to make



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sure to employ the Three Essential Skills: take the time to *ask questions with an open heart, listen to understand, and find common ground when possible*. When we fail to do these things well, we risk doing to pro-choice people what those two pro-choice people did to me.

That kind of conversation will not draw people toward us. It will likely only result in pushing them away.

When pro-choice people make assumptions about your position, cut you off in conversation, and refuse to listen, it can be tempting to return in kind. Instead, we should labor to continue to give them the benefit of the doubt even if they give us no reason to do so.

As carriers of the light and hope of Christ, we have a great responsibility to not only speak truth but to speak it in love. We must choose to treat people who disagree with us with grace and dignity regardless of how they treat us. This does not guarantee that our conversations will go as we want them to or even that the pro-choice person will like us in the end, but it does help us to treat them with the dignity they deserve. We treat them this way not because they are kind but because they are human and an image bearer of God.

In Christ,



#### RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**September 23:** The JFA team did a training seminar for 150 high school students at Christian Heritage Academy in Oklahoma.

**September 24-29:** The JFA team did a training seminar in Denton, Texas and in Stephenville, Texas. We also did two days of outreach at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas.

**October 1-6:** The JFA team will put on a training event for 66 students at Ellerslie Mission Society in Windsor, Colorado. We will also do a training event at Calvary Church Englewood and at Saint Joseph Catholic Church. We will also do two days of outreach at Colorado Christian University.

**October 7-10:** I will serve on a Deeper Still retreat in Michigan supporting women in their process of healing after abortion.

**October 14-17:** I will serve on a Deeper Still retreat in Pennsylvania.

**October 18-21:** We are doing a four-day online dialogue workshop. If you would like to participate in JFA training and haven't yet, this is a great opportunity! Go to [www.jfaweb.org/register](http://www.jfaweb.org/register) to register.

To see more recent and upcoming events, visit our website: [www.jfaweb.org/calendar](http://www.jfaweb.org/calendar).

