

BattleZONE Ministries Relational Discipleship Busters: Opinion-ator, General-izor, Professor & Diversion-ator

BattleZONE Training Course continues to impact men's lives because God is merciful and grace-filled. In light of the small and confidential BZ teams that take place in churches and other groups throughout the country we at BZ Corporate have pinpointed FOUR indicators that stifle the generational-relational-discipleship model. These FOUR Relational-Discipleship Busters when identified and eradicated create a culture where God's Holy Spirit can begin to bind these men together in Truth and Love. Below are descriptions and examples of the "4-Busters".

Opinion-ator: is a habit in church groups or life where a man constantly gives his opinion about a topic. This is detrimental to a BattleZONE small group because God's Truth gets covered up or diverted by someone's opinion. An Opinion-ator stifles transparency, accountability and authenticity ultimately resulting in surface relational depth. The way to stop an Opinion-ator's bad habit is to initially explain why someone who opines in a BZ group harms the relational depth. Another way is for the BZ Coach/Captain to gently point out when someone is giving his opinion instead of using God's Word or sharing a real life challenge or experience that coincides with the BattleZONE Play, Biblical passage or activity "one the table". An example of an Opinion-ator could be, "Well I think you should just tell your neighbor that if he doesn't stop his barking dog that you will file a complaint with the police." The man who is disturbed by the barking dog at night has a major BattleZONE of anger, so telling him to engage with the neighbor in this way may end in sin. Pushing the Opinion-ator aside one could recommend that we seek God's Word for a passage that will help him deal with his anger and one that encourages him to pray for his neighbor and love him—to show Christlikeness.

General-izor: is a way for men to join in the conversation but not reveal personal challenges. For example, "I struggle with lust too", which is general. Where a more transparent man is more specific with his struggle with lust, "I sometimes go out of my way to catch a look at women in public or at work who are revealing too much cleavage or have large breasts." A General-izor is hiding the shame of his actions, which is understandable. However, it is in the details of sharing the struggle with his personal sins that the "shame-bomb" can be detonated and he experiences acceptance from the men instead of the rejection he was avoiding with being general. A General-izor also stifles transparency, accountability and authenticity ultimately resulting in surface relational depth.

It is important to note the one should NEVER share detail that paints too graphic of a picture in the minds of the other men—causing them to sin. I have also experienced men sharing the details as a way of bragging about their past or current sin. This too is unacceptable. The BZ Coach/Captain must use great wisdom in their personal sharing. The BZ Coach/Captain should interject if too much detail is being shared that could cause another person to sin.

Another example would be that if someone says, "I had one too many beers last night", again too general and in this case it is a lie. Compared to, "This is hard for me to share but I was planning to get drunk all week on Friday evening. I didn't eat so I could get a bigger "buzz" prior to drinking the six pack of beer. I know it's a sin, but my flesh denies the Spirit anyway. I feel guilty the next day and I'm so ashamed. I consistently do this once or twice a week." This was the FULL TRUTH—not just a pacifying general statement to fool yourself and the others into thinking you are ALL-IN.

The way to stop a General-izor is to again explain why it is important to be specific but not share too much detail as it will cause someone else to stumble. This may need to be done at the beginning of each BZ session. Another way is for the BZ Coach/Captain to gently point out when someone is being too general and for the BZ Coach/Captain to set the example for sharing. Last, it will be important to remind the men about the confidentiality agreement and that what is shared here—stays here.

Professor: Is the individual who is knowledgeable about God’s Word or they want you to think that they are knowledgeable. This individual may think that by providing the Greek and Hebrew meaning of every word is beneficial but is missing the practical application aspect of the text as it can help him or the other men to live a holy life. Often times the Professor will take the topic at hand as a tiny window to teach everyone in the group what the verse he has been studying says. Ultimately this person considers themselves a teacher and uses the BZ group to teach, teach and teach—instead of to share, share and share. Sharing is different from teaching because sharing involves taking the Scripture and gaining understanding NOT just to know the meaning of the passage but to APPLY it to their lives. Also, Professor’s who love to teach often times are hiding behind his “teaching” strategy so he does not have to share what he is struggling with himself. Professors may also get too caught up on a controversial doctrine and literally look to “pick a fight” about a topic like predestination vs. adoption. The BattleZONE environment is not the place for these discussions or debates. This environment is for pursuing Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit as to deal with the temptation and sin in the context of brotherhood in pursuit of Holy living. Learning the truths of doctrine through real life application in the context of relationship is the goal; not understanding the symbolism in certain passages of Scripture—though this too is profitable. Yes, hermeneutics (the interpretation of Biblical text) is incredibly important, however if God’s Truth from the text does not collide with real-life living it becomes mere intellectualism and textualism. 2 Timothy 3:16 says; *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*** BattleZONE’s relational-discipleship environment is intentional about hitting all four uses for God’s Word, not just teaching.

The way to stop a Professor is to again explain why it is important to share and not teach. Share how the Biblical concept, verse or topic impacts you or how you struggle to apply the text in real life. This too may need to be done at the beginning of each BZ session. Another way is for the BZ Coach/Captain to gently point out when someone is teaching instead of sharing.

Diversion-ator: Is the person who habitually diverts the topic of discussion to what he wants to talk about or what he feels comfortable talking about. The Diversion-ator is a master at avoiding answering a question that hits too close to what he is covering up. The Diversion-ator may have a favorite subject in the Bible that he knows a lot about—so he wants everyone in the group to know that he knows a lot about this topic as to think more highly of him. A Diversion-ator is usually the one who talks louder than the rest and has bouts as the Opinion-ator as well.

The way to stop a Diversion-ator is to explain why it is important to stay on topic and not take the group down a “Rabbit-Trail”. This may need to be done at the beginning of each BZ session. Another way is for the BZ Coach/Captain to gently point out when someone is using a diversion tactic and getting the team off course. Again the BZ Coach/Captain is to set the example for staying on topic no matter how uncomfortable it may be. The temptation to divert the group could come from several things. The first has already been mentioned, to avoid the uncomfortable topic or question “on the table”. The second could be a way to glorify yourself by bloviating on a topic of the Bible you know well to impress the others in the group, which overlaps a bit with being a Professor. Three, to divert the group off of a topic you know little or nothing about, thus making you feel stupid and/or very uncomfortable.