



IRON SHARPENS IRON

Proverbs 27:17

Copied from Elmwood Church of Christ
Lafayette, Indiana

Think about it; this concept doesn't really work with other materials: Cheese doesn't grate cheese. Coffee doesn't brew coffee. But "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.", does. Consider the substantial amount of heat, pressure, and resistance required for us to be sharpened as instruments of God's purpose in our daily lives and in our ministries.

So how does iron sharpen iron? Practically speaking, you sharpen something by creating shape-altering friction between the two surfaces. The softer metal edge will be worn down and thus sharpened by the harder material. This is why you don't sharpen two identical Kershaw folding knives by vigorously rubbing their edges together – that would only dull them both.

Metaphor alert: This is where you lean back and think, *Wow . . . so seeking refinement only through relationships with [people just like me] isn't the best way to stay sharp in my spiritual growth and leadership.*

I'm asking you to consider who God has placed in your life that you don't always appreciate or seek perspective from.

More resistance = more change.

Scripture says we're to flee from unrighteousness (2 Timothy 2:22). Unfortunately, some of us flee from conflict in the name of church peace (or self-preservation). We have a saying in my home that we'd rather be friends than be friendly. Being friendly means never offending anyone and thus never getting past surface relationships. But being a friend means "bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.*" (Colossians 3:13). The Lord has forgiven us, so we're to be genuine and offer forgiveness in every relationship we have—that will help others do the same.

So how much resistance do you allow?

Who are you allowing to speak into your life?

Do you have any real friends who are at least 10 years older than you?

Do you have friends who have different hobbies and interests?