How Can I Be Honest Without Getting into a Fuss?

Introduction:

1. A concern of many who communicate is how do I teach without “making someone mad?”.
   1. This is especially true when the communication is for the purpose of correcting something that is wrong.
   2. It is this kind of teaching at the close of the chapter.
      1. “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” 2 Timothy 2:25
      2. *paideuo* - “to chastise or castigate with words, to correct..” - Thayer, p. 473.
2. The reason Timothy is to avoid foolish and ignorant disputes is that they generate strife. 2 Timothy 2:24
   1. The word for strife, *maka*, literally means “a battle.” - Arndt & Gingrich, p. 497. 2 Timothy 2:23
   2. The word for strive or quarrel, *makomai*, literally means “fight”; fig., of fighting without weapons, “fight, quarrel, dispute.” - Arndt & Gingrich, p. 497
3. How do we correct, chastise, communicate without fussing?
4. REALIZE THAT PROPER CORRECTION IS AN ACT OF KINDNESS.
   1. “A good friend is someone who will tell you when you have spinach stuck in your teeth, when your deodorant has quit working.”
   2. A good surgeon is invaluable when surgery is needed. Proverbs 27:5, 6, 17
5. HOW CAN I COMMUNICATE THAT I CARE DURING CORRECTION?
   1. Don’t fight.
      1. Think about what you are going to say. Ephesians 4:29
      2. Think about how you are going to communicate it. Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 15:1
   2. Be gentle.
      1. Dr. Blackwell.
         1. Gentle.
         2. Warned when he had to hurt.
         3. Apologized for the hurt.
      2. Word used only one other time. 1 Thessalonians 2:7
      3. A battle often evolves – not because we did not have the truth, but because we did not have the touch; we could have used a reasonable amount of the painkiller of gentleness and have performed the same operation with less pain.
   3. Be prepared.
      1. “Skillful in teaching.”
      2. This comes from
         1. Instruction and practice; a person who wouldn’t think of going driving or going hunting without practice will attempt to rearrange another person’s life without any practice or supervision.
         2. Being a student. Matthew 5:3
         3. A pediatrician cannot practice medicine well without learning from a three-year-old.
      3. A quarrel can be a cover-up for a lack of information or a lack of skill and being unwilling to admit it.
   4. Be patient.
      1. “Not resentful under injuries” (Williams).
      2. I get into a fuss when I take the rejection personally.
      3. How does a dentist respond when a patient in pain bites him?
      4. Israel wanted a king when Samuel was old and his boys were misbehaving.
      5. God said, “For they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me” (1 Samuel 8:7).
   5. Be aware of your power.
      1. The chastising with words is to be done in meekness.
         1. *prautas* - “gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness” (*Arndt & Gingrich*, p. 705).
         2. “Strength under control.”
      2. If I am not aware of my power or deny my power, it will be difficult, if not impossible to keep it under control.
      3. What power do I have to keep under control?
         1. Gospel.
            1. It is powerful. Romans 1:16; Hebrews 4:12
            2. It needs to be “rightly divided” – the right portion given to the right person at the right time. John 16:12
         2. Information, knowledge.
         3. Age.
            1. “When you are as old as I am, you will understand.”
            2. “You boys will understand when you have been around as long as I have” (head elder in elders’ meeting).
         4. Size.
         5. Physical strength.
         6. Money.
            1. How much do I have to give?
            2. How much do I need to give?
            3. How much will be helpful?
            4. When would more be hurtful?
         7. Emotions.
            1. Some people say, “Well, I just tell people how I feel; if that’s the way I feel, I just say it.” Proverbs 29:11
            2. That is not a mark of wisdom. Proverbs 16:32
         8. Position.
            1. Paul could have made demands as an apostle. 1 Thessalonians 2:6
            2. But he chose to use the gentle approach of a nursing mother rather than the demanding approach that he could have taken because of the authority of his office. 1 Thessalonians 2:7
            3. If you find yourself using your position often (parent, elder, preacher, teacher, boss) to demand your way, it might be good to ask, “Do I have my strength under control?”.
            4. I find when I get to this point, I am usually in a fuss and don’t have anything else to offer.
      4. The issue is not whether we have power or not, but how much should we use.
         1. Wilson hydro plant in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, sends 165,000 volts to New York.
         2. In some of the transmission lines bringing electricity to our homes, there are 13,800 volts.
         3. The line coming into our house brings 220 volts.
         4. We would receive more benefit from a candle and a Coleman stove than to turn that much power into all the circuits in our house, uncontrolled.
            1. The oven, cook top, and dryer need 220 volts.
            2. The lights need 110.
            3. The cassette player needs 9.
      5. The challenge of using well the electricity which has been produced for us is keeping it under control.
      6. Our challenge is not whether we have power or not, but keeping the power that has been given us under control.

Conclusion:

1. One of the most difficult things in the world to do, and do well, is to correct another.
2. There are certainly times when it needs to be done in a caring way.
3. But the only person who will be able to do this is one who:
   1. Suffers like a soldier.
   2. Goes by the rules like an athlete.
   3. Works hard like a farmer.
4. Alice Miller’s rule of thumb is a good one: “If it is very painful for you to criticize your friends, you are safe in doing it. But if you take the slightest pleasure in it, that is the time to hold your tongue” (*The Friendship Factor*, Alan Loy McGinnis, page 68).
5. Rose Garden, Lynn Anderson.

I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.

Along with the sunshine, there’s gotta be a little rain sometimes.

When you take you’ve gotta give, so live and let live or let go.

I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.

I could promise you things like big diamond rings,

But you don’t find roses growing on stalks of clover.

So you better think it over...

I could sing you a tune and promise you the moon,

But if that’s what it takes to hold you, I’d just as soon let you go.

But there’s one thing I want you to know:

You’d better look before you leap, still waters run deep

And there won’t always be someone there to pull you out.

And you know what I’m talking about...

I beg your pardon, I never promised you a rose garden.

Along with the sunshine, there’s gotta be a little rain sometimes.