Do I Lean Silent or Sharp?

A free companion to "Admonish One Another" · The One-Another Life series

Every one of us has a natural pull when a hard conversation is needed. Some of us swallow it and hope it resolves on its own. Others of us blurt it out before we've prayed it through. Neither tendency is a character flaw — but left unexamined, either one keeps you from admonishing the way Romans 15:14 and Colossians 3:16 describe: in love, from relationship, for the other person's good.

This isn't a scored test. There's no "passing" result. It's simply a mirror — read through the pairs below and notice which side you find yourself nodding at more often.

Read Each Pair. Which Sounds More Like You?

Silent: I tend to wait "until I'm sure" — which often means I never say anything at all.
Sharp: I tend to speak the moment something bothers me — before I've had time to pray it through.

Silent: When I finally do say something, I over-explain, soften it into mush, or apologize it away before she can even respond.
Sharp: When I say something, I say it plainly — sometimes so plainly it lands harder than I meant.

Silent: I worry that speaking up will damage the relationship, so I choose comfort over honesty.
Sharp: I worry more about the issue getting fixed than about how the words land.

Silent: I've stayed quiet about something for months (or years) that I now wish I'd addressed early.
Sharp: I've had a mentee go quiet or defensive after I said something — and I wasn't sure why.

Silent: My silence usually comes from fear — of conflict, of rejection, of being wrong.
Sharp: My directness usually comes from urgency — I want the pattern to change now.

If you found yourself nodding mostly at the first option in each pair, you likely lean silent. If you found yourself nodding mostly at the second, you likely lean sharp. Many of us are a little of both, depending on the relationship or the season — and that's worth noticing too.

A Word for Each Tendency

If you lean silent:

> *"I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another."* — *Romans 15:14*

Paul isn't writing to the bold and outspoken here — he's writing to ordinary believers and telling them they are able. Your silence may feel like kindness, but withheld truth isn't actually love; it's often self-protection wearing love's clothing. You have more standing to speak than you think.

If you lean sharp:

> *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom."* — *Colossians 3:16*

Notice the word richly — admonishment is meant to be soaked in the same grace that saved you, not fired off in the heat of frustration. Your instinct to address things quickly is a gift; it just needs to slow down long enough to become wisdom instead of reaction.

Say It Loving, Not Controlling

Phrase starters for whichever way you lean

Knowing your tendency is only useful if it changes what you actually say. Below are real openers to borrow — not scripts to recite word-for-word, but starting points so you're not standing there with the right conviction and no words.

If You Lean Silent: Openers to Help You Actually Start

- "Can I share something I've been sitting with? I love you too much to keep holding it quietly."
- "I've noticed a pattern, and I've been praying about how to bring it up — can we talk?"
- "This is a little uncomfortable for me to say, but I'd rather risk that than stay quiet."
- "I'm not saying this to correct you from a distance — I'm saying it because I'm for you."
- "I don't have this all figured out, but here's what I'm seeing — can I be honest with you?"

If You Lean Sharp: Openers to Help You Soften Without Softening the Truth

- "I want to say this well, so bear with me while I find the words."
- "I've noticed something, and I want to bring it to you gently, because I care about you, not just the issue."
- "Can I ask you about something first, before I share what I'm seeing?"
- "I could be missing part of the picture — help me understand before I say more."
- "I'm bringing this up because I love you, not because I'm frustrated with you."

A Few Phrases Worth Avoiding, Either Direction

- "You always..." or "You never..." — sweeping language shuts down honest response before it starts.
- "I'm just being honest" as an opener — it often signals bluntness is about to arrive without love.
- "Everyone has noticed..." — borrowing others' opinions adds pressure instead of care.
- Bringing it up mid-conflict or in the middle of an unrelated disagreement — the timing itself can feel controlling, even if the words are gentle.

However you lean, the goal isn't a perfect script. It's a posture: full of goodness, filled with knowledge, able also to admonish one another — in love, from relationship, for her good.

Want help talking through what came up for you here? That's exactly the kind of conversation this community was built for — come bring it into the Bridge the Gap Christian Women Who Mentor Facebook Group, where these deeper conversations can happen safely.