Conflict

Conflict is...

- Normal
- Happens continuously
- Emotional
- Stimulates changes
- Part of life
- Major or minor depending on the situation and energy

Why do we get into conflict?

- Different goals (concerns or desires differ from another person’s)
- Common goals but different approaches
- Change
- Scarce resources
- Poor communication

Can you manage conflict?

- Anticipate conflict
- Design systems to minimize conflict
- Improve leadership & communication skills

When you are prepared you can...

Build on the positive outcomes of conflict:

- Stimulates creativity
- Builds long-term relationships
- Personal, professional, and organizational growth
- Problem addressed, conflict is resolved
- Shared decision-making strengthens team
- Leadership emerges

Minimize the negative outcomes of conflict:

- No results
- Destroys relationships
- Destruction of trust
- Someone wins, someone loses
- Unwillingness to work together
- Expensive litigation
- Community leadership declines
- Loss of individual / team confidence

Think of one word that best describes how you feel when you have to deal with a conflict situation.
**WHICH IS YOUR STYLE UNDER STRESS?**

Fight or Flight

**THE FIVE CONFLICT MODES**

- Assertive
- Unassertive
- Uncooperative
- Cooperative
- Compromising

**Which is your ‘default’ approach to conflict?**

- Compete
- Avoid
- Accommodate
- Compromise
- Collaborate

**THE THOMAS-KILMANN INSTRUMENT (TKI)**

http://www.kilmanninstruments.com/catalog/thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode-instrument

**Food for thought…**

Managing Conflict Situations in your work:

- How might your personal conflict style affect some chronic conflict situations?
- What might you do differently?
- What can your team do differently?
  - You have choices in a conflict
  - Give yourself time to think
  - Choose your words carefully...

**Communicating Through Conflict**

- Preserve the Relationship
- Create Safety
- Develop a Shared Purpose

**OPENING**

- Tell the facts & impacts, on yourself & others, without judgment
- Explain the outcome you want

**LISTENING**

- Ask to listen, thoughtfully and with respect
- How do you see the situation?
- Why do you want that?

**DIALOGUE**

- Open, Honest Communication

- How can we satisfy both your needs and mine?
- What do we both care about?

**RESOLVING**

- Commit to stay in dialogue, by asking: “are you willing to…?”
- Recognize each other’s needs, the reasons behind the position each is taking: ask “Why do you want that?”
- Invent a mutual purpose with brainstorming: “how can we safely satisfy both your needs?”
- Brainstorm solutions

**References:**

- Bushe, Clear Leadership
- Kaner, Participatory Decision Making
- Moore, The Mediation Process
- Patterson et al., Crucial Conversations
- Reese, Facilitator Excellence
- Schuman, The Handbook for Working with Difficult Groups
**TEA**

Tell your facts and feelings, without judgment

Explain the general outcome you would like

Ask for the other persons’ views, thoughtfully and respectfully

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**Positions and Interests**

**Positions:** A group’s desired outcome(s)

**Interests:** A group’s underlying goals, concerns, values or needs

Invent a mutual goal: Discussing everyone’s interests, *not* their positions, leads toward shared solutions

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**Communicating through Conflict**

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**Active Listening Skills Continuum**

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<th>Ask</th>
<th>Probe</th>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
<th>Summarize</th>
<th>Reframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask: Listening begins with someone talking. Sometimes to get a conversation going all it takes is a simple question: “What do you think about that?” “How are you feeling about that?” “What’s your view?”</td>
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<td>Probe: Use gentle questioning to help others share their thoughts and feelings if someone has withdrawn or is silent. If they’re still not talking, guess what they might be thinking and ask them if you’re right. This should help them feel safer sharing.</td>
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<td>Paraphrase: Rephrase what was said, using words close to those of the speaker. Restating assures the speaker that you have heard them. It also demonstrates your intention to start the conversation from where “they are” instead of skipping ahead to what you want to say. In other words, it shows your intention to understand their position.</td>
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<td>Summarize: Paraphrase, adding your understanding of the emotion the speaker is expressing. This can also be called “mirroring.” Use phrases like “I wonder if you’re feeling…” “I get the impression that…” “Maybe you’re feeling…” This legitimizes the speaker’s feelings and often helps them release negative emotions so they can look towards constructive solutions.</td>
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<td>Reframe: State the situation in neutral language, describing what you’ve understood the speaker really wants. For example, if a person says “I’m tired &amp; bored of the way you do most of the work.” Be “I’m hearing that you’d like them to share the load and be equal partners in this project.” This leads into envisioning constructive solutions to the problem.</td>
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