

Managing Conflicts Productively (Version 1.1 07-05-2003)

Turning Conflicts Into Success (Robert Pennington)

Principles

- "Whether you think you can or you can't you're right." (Henry Ford)
- Conflicts occur when two people NEED to be right
- At WORK love is called "CARING & RESPECT"
- Setting aside your belief is not the same as giving it up
- We can tolerate a lack of agreement if we have understanding but we cannot tolerate a lack of understanding
- "In the fullness of one is the seed of the other." (Lao Tsu - +/-, talk/ listen, yang/yin)
- Principle of Receptivity: The RECEPTIVE position always gives birth to something new.

Understanding

- Confidence of understanding is no measure of understanding
- Definition of Understanding: When the other person FEELS understood-Releases energy
- Most conflicts are not about value but about misunderstanding
- Look, get out of the way, support
- Asking allows raising to consciousness

When LISTENING ask:

- "What is it that you want me to know about this?"
- "Is there anything else?"
- "Is that all?"

When SPEAKING ask:

- "What is it that you're hearing me say?"

Managing (Your) Emotional Vulnerability

- EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY is a leftover from growing up & flares up (is reactivated) in conflict

To manage (your) emotional vulnerability in a conflict:

- Breath
- Relax
- Reassure Yourself
- Act & Think Positive (there is a win-win negotiation possible here)
- Smile

Closeness exercise to do interactively with another:

- "What my mind says that makes me feel distant from you is..."
- "What my mind says that makes me feel close to you is..."
- Sometimes you can write to work through the emotion of the conflict & disappear it

Steps To Resolve A Conflict

1. Understand Another
2. Acknowledge ANY Truth
3. Ask for Understanding
4. Clarify Differences
5. Negotiate Agreement

Process For Change

1. Learn new material
2. Forget while things go smoothly
3. Crash

4. In midst of crash remembrance/awareness of new material
 5. Try new alternatives
 6. Learn & grow ways to learn more about turning conflicts into successes:
 - Talk to others
 - Tapes
 - Personal journal
- Definition For LOVE (CARING & RESPECT):
 - All right that other person is on planet
 - All right that other person has lessons to learn (too)
 - Make only supportive agreements
 - Hold a powerful image for people being amazing beings (including you):
 - Intricate, fascinating, complex, responsive

Building Productive Teams (Glenn H. Varney)

- Effective groups REQUIRE conflict: stimulate interest/energy, foster creativity/intensity, result in better ideas/more innovative solutions
- Need to know how to bring differences to the surface & air them in constructive ways
- Conflict sources include COMMUNICATION (misunderstanding), STRUCTURE (circumstances, position), & PERSONAL (needs, emotional vulnerability)
- Responses include AVOIDANCE (repress feelings, physical removal), DIFFUSION (cool off, solve minor points, postpone), CONFRONTATION (take it on, solve problem)
- What DOESN'T WORK: POWER (physical force, bribery, punishment)-Pressuring, Avoiding
- What DOES WORK: NEGOTIATION (hear both sides, resolve differences)-Persuading, Stating Expectations, Exchanging, Questioning, Listening, Disclosing, Finding Common Ground, Disengaging

The Gentle Art Of Verbal Self Defense (Suzette Haden Elgin)

1. Know that you are being attacked-Feeling of distress, upset-Break in sense of well-being-Emotional vulnerability reactivated
2. Know what form of attack you are facing
 - Communication modes:
 - BLAME - acts, talks confident when really not
 - PLACATE - acts, talks agreeable when really not
 - COMPUTE - acts, talks don't care when really does
 - DISTRACT - acts, talks all three
 - LEVEL - acts, talks consistent with what really feels, thinks
 - Two components of communication:
 - PRESUPPOSITION ("if you really cared about X")
 - BAIT ("you'd have done a better job on Y")
3. Know how to make your defense fit the attack
 - Type, Intensity, Degree of Importance
4. Know how to follow through
 - Ignore the BAIT - respond directly to the PRESUPPOSITION ("when did you start thinking I didn't care about X")
 - Look to see how what the speaker says could true be for them
 - Use attacker's own momentum as part of your defense
 - Respond in same sensory mode (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste)
 - RESPOND in:
 - Same BLAME, PLACATE, or DISTRACT mode to ESCALATE conflict
 - COMPUTE mode to HOLD conflict at CURRENT LEVEL until know what to do or to defer resolution
 - LEVEL mode when/if able/willing to allow space for other to level & begin to RESOLVE conflict