

Making Lemonade out of Lemons

Conflict vs. Arguments



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Participant Guide

Session 5

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Conflict VS. Arguments

"In leadership, there are no words more important than trust. In any organization, trust must be developed among every member of the team if success is going to be achieved."

--Coach K

Objectives

- *Resolving Conflict*
- *Agree to Disagree*

Tough Calls for All Leaders

When promotions happen to incompetent people

It is not easy to work with someone when you are wondering how on earth that person reached his current position.

Incompetence comes in many shapes and sizes. What would you consider to be incompetent?

The mistakenly promoted employee

One of the worse things you can realize as a supervisor is when you have promoted someone who shouldn't.

When workers cannot be fired

Cover basics—make sure you have done all you can, coaching, training etc.

Dealing with unacceptable work

Unacceptable work makes life hard for supervisors, but accepting it makes life even harder. Supervisors sometimes avoid a confrontation over quality—often by doing the work themselves. Now they resent the worker.

When an employee says "That's not my job."

"I need you to do this", is not a good way to ask an employee to do something outside of their job responsibilities.

When you are not getting through

Monitor yourself—take the time to make your messages as direct as possible

Listen more closely—try to connect with employee, see if from their point of view

Ask employee for help—"What do you think we should do to communicate better", Employees may be amazed to realize you are open to their opinion.

Leadership

Business begins with trust...As companies abandon bureaucratic mechanisms, their leaders need to understand that trust is as important to management as it is to relationships with customers.

--Warren Bennis

It is incumbent on top leaders to set the tone and the example. It is the job of the leadership team to create a culture of trust and integrity that strengthens the bond of employee engagement.

Survey's reveal that workers find most troubling about senior management in their organization:

- Basic lack of trust and integrity
- Isolated and out of touch with day-to-day reality
- Greed and self-interest
- Lack of concern and appreciation for workers
- Lack of trust and respect for workers
- Isolated and unapproachable
- Mismanagement of change
- Poor communication

The downsizing of the 1990's began to dig the hole of distrust. Recent survey's also indicate the lack of trust is still a major problem.

_____ % of Americans believe executives help themselves at the expense of their companies

Only _____ % of workers trust senior leaders

Only _____ % of workers believe their organization as a whole is well managed

Only _____ % of workers agree that "I can trust management in my organization to always communicate honestly.

Only _____ % of employees believes that managers in their organization are concerned for the well-being of employees.

All this data points to the corrosion of trust as well as a crisis of confidence in the ability of top leaders to lead their organization to success.

When communicating with someone in your professional life do you....

Tell people exactly what you expect of them.

Provide detail and facts.

Tell stories to get your point across.

Give positive feedback and encouragement.

Think outside the box using metaphors, and other abstract language.

In-depth personal one-to-one dialogues.

A thorough explanation of how and why things are done.

Logical reasoning and objectives.

Acknowledge a persons need to think about and work on a task.

Cooperation and accommodation; nurture supportive language.

Global ideas rather than specifics.

Debate perspectives rather than take them at face value.

Provide stories of inspiration and how others have managed adversity.

Minimal direction and rules--get to the point.

How and why things work.

Share personal values and ideas.

Accurate and precise data from reliable sources.

Score yourself from 1 – 5 (1 lowest; 5 highest). Put a "+" next to your top 3 and an "X" next to your lowest three.

Use and Abuse of Conflict

Conflicts are inevitable. But everyday problems can be resolved in such a way that relationships are built, not enemies made and opportunities lost.

--Dianna Booher

People who never experience conflict on the job are either living in a dream world, blind to their surroundings, or in solitary confinement! Because whenever two or three are gathered in any community for any reason at any time, there will inevitably be some form or degree of dissension, difficulty, or difference of opinion.

Conflicts just happen.

They can result from excellent work or poor work, from good intentions or evil intentions, from appropriate behavior or inappropriate behavior.

Because people come from such divergent experiences and backgrounds, think and reason so differently from one another, and communicate so uniquely, conflicts are not only possible but highly probable.

When the inevitable conflict surfaces, we need to deal with it so that it doesn't drain our energy, infect our whole life, and sabotage our effectiveness.

Personality Traits that promote negative conflict:

- Authoritarian attitudes
- Arrogance
- Dogmatism – insistence on the truth of a belief that cannot be proved
- Controlling personalities
- Fear of uncertainty

Did you know...According to survey by Accountemps, managers in major U.S. organizations spend more than 4 weeks a year handling problems caused by employees who can't get along with each other.

Consequences of Negative Conflict

- Energy is diverted from goals
- Lack of cooperation on tasks
- Increased stress and frustration
- “Losers” in the conflict feel demeaned or not respected which in turn affects their commitment to the organization.

- Is contagious to others, forcing people to choose sides and poisoning relationships

- Morale declines
- Distrust mounts
- Job satisfaction suffers
- Absenteeism rises
- Turnover increases
- Clients notice that something is wrong and they take their business elsewhere

Harmful strategies when dealing with conflict:

- Win at all _____
- Pretend it doesn't _____
- _____ about it
- Keep _____
- Pull _____
- White _____ it Be careful of your “Why” questions. They can put the person on the defensive.

Benefits of Positive Conflict

- Focusing attention
- Can spur the organization to modify outdated procedures
- Better decisions are made
- Trust on our teams increases
- Greater understanding of others
- Energy level rises
- Venting of negative feelings

Conflict is likely to be constructive if:

- The problem is seen as _____. I'm OK, you the one with the problem is NOT mutual.
- Both express their ideas _____ and _____.
- Each person takes the other _____ and treats with respect
- Both feel they have been _____ and _____.

There is a great difference between knowing and understanding; you can know a lot about something and not really understand it.

--Charles Kettering

- Both are committed to the _____ they finally reach
- Relationship is _____ by the process

The opposite of all the above is *destructive conflict*.

Determine the nature of the conflict

For the most part, conflicts can be divided into five categories. Identify them correctly and you heal the wound. Misdiagnose them and you allow the disease to spread.

- Conflicts over _____
- Conflicts over _____
- Conflicts over _____
- Conflicts over _____
- Conflicts over _____

Determine the method of solving

Once you've categorized the kind of conflict staring you in the face, you'll have a clear understanding about the effort involved in resolving it and the potential for a successful resolution.

Some will be quick; some will be never-ending. Plan your future actions and reactions accordingly.

_____ is used when you yield to the other person's plans. This is a good strategy when the **issue is important to them and relatively unimportant to you**, when you cannot win or are wrong, when you want to bank a favor for later, or when harmony is more important than the issue.

_____ is the process of melding both party's desires into an equally agreeable alternative. Use this method when the **issue is important to both of you but not worth fighting to the bitter end**, when the situation is temporary and will lead to a quick fix, or when you don't have time to haggle but need to meet some of your goals.

_____ the other person to get your way is another option. Though sometimes seen as aggressive and domineering, this strategy can be effective and appropriate. This strategy is best used when the **situation is an emergency and you have to act quickly**. You may have to play the part of statesman and enforce unpopular principles or take unpopular actions for a higher good or goal.

_____ - joining forces with the other and working things out - is a final strategy. Make the effort and take the time to collaborate **when the relationship is long-term and the situation will be recurring, when both goals are too important to compromise, or when you need buy-in from both people on the outcome..**

**On all situations clarify their position first, then assert yours

Four Steps on Managing Conflict:

1. _____ – Learn as much about their point of view. Watch your body language and stay engaged. Let them talk, don't interrupt. Don't worry; you'll get your turn!
2. _____ - Show that you heard and understood. Hear them so well that you could make their argument for them. Explain back to them what you think they are saying. If you get defensive, admit it. "I noticed I am becoming defensive. I think it is because your voice just got louder and you sounded angry. I would like to talk and understand I am not trying to persuade you in any direction."
3. _____ - When you sense they are finished it is your turn. Clarify their position and don't minimize yours.

"From what you told me, I can see how you came to the conclusion that I am not a team player. And I think I am. When I introduce problems I foresee with a project I'm thinking long term success. I don't mean to be a critic, though perhaps I sound like one. Let's talk about how to address this so my intent is clear.

4. _____ - Brainstorm for solutions. If it becomes adversarial, go back to inquiry.

Final Tips:

- A successful outcome will depend on 2 things: *how you act* and *what you say*.
- Acknowledge emotional energy yours and theirs and try to stay calm.
- Don't take personal attacks.
- Don't assume they will see it from your point of view, even though you are try to see it from theirs.
- Practice the conversation before having it.

How to Begin:

"I have something I would like to discuss with you that I think will help us work more effectively."

"I would like to talk to you about _____. First I would like to get your opinion."

"I need help with _____. Do you have a few minutes?"

"Tell me about last Monday when you _____. I need to understand what happened from your point of view."

"I'd like to see if we might reach a better understanding about _____. I would really like to hear your perspective on this."

How to Disagree Agreeably –

Where are some situations you are asked to offer your opinion?

What are some fears or challenges of stating our opinions?

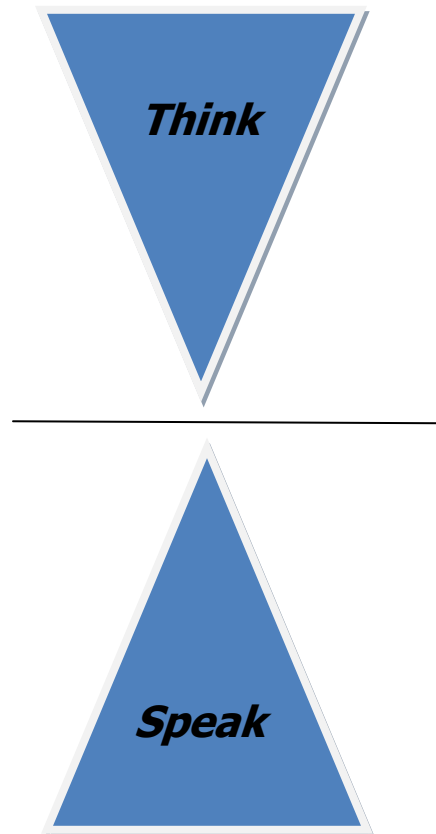
What is the challenge of stating our opinion when someone disagrees with us?

Process:

1. **Listen** Actively
2. Connect or **Cushion**
3. **Restate** what they are saying leaving out all opinions and emotions.
4. Bridge out opinion with **evidence/facts** or use your Expectations Worksheet" (avoid "but" and "however")
5. Follow-up with therefore I think (not always necessary)
6. Consider offering a **solution**, best to do together.

- What do I think?
- Why do I think that?
- An example.....

- One example is....
- This example shows...
- Therefore I think...



A process helps us organize our thoughts so we can state our opinions with confidence. How do we disagree and still be heard. We need to keep lines of communication open.

When opinions differ, use cushions to soften the blow!

- ▶ *I see what you are saying, tell me more*
- ▶ *This is a big issue for you*
- ▶ *I might feel that way if I was in your shoes*
- ▶ *That's an interesting perspective*
- ▶ *I didn't realize you felt that way*
- ▶ *I had not considered that perspective*
- ▶ *Please continue*
- ▶ *That may be*
- ▶ *I do appreciate you sharing your experiences. What else can I do?*
- ▶ *Let's consider this...*
- ▶ *I appreciate what you are saying....*
- ▶ *Let's also discuss this angle...*
- ▶ *What would happen if.....*
- ▶ *Have you ever thought about.....*
- ▶ *Compare that idea with this idea.....*

Stating our Opinions

EXAMPLE:

What do you think? Your Opinion	Why do you think that	An example
All employees should be required to attend leadership and communication training program.	<p>The number one cause of people leaving their jobs is due to poor leadership.</p> <p>Our number one challenge in most organizations is poor communication</p>	When I worked for XYZ company we had 80% turnover due to poor leadership, lack of expectations, poor feedback, and no recognition. The top leaders didn't want to spend any money on training their employees in these areas. I just assumed all organizations were like this. My next job was entirely different. There were expectations clearly defined, motivation was the culture, feedback was given daily and a recognition program was established. They top leaders required they every employee attend 3 workshops a year on developing their interpersonal skills.

What do you think? (Your Opinion)	Why do you think that	Evidence (An Example)
Evidence (An Example)	Evidence Shows	Therefore I Think

Resolve Conflicts with 'Yes!' Triggers

Anticipate what you want out of a situation before you go into it

Determining your goal in advance will help you save time. If you know exactly what you want, and your clients know what they want, it will be much easier to reach a compromise. If you don't know what it is you want, how can you ask for it?

Demonstrate good will up front

Demonstrate your willingness to compromise. If you look at your client with a glare and talk through clenched teeth, you will only intensify the negative energy.

Be professional. Take a few deep breaths and go in to the situation with an open mind. This will show a commitment to your own standard of behavior.

Know that "less is often more"

Regardless of your frustration level, try not to be confrontational. Listen attentively, and keep your motions and voice smooth and calm. Yelling will accomplish nothing more than an increased heart rate.

Remember an argument has two sides

Don't forget to listen. Try not to be too pushy. Just because you know exactly what you want, it doesn't necessarily mean you're going to be able to get it. Resolving an argument relies 99% on compromising.

It can't be that bad

If the situation has escalated to the point that you don't even want to be in the same room with your client, you need to step back and look at everything in a new light.

More than likely, you and your client were on good terms to begin with. You may find that you tend to focus only on your good qualities and especially on your client's bad ones.

Remind yourself that just as you have negative qualities, your client has positive qualities.

Step back far enough to see the situation as from your client's perspective

Are you egging the situation on? Take a minute to see if you are making the situation more difficult than it needs to be. By purposely being rude to irritate your client, you will only cause the fight to last longer.

Don't accuse!

When you're talking to someone you're angry with, it's often very easy to accuse them of being at fault. For example: *"YOU don't make any sense. YOU are irritating."* This automatically causes others to be defensive: *"Yes I do make sense! YOU are irritating."*

Instead, refer to yourself and your feelings. No one can argue with that. Instead of the example above, you could say, *"I don't feel that I understand where you're coming from. I feel irritated."*

This prevents the person you're arguing with from feeling that they need to defend themselves. They can't reject what you say you feel.

Don't assume your client is lying

If you think they are lying, keep asking questions rather than accusing them of misrepresentation. Asking questions gives you the time to see if, in fact, you were mistaken, thus possibly saving face for yourself.

Don't focus on the negatives

More than likely, there will be things you and your client will have to "agree to disagree" on. Once you've determined you absolutely cannot compromise on these things, leave them alone and work on the things you *can* compromise on.

Don't assume you make sense

Just because you understand what you want doesn't mean that your clients will.

Do not presume that the other person recognizes all the benefits of what you are proposing. Ask your client if they understand where you're coming from and be prepared to answer their questions