

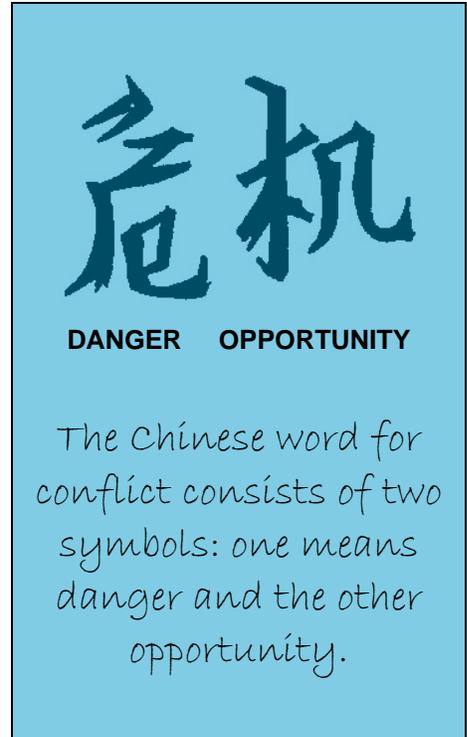
Understanding Conflict

What Conflict Really Is...

Conflict is a situation in which people who need to work together cannot agree on how to do it. It is caused by real or perceived threats to the interests of either or both parties.

What Conflict is Normally about

- ✧ Values, Goals, Beliefs
 Individual – personal level
- ✧ Positions/Power
- ✧ Personalities
- ✧ Working Conditions
 Job descriptions, environment,
 compensation, standards,
 methods, costs, restrictions

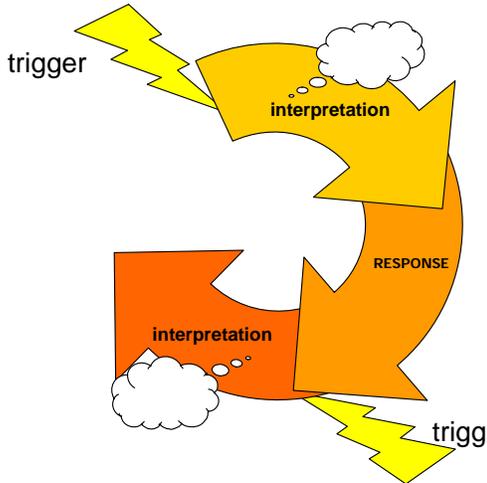


What are your physical cues when you experience conflict?

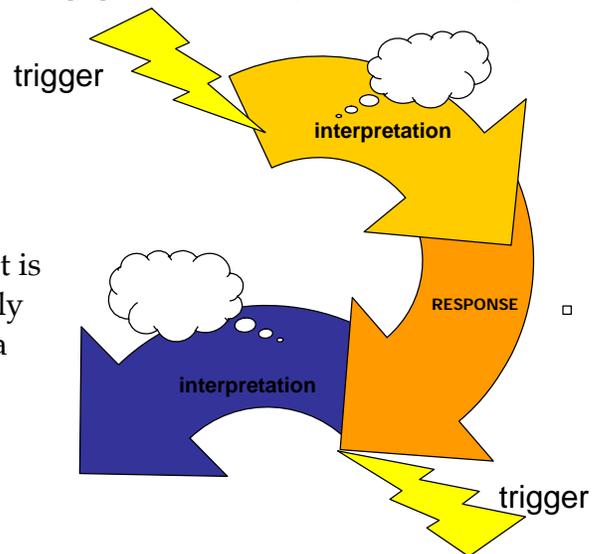
We need to remember that conflict is more than an intellectual exercise. Our brain chemistry and our physiological state changes when we are under stress. It is important to recognize and respect the physical manifestations of conflict in staff, as they give you clues to appropriate responses.

Triggers

Trigger Response Cycle



Trigger Response Cycle



The perception of conflict and the response to it is highly personal. People respond very differently to the same stimulus, and the response can be a major factor in managing conflict.

You can choose your interpretation

You can choose your response

Conflict - in any given situation - is not inevitable. It is highly manageable, but requires awareness and intention.

What are your triggers?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

The Third Side

What is the **Third Side**? The **Third Side** is a way of looking at the conflicts around us not just from one side or the other but from the larger perspective of the surrounding community.

Taking the **Third Side** means:

- Seeking to understand both sides of the conflict
- Encouraging a process of cooperative negotiation and seeking out against any abuse or violence
- Supporting an inclusive solution – one that fairly meets the essential needs of both sides and the community

You can have natural sympathies for one side or the other and still choose to take the **Third Side**.

The Balcony

A metaphor to help you remove yourself from your current position and see the situation from another angle.

The Third Side Elements:

Emotion
Rationality
Creativity

“Seek the third
truth”
- Gandhi

Acknowledge the Emotions

- Empathize
- Show interest in how they feel
- Inquire further
- Summarize
- Offer a guess at how they might be feeling
- Name the emotions
- Say “Yes, and ...,” instead of “yes, but...”
- Make it safe for them to be honest by restating and summarizing
- Agree when you can
- Thank them for sharing

The Third Side - continued

Consider the Rational Element

- People react emotionally
- People have reasons for their reactions
- Emotional element must be addressed before rational element

Check in with yourself:

Stop: take time to prepare, take a time out, count to ten, take a breath

Look: inside yourself, what is your normal reaction? Do you take sides, ignore, escape, or do you have another reaction? Distinguish your emotions from your trigger points.

Listen: listen to understand yourself *and* the other party

Engage the Creative Element

- Emotions have been acknowledged
- Rational basis for the response has been identified
- Begin exploring options for creative and previously unseen ways to solve the problem

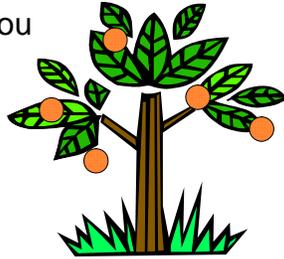
Types of questions to get people thinking creatively:

- What are all the options to solve this problem no matter how wild or outlandish they may seem?
- What have I seen succeed in similar situations?
- What are all the possibilities?
- What else might we try?
- What are some ways we could deal with this problem?
- Let's get all of the options on the table
- What if we..."
- Do you have any ideas on that?
- If we work together, how might we make this better for all?

Understanding Interests and Positions

Analyzing Conflict

Positions - what you say you want



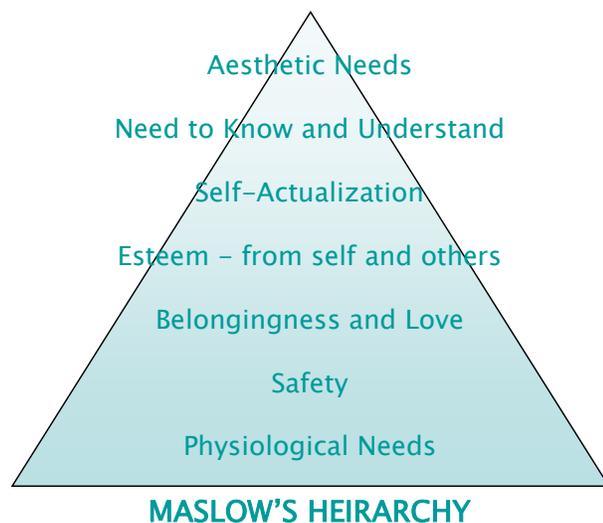
Interests: the reason you want it

Positions

- Tangible, measurable
- May be emotionally charged, strongly held
- Negotiable, although may be presented as “non-negotiable”
- Can lead to polarization
- The ‘bottom line’

Interests

- Root causes of any conflict - the reason below the position
- The source of the motivation - needs, desires or principles
- May be intangible
- The answer to the question “why”
- May usually be satisfied in many ways



Listening for Interests

Questions to Ask

- What will it achieve for you/them if we...?
- As I understand your/their interests, they are ...
- Have I misunderstood your interests?
- What am I missing?
- What are your key concerns?
- Help me understand why this is really important to you/them ...
- Could you walk me through this step by step?

Skills

Summarize – let them know they are understood.

“Let me make sure I understand you. Your interest is _____. Am I right?”

“From your perspective we should _____. Is that accurate?”

“Let’s see if I can review the key points we have discussed. Did I understand you correctly?”

Encourage – Give them a full and respectful hearing.

“Yes, please go on.”

“Then what happened?”

“Is there anything else you would like to add?”

Clarity – Ask questions to help get below the surface of an issue.

“How much of a concern is this?”

“How does this compare to other situations?”

“Can you give me an example?”

Acknowledge their point – Recognize their point of view.

“If I were in your shoes, this is how I might see it also.”

“I can understand why you believe that.”

“I see what you mean.”

Acknowledge their feelings – Don’t ignore their emotions.

“I can see why you would feel that way.”

“I can appreciate how you feel.”

“I respect your right to feel that way.”

From the Balcony – a Worksheet

How will I manage my emotions?

What is triggering my response?

What are my interests?

What are the other party's interests?

What are the interests of the surrounding community?

What are options for mutual gain for all parties, including the surrounding community?

How will I encourage others to think creatively?

The Durable Resolution Triangle

Teams need Satisfaction with Substance

What was the resolution?

- ✧ Facts/Objectives
- ✧ Terms/Conditions
- ✧ Price/Pay
- ✧ Date/Deadline
- ✧ Who/What/When/How

Teams need Satisfaction with Process

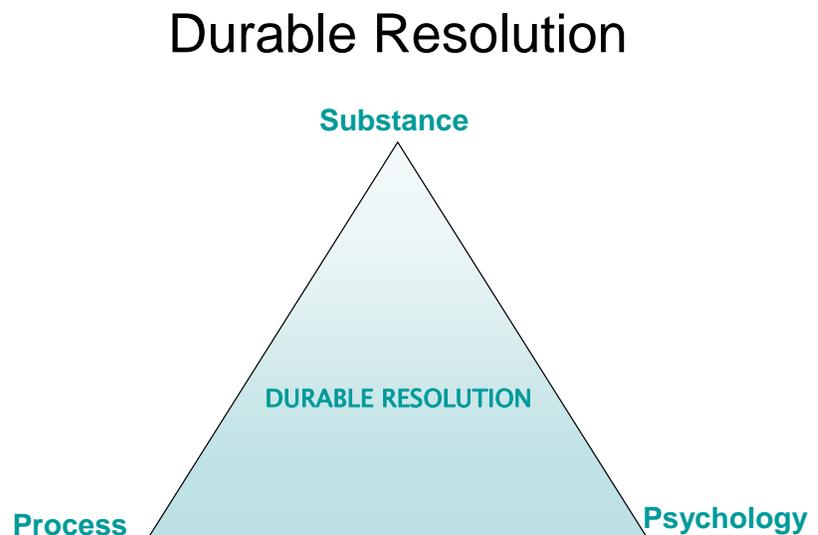
How did the group get there?

- ✧ Who was involved
- ✧ Who had a say
- ✧ What process was used
- ✧ How power was balanced
- ✧ What was considered

Teams need Psychological Satisfaction

How were people treated during the process?

- ✧ Respect
- ✧ Recognition
- ✧ Validation
- ✧ Safety
- ✧ Acknowledgement



A Few More Tools

Intent V. Impact

“We Judge Ourselves By Our Intent...
We Judge Others By Their Impact”

Paraphrase of John Wallen

Ladder of Inference (Argyris; Senge- *Fifth Discipline*)

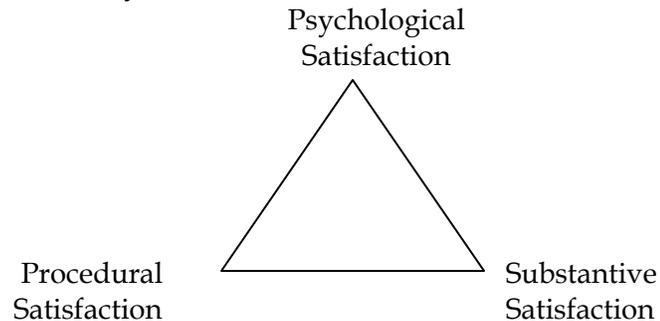
- 1) We take **Observable** “data” and experiences - as if a videotape recorder might capture it
- 2) I select “Data” from what I observe
- 3) I add **meanings** (cultural and personal)
Ladder of Inference
- 4) I make **assumptions** based on the meanings I added
- 5) I draw **conclusions**
- 6) I adopt **beliefs** about the world
- 7) I take **actions** based on my beliefs

How to work DOWN the Ladder:

- 1) Become aware of your own thinking and reasoning
- 2) Make your thinking and reasoning more visible to others
- 3) Inquire into others’ thinking and reasoning (inquiry) - ask “why” questions

Guidelines for Handling Conflict Positively

1. Ask yourself why you are reacting to the situation, behavior or issue.
Do you need to work through the issue with the other party? Or is this your issue? If yes – then remember the Satisfaction Triangle



2. Ask the party to take some time in the future and meet with you about the X issue.
Explain that you are hoping to discuss the issue, the impacts, and work through it to come up with a mutual solution. State that you would like to meet at X location at X time – if that is alright with the other party. Be sure to give yourself enough time to be in the right frame of mind. In other words, ensure you are “cooled off” before you begin discussions.
3. Create a comfortable environment
Part of the psychological satisfaction angle of the Triangle. Think about the appropriate way to discuss the issue. Find a neutral location – one without interruptions. Sit in an open manner – non-confrontational and be conscious of your non-verbal body language. Consider the personality styles of the persons in conflict – have you designed a process that will effectively accommodate each other’s preferred styles of handling conflict?
4. Establish negotiating rules
You are beginning the process for laying out the procedural satisfaction. You may decide to let one side speak first without interruptions – and only take notes. Then the other party may speak. Decide upfront if there are any “hot buttons” to avoid and if any language may be inappropriate to use. Discuss confidentiality.
5. Use “I statements”
Part of the psychological satisfaction. The person giving the feedback needs to own the issue – and not use generalities like “everyone thinks... Others say...”

Guidelines for Handling Conflict Positively

Continued

6. Identify the problem
You are starting to determine the substantive satisfaction. Spend ample time here and seek out the “interests” of the other person. This element may take a while to pinpoint – look for the root causes for the behaviors or reasons for the situation. You may be surprised as to what is really at the bottom of the issue. Use an appreciative inquiry approach – be really inquisitive about the other person’s story. Probe them – find out their reactions and understandings. Most of the time, first impressions of the issue are wrong. Be sure to have both parties spend time discussing their version of the problem. Write it down – on a mutual piece of paper as a focal point for the discussion. By focusing on the paper with the problem – you are shifting the blame and burden of the problem from the *person* to the *issue*.
7. Identify impacts that each party has experienced
Part of the psychological satisfaction. People may not know the impact their behaviors have on others. Use the feedback model or the “impact v. intent” model to provide appropriate feedback. Do not use “absolutes” in your language. For example, “you always do this.” Instead, use words like “tend to” or “lately, your approach has been.”
8. Identify options
Be creative. There may be some obvious options – but there may be many other ways too.
9. Identify criteria for decisions
Brainstorm the criteria for success: the outcome must do X, Y and Z. With “X” being more important – so weight the criteria more. Spend the time review the notes from the conversation to this point. What does each party care about? What needs to be in this decision that will meet the psychological and substantive satisfaction?
10. Agree on the decision
Which option meets the needs of both parties?
11. Agree on a follow-up plan
Do you need to meet again? Do you feel heard? Is the situation *really* resolved? What do you want to do next? What will you do if the situation re-occurs?