
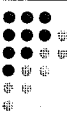


Constructive Conflict




Mindy Habecker
Dane County UW-Extension

February 19, 2011



Objectives


- Gain self-awareness of your skills and assumptions
- Be exposed to concepts that help you experience conflict situations differently
- Practice skills



2

The Arm Exercise


- No talking is allowed during activity
- Pair up with a person next to you
- Put your hands together, as for arm wrestling
- Goal: Score as many points as you can
- A point is scored whenever your partner's arm touches table
- Count your own score.



A Model for Improvement

GENERAL.....SPECIFIC

Assumptions, Beliefs	How we think	How we act	Results
Success = I win, you lose	Get them before they get me	Struggle hard	Score: 0,0
Success = mutual gain	Invite them to cooperate	Let them have the first point	Score: 20,20




4

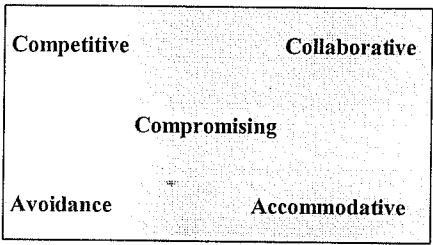
Components of Conflict Behavior

Assertiveness, behaviors intended to satisfy one's own concerns


Cooperativeness, behaviors intended to satisfy the other individual's concerns



Conflict Styles

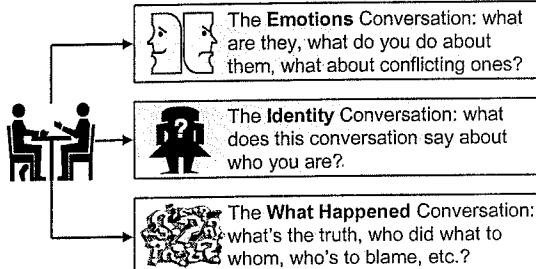


Uncooperative Cooperative



The Three Conversations

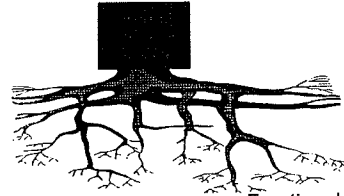
Each difficult conversation is really composed of three distinct conversations



Emotions

Understand your Emotional Roots

How we feel in any specific situation, is determined in large part by our previous experiences



Emotional Footprint: How emotions were handled in your family. Which were ok to express? Which were not?

Emotional sore spots: feelings from similar past situations

Emotions

Feelings shape how you think, BUT...



How you think also shapes how you feel
And, by thinking through the situation in new ways your feelings may change

Insights from the following questions may impact how you feel:

What are their **perceptions**? What's their story about what happened?

What might be the range of their **intentions** (separate impact from intent)?

What is their **contribution**? What's **your** contribution?

Emotions

Some helpful ways to share feelings:

Share the complexity of how you feel

Instead of just: → Try:



Try:



Treat feelings as data:

"When I saw ..., I felt ..."



Make understanding explicit:

"So, you were feeling..."
"Before moving on, I want to make sure you know how I felt..."

Dealing with Identity

We tell ourselves stories about the type of person we are:

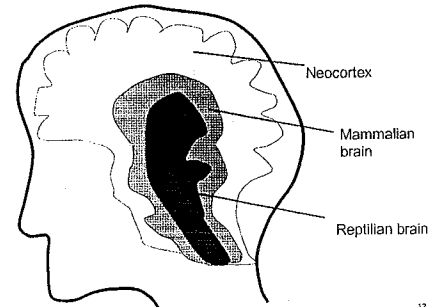
- a kind person
- a responsible person
- a loving friend, sister, brother, etc.
- a competent manager...

When others give us data about our

intentions contributions
blameworthiness feelings

that contradict our self-image, we can lose our balance

Dinosaurs vs. Humans

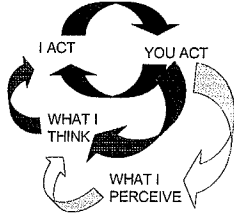


Neocortex

Mammalian brain

Reptilian brain

Dinosaurs vs. Humans



Maintain and Regain Balance

Do:

- Know yourself and what triggers you
- **Ground your self-image;** base your self image on lots of data, not just one opinion or one case
- **Balance your self image:** accept that you will make mistakes and you have had lots of successes...
- **Prepare** for their response
- **Learn techniques** for regaining your balance: take a breath or a break, reframe the conversation

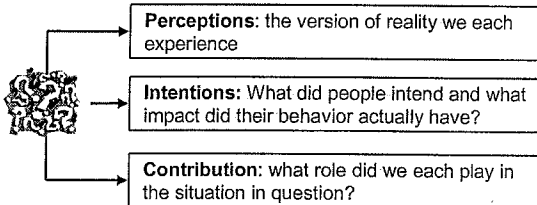
Don't:

- **Deny** or dismiss compelling data
- **Ignore** the broader perspective; what other information do you have about yourself over time?

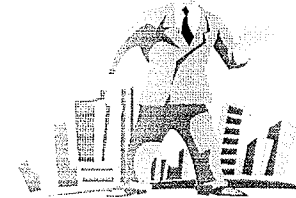
What Happened

WHY? A need to validate one's view of what happened and to see that appropriate consequences flow from it.

HOW? There are three main components of the What Happened Conversation



How certain are you exercise?



**TWO OF THE MOST
POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE OF ALL
HUMAN FEARS ARE
THE FEAR OF FAILURE
AND
THE FEAR OF SUCCESS.**

How certain are you exercise?



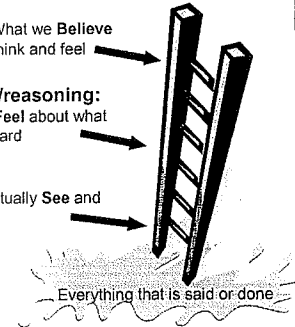
The Shoe Shop Problem

A Customer walks into a shoe shop early one morning. The Customer finds a pair of shoes. The price of the shoes is \$60.00 and the Customer gives the Clerk a \$100 bill. The Clerk does not have change for the \$100 bill, so the Clerk goes next door to the restaurant and asks for change. The restaurant gives the Clerk 10, \$40 bills in exchange for the \$100 bill. The Clerk returns to the shoe shop, gives the Customer the shoes and \$40 change. Later in the day, the Owner of the restaurant comes to the shoe shop and tells the Clerk that the \$100 bill is counterfeit and demands \$100 back. The Clerk gives the Owner of the restaurant \$100. Not counting the price of the shoes (\$60.00), how much cash has the shoe shop lost?

19

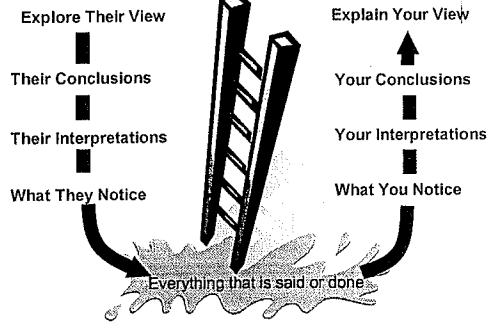
The ladder of inference

3. **Conclusions:** What we Believe based on how we think and feel
2. **Interpretations/reasoning:** How we Think or Feel about what we've seen and heard
1. **Data:** What we actually See and Hear



20

Dealing with Perceptions



The Ladder of Inference is based on the work of Argyris and Schön.

21

Guidelines for Inquiry

Use open-ended questions to push down the ladder of inference:

To get at reasoning, ask "what led you to that conclusion?" or "what made you feel that way?"

To get at data, ask "what did you see that led you to think/feel that way?"

Inquire to learn, not persuade

Ask for clarification, "what did you mean when you said...?"

Avoid:

Leading questions, "Don't you think that...?"

Argumentative questions, "Isn't it true...?"

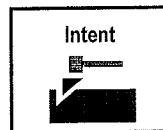
Advocacy masked as a question, "Isn't that a dumb idea?"

Try this on for Size...



- Find a partner, someone you don't know well
- Think of a situation where things went not as well as you wanted
- Describe this to your partner referring to the ladder in inference (5min)
- Partner listen, then ask questions to better understand the conflict
- Switch roles

Intent and Impact



Intent Does Not Equal Impact



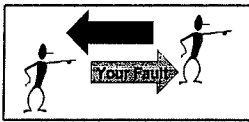
We assume their intentions from the impact of their behavior on us and we often assume the worst intentions.

When we have good intentions, we assume the impact on them is a "misunderstanding", or less significant.

When giving feedback, share the impact of their actions on us and separate that from any judgment about their intentions

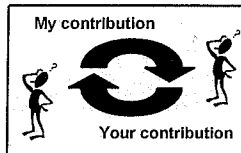
Inquire about our impact on them regardless of our intentions

Blame vs. Contribution



Move from assigning blame.....

To understanding how we each have contributed to the problem so that we can improve together



Understand the contribution system

'The More' I do "X", 'The More' you do "Y", but 'The More' you do "Y", 'The More' I do...

25

Blame vs. Contribution

There are times when assigning blame is appropriate or unavoidable

But, if you are trying to improve how two or more people work together, contribution will serve you better:

Understanding each sides contribution to the problem allows you to avoid the same problem in the future.

Accepting *appropriate* responsibility is empowering.

26

References

- *Difficult Conversations: how to discuss what matters most.* Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S., 2000.
- *Getting to Yes.* Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B., 1991.
- *Beyond Reason: using emotions as you negotiate.* Fisher, R., Shapiro, D., 2005.
- *Crucial Conversations: tools for talking when stakes are high.* Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A., 2002.
- *Reptiles in Love.* Ferguson, D., 2006.
- *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life,* Rosenberg, Marshall B., 2003.

27

