

Whistle While You Work and They'll Poke Your Eyes Out: Managing Conflict with Coworkers

June 21, 2016 – Finger Lakes Library System
Presented by Mary Fellows, Upper Hudson Library System

NOTES

Topics:

- Knowledge about conflict
- Self-awareness
- Key conflict resolution skills

Conflict is:

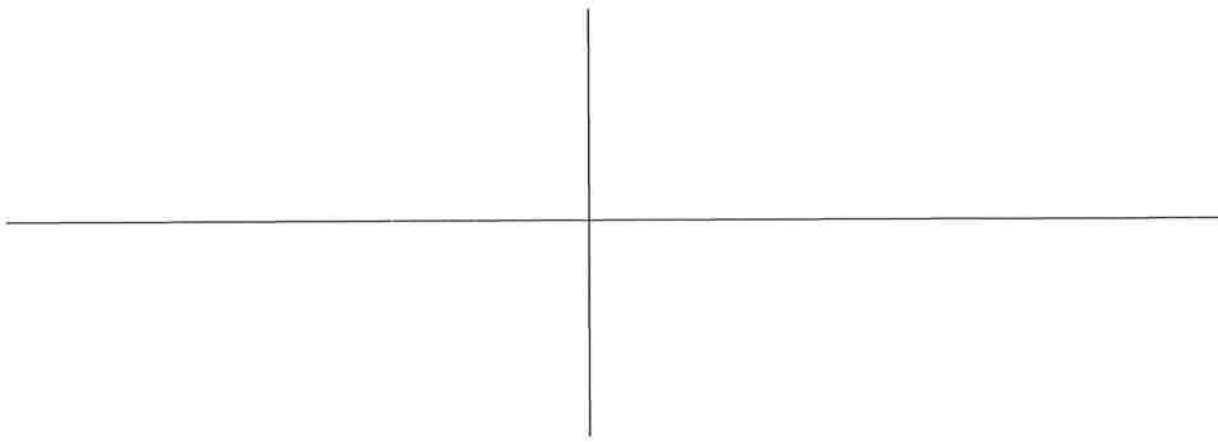
Three GIs:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Defaults

Fears

Pain/pleasure grid



Key conflict resolution skills

1. Choose a response

2. Communicate effectively

"I" Statements:

I feel ____ (name the feeling)

when ____ (describe the behavior)

because ____ (provide the reason).

I need ____ (tell what would make it better for you).

Active listening skills:

Listening styles

Communication patterns leading to continued conflict:

Value your integrity above all:

Takeaways:

Self-knowledge and self-awareness

Choose a response

Active listening

Go for win-win

Confrontation Techniques

1. Identify and Clarify Differences

Assumption:

Communication is improved if right/wrong polarity is minimized.

Examples:

"It sounds like we disagree on this."

"I see it differently; here's why."

"I think we need time to try to understand our differences."

"What you seem to be saying is that you disagree with my observations."

"Let me tell you how I see it, and then you tell me whether you disagree."

"I think we need another opinion."

2. Directly, openly, and matter-of-factly, let the person know when you're confronting him or why.

Assumption:

"Direct" is quicker and better in the long run than "indirect."

Examples:

"I'm going to 'push' you a little on this matter. Let me tell you why."

"I'm trying to make it clear what I think you need to do differently because in a few weeks I'm going to be asked to evaluate you and make a recommendation; I want to be able to make a good one. I couldn't do that at this point."

3. Diffuse anger by not taking it personally

Assumption:

- a. The other person's word and behavior tell you about that person, not about you.
- b. Everyone is doing the best they can (to feel good about themselves).

Examples:

"I can tell you think I'm the bad guy in this situation, but I can't accept that."

"I'm willing to take some of the blame for what's happened, but it seems to me that you want me to take it all."

"You're reacting like I'm 'out to get you' rather than just trying to help you be a better _____."

"I'd be happy to listen to your criticisms of the program, but at the moment, our purpose is to consider your feedback from various sources."

Proctor, Thomas, EdD. "Confrontation Techniques." *Peace Health*. Faculty Development Center, 1988. Web. 18 July 2016.

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Collaboration:

A way in which two or more people try to resolve a conflict

1. Identify the problem.

- a. Talk about the real concerns and identify the issues or needs.

2. Focus on the problem (try to keep the behavior out of it and don't take it personally).

- a. Do so without blaming or attacking the other person.
- b. Identify and clarify issues and needs.

3. Listen with an open mind and try to first understand the other person, then seek to be understood.

4. Brainstorm solutions with no judging.

5. Evaluate solutions.

- a. Think win-win.
- b. Identify positives and negatives of each.
- c. Possibly combine solutions and/or modify them.
- d. Be creative!
- e. Ask reality testing questions--"what ifs?"

6. Agree upon a solution.

7. Come up with a plan to carry out the solution.

Hints for Dealing with Conflicts On a One-to-One Basis

Fairfax County (VA) Schools, "10 Lessons for Teaching Conflict Resolution Skills"

TAKE TIME TO COOL OFF. Issues can't be dealt with unless emotions are worked through. In both individual and group situations, the long-term relationship is generally more important than the conflict. Also, the process of conflict resolution is as important as the content. A resolution in which one party is the winner and the other party is the loser is no resolution.

THINK ABOUT THE PERSON AS A PERSON. This helps to break down role stereotypes.

KNOW YOUR AIM. Knowing what is important to you in the conflict and stating it clearly makes it more likely that your needs will be met and that the conflict will be resolved.

TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE OTHER PERSON IS SAYING. Listening, paraphrasing, and good feedback show concern for the other person, which, in turn, facilitates communication, defuses conflict, and lowers tension.

FIND SOMETHING YOU CAN AGREE ON. Use this as a basis from which to work through the problem.

BE SPECIFIC WHEN YOU INTRODUCE A GRIPE. Don't just complain. Ask for reasonable changes that will relieve the gripe. Confine yourself to one issue at a time.



Fairfax County Public Schools. "10 Lessons for Teaching Conflict Resolution Skills." Web. 18 July 2016.
http://www.creducation.org/resources/CR_Guidelines_and_10_CR_lessons_FCPS.pdf

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ASK FOR AND GIVE FEEDBACK ON MAJOR POINTS. This serves to make sure you are heard, and to assure the other person that you understand what he or she wants.

NEVER ASSUME that you know what the other person is thinking until you have checked out the assumption. Do not predict how he or she will react or what he or she will accept or reject.

FORGET THE PAST AND STAY WITH THE PRESENT. Changes can't be retroactive, but you can have an impact on the future.