

Conflict Management

Conflict in life is:

- a) avoidable,
- b) preventable,
- c) necessary, or
- d) all of the above.**

Defined

Conflict management is the process of resolving or minimising the disagreements resulting from perceived or real differences.

Key messages

Conflict happens.

Mutual understanding is the healthiest and most productive goal of all conflict.

A big source of stress is the misconception that all our problems are solvable.

Reflect on your own attitude towards conflict.

- What did you learn about conflict growing-up? Was conflict seen as positive, negative, or neutral?
- Was it acceptable for you to express anger? What are your memories of “winning” and “losing”?
- How does your definition of conflict affect the way you think about conflict?
- What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses in conflict situations?

Conflict can provide opportunities but like anything, it has to be managed.

Often, people fear conflict and see it as something to avoid.

However, unresolved conflict, however, can result in the breakdown of relationships and lead to feelings of resentment/frozen anger (i.e., depression).

Identifying your triggers

Examples of trigger emotions that may help you connect a feeling to an incident:

- A time when I felt judged...
- A time when I felt excluded...
- A time when I felt disrespected...
- A time when I felt abandoned...
- A time when I felt alone...
- A time when I felt out of control...

Identifying your triggers

The Gottman Institute compiled a list of 24 common triggers that are often activated in conflict with other people.

WHAT TRIGGERED ME?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 01. I felt excluded. | 13. I felt like the bad guy. |
| 02. I felt powerless. | 14. I felt forgotten. |
| 03. I felt unheard. | 15. I felt unsafe. |
| 04. I felt scolded. | 16. I felt unloved. |
| 05. I felt judged. | 17. I felt like that was unfair. |
| 06. I felt blamed. | 18. I felt frustrated. |
| 07. I felt disrespected. | 19. I felt disconnected. |
| 08. I felt a lack of affection. | 20. I felt trapped. |
| 09. I felt uncared for. | 21. I felt a lack of passion. |
| 10. I felt lonely. | 22. I felt like I couldn't speak up. |
| 11. I felt ignored. | 23. I felt manipulated. |
| 12. I felt like I couldn't be honest. | 24. I felt controlled. |

Scenario

Think about a conflict you had that you handled the wrong way, what some things could you have done differently.

COMMUNICATION PATTERNS THAT DESTROY TRUST

GOTTMAN'S 4 HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

CRITICISM
(also blame)

You ALWAYS
Do THIS!

TALK ABOUT
YOUR FEELINGS.



CONTEMPT
(hiding)

contempt (often
verbal abuse) offers
NO opportunity for
joining & resolution.

INTENTIONALLY
PRACTICE NAMING
APPRECIATION



DEFENSIVENESS
(a type of blame)

example:

It's all
your fault!

defensiveness
ESCALATES
conflict &
deflects shared
responsibility.

BE CURIOUS ABOUT
CO-CREATED DYNAMIC



STONEWALLING
(hiding)

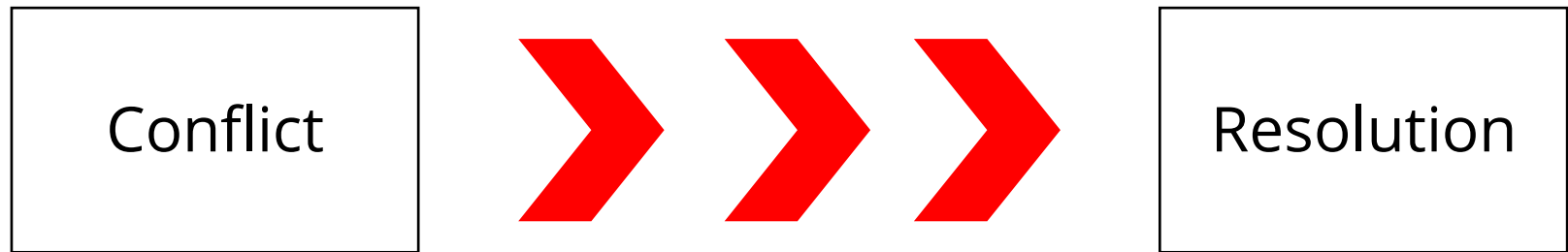
are you mad?
READ

stonewalling is
tuning out, ignoring,
or sometimes fear-
based shutting down.

ASK FOR A
BREAK. GET
GROUNDED
RETURN.



VISUALLY ADAPTED BY @LINDSAY BRAMAN
FROM THE WORK OF DR. JOHN GOTTMAN



What are the specific steps necessary to get from “conflict” to “resolution”?

What has to happen before resolution?

Fair Fighting: Ground Rules

Remain calm. Try not to overreact to difficult situations.

Express feelings in words, not actions. Telling someone directly and honestly how you feel can be a very powerful form of communication.

Be specific about what is bothering you. Vague complaints are hard to work on.

Deal with only one issue at a time. Don't introduce other topics until each is fully discussed. This avoids the "kitchen sink" effect where people throw in all their complaints while not allowing anything to be resolved

No "hitting below the belt." Avoid personal attacks.

Avoid accusations. Accusations will cause others to be defensive.

Don't generalize. Avoid words like "never" or "always." Such generalizations are usually inaccurate and will heighten tensions.

Avoid "make believe." Exaggerating or inventing a complaint or your feelings about it will prevent the real issues from surfacing. Stick with the facts and your honest feelings.

Don't stockpile. Storing up lots of grievances and hurt feelings over time is counterproductive. Try to deal with problems as they arise.

Avoid clamming up. When one person becomes silent and stops responding to the other, frustration and anger can result. Positive results can only be attained with two-way communication.

Non-Violent Communication

What is it?

- A way of dealing with conflict without the use of force, discipline or punishment
- Constructive, rather than destructive
- Non-judgemental and non-blaming
- Considers needs of self and others
- Encourages empathy and co-operation

The Four Step Process

- What do I observe ... with no judgement or criticism
- What am I feeling ... hurt, scared, joyful, amused
- What needs do I have ... in relation to the feelings identified
- What requests can I make ... in practicable language and not as a demand



The Four-Part Nonviolent Communication Process

Clearly expressing how **I am** without blaming or criticizing

Empathically receiving how **you are** without hearing blame or criticism

OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:
"When I (see, hear) . . . "

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:
"When you see/hear . . . "
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)

FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:
"I feel . . . "

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:
"You feel . . . "

NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:
". . . because I need/value . . . "

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:
". . . because you need/value . . . "

Clearly requesting that which would enrich **my** life without demanding

Empathically receiving that which would enrich **your** life without hearing any demand

REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:
"Would you be willing to . . . ?"

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:
"Would you like . . . ?"
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)



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VOICING OUR NEEDS DURING TIMES OF STRESS

@HOLISTICALLYGRACE

JUDGEMENT/SHAME

ALL YOU DO IS SIT AND SCROLL ON YOUR PHONE

YOU NEVER HELP WITH ANYTHING

IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

I CAN'T COUNT ON YOU FOR ANYTHING

EMOTIONS/NEEDS

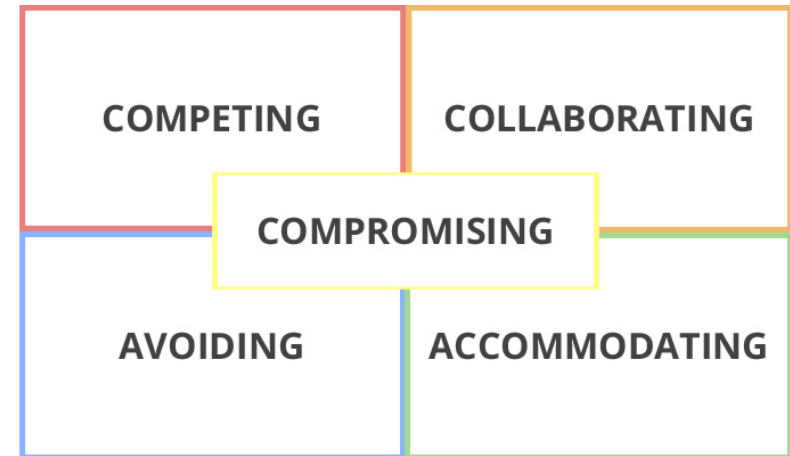
I FEEL DISCONNECTED WHEN YOU ARE ON YOUR PHONE. I NEED US TO MAKE TIME FOR EACH OTHER

I'M OVERWHELMED IN THIS CURRENT ENVIRONMENT. I NEED YOUR HELP.

I FEEL VOICELESS WHEN YOU DON'T ASK MY OPINION. I NEED TO HAVE AN INPUT IN THIS PARTNERSHIP.

I FEEL ANXIOUS WHEN YOU WALK AWAY. I NEED YOU TO SIT WITH ME FOR A BIT.

HIGH
↑
ASSERTIVE
↓
LOW



LOW ← COOPERATIVE → HIGH

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