



Handling Conflict

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Max Lucado...

Conflict is inevitable,
but combat is not.

Not only is conflict inevitable, it can and should be good. If you're dealing with important and complex issues, then good decision-making means engaging in healthy, productive conflict.

Edwards Deming quote...

All models are wrong
Some are useful

CONFLICT

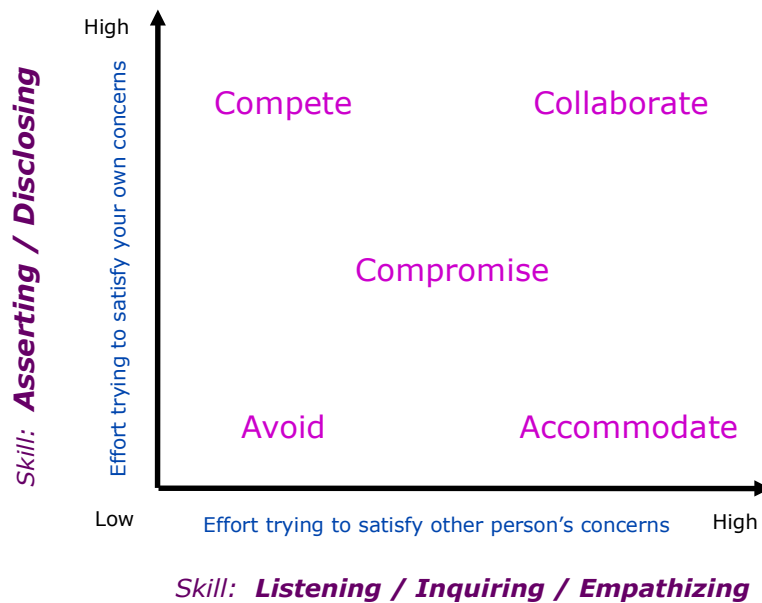
definition

- the condition in which people's concerns appear to be incompatible

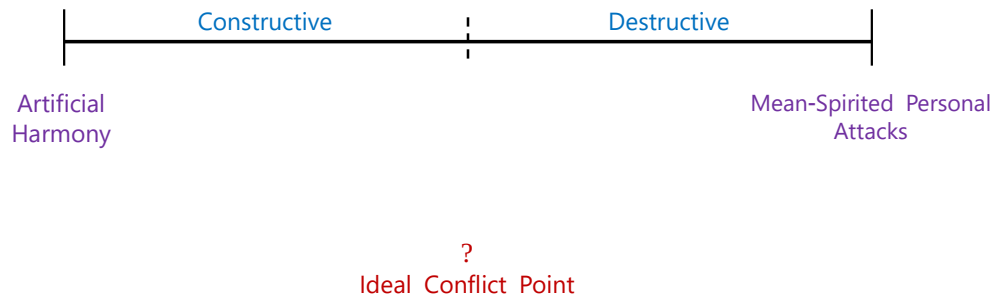


Dual Concern Model

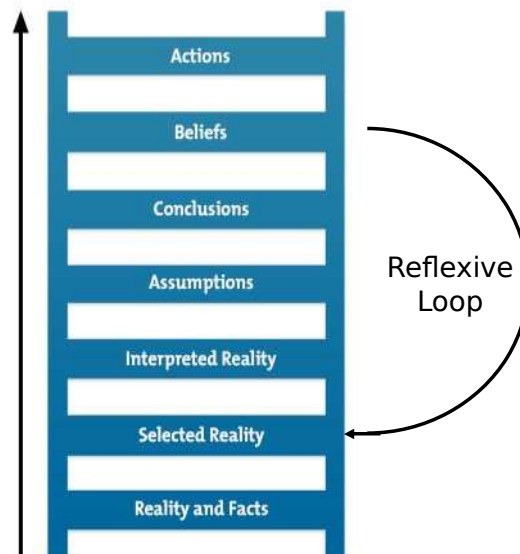
Conflict – the condition in which people's concerns appear to be incompatible



Conflict Continuum



Ladder of Inference



Using the Ladder to Inquire

- Inquire into what has gone into the person's conclusion – what is farther down the ladder.
- Inquire to the depth appropriate for the conversation, the relationship.
- Convey genuine interest.
- Beware of aggressive questioning.
- LISTEN. Don't work on your rebuttal.

Some Effective Inquiry Questions

- What led you to that?
- How did you reach that conclusion?
- Tell me what went into that conclusion?
- Walk me through the thinking behind that opinion.
- I'm interested in knowing how you reached that decision.
- *Sometimes an effective inquiry is advocacy (a statement), followed by a pause.*

Important disclosure can be about

- How willing you are to disclose (a lot/a little)
- The extent to which the situation allows for others to participate in the thinking & decision-making process (all/some/none)
- Sometimes disclosure is not wise, safe or appropriate.
- Sometimes disclosure is needed, but further input is not an option.
- Suggestion: Set your default to disclose, step back as needed.

Interests vs. Positions



There was once only one orange left in a kitchen and two prominent chefs were fighting over it.

"I need that orange!"

"Yes, but I need that orange as well!"

Time was running out and they both needed an orange to finish their particular recipes for the President's dinner. They decided on a compromise: they grabbed one of the large kitchen knives that was lying around, split the orange in half, and each went to his corner to finish preparing his meal.

One chef squeezed the juice from the orange and poured it into the special sauce he was making. It wasn't quite enough, but it would have to do. The other grated the peel and stirred the scrapings into the batter for his famous cake. He too didn't have as much as he would have liked, but given the situation, what else could he have done?

Principled Negotiation

Conflicts are almost never about getting the facts right. They are about conflicting perceptions, interpretations, and values.

They are not about what a contract states, they are about what a contract means.

They are not about what is true, they are about what is important.

We infer the intentions of others based on their behavior. We assume we know their intentions when we actually don't.

We want to...

Separate People from the Problem – Perceptions, Emotions and Communication

Focus on Interests Not on Positions – Position is something one has decided upon. Interests are what led to that position.

Invent the Options for Mutual Gain – Separate invention process from decision making.

Insist on using Objective Criteria – Making decisions based on objective criteria can preserve a good relationship.

Conflict 101

- A conflict is more than just a disagreement. It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).
- Conflicts continue to fester when ignored. Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them.
- We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
- Conflicts often trigger strong emotions. If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully.
- Conflicts are an opportunity for growth. When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

The ability to successfully resolve conflict depends on your ability to:

- **Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm.** By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
- **Control your emotions and behavior.** When you're in control of your emotions, you can communicate your needs without threatening, intimidating, or punishing others.
- **Pay attention to the *feelings being expressed* as well as the spoken words of** others.
- **Be aware of and respectful of differences.** By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, you can almost always resolve a problem faster.