Conflict Resolution

Dr. Gail Berger
June 13, 2018
Conflict.
Conflict
Overview

1. Analyze a model for conflict resolution
2. Explore strategies to resolve conflicts effectively
3. Examine the impact of emotion on conflict resolution
Contextualize the Learning

Conflicts
What types of conflicts and disputes do you experience in your work?

Challenges
What challenges do you personally face when you try to resolve conflicts?
Interests

*Why* you want something

Define the problem

Motivate people

*What* you have decided that you want

Confrontational

Contentious

Argumentative

Positions
To Resolve Disputes Tune into…

Our **TYPICAL** Radio Station

A **BETTER** Radio Station

WiiFM

WiiFT
Disputes

One person makes a claim/demand/request that is rejected and seen as unwelcome, inappropriate or unfair.
People are coming to the table *angry.*

A claim has been made and rejected

The focus is on *minimizing loss,* not maximizing gain.

The parties are *not free agents!* They are dependent on each other because their BATNA’s are linked.
3 Approaches to Resolving Disputes

- **Interests**: Underlying reason for the dispute; needs; future focus
- **Rights**: Fair; blame; focused on the past
- **Power**: Coercion, threats
We are both in a bind
Tony has the money, you have the apartment, and I have a lease – can we please talk?
I have a daughter and you have a key, and I can’t stand guard all night

I have a lease in my pocket
It’s 12:20 am and I technically have possession
I have a lawyer acquaintance downtown
Possession is 9/10ths of the law

I’ve got a gun and I will use it
Do I storm the place in the morning?
If you have problems talk to the housing authority
I will scream rape
Apologizing does not mean that you’re wrong and the other person is right. It just means that you value your relationship more than your ego.
Effective Apologies!

Apologies are more comprehensive and less defensive if the apologizer first engages in a self-affirmation exercise.
Focus on Interests!

Ultimately, to resolve disputes with integrative agreements, focusing on interests is key.
Find Common Ground

Shared Interest
How can you refocus on interests?
Refocusing on Interests

**Avoid reciprocating**

**Avoid getting personal**

Reciprocate, but send a *mixed message*

*Process intervention*: Let’s talk, let’s cool off, let’s take a walk, label the process
People who use a process intervention are the most likely to refocus the other party on Interests

- **Reciprocate**: 66%
- **Don't Reciprocate**: 76%
- **Mixed Message**: 74%
- **Process**: 82%

The way that Person “B” responds to Person “A”
Walking Side by Side to Resolve Conflict
**Competitive/Defensive Position:** Reduces the chances of a successful negotiation. The table is a barrier, and this position can create negative energy.

**Corner Position:** Friendly conversation, good eye contact, relieves tension and increase chances of a positive outcome.

**Cooperative Position:** Working together jointly; But B must be able to move into this position without the other person feeling like territory has been invaded.

**Independent Position:** When people do not want to interact with others – “diametrically opposite” – Avoid this position where open discussion is desired. (Appropriate in library)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defusing Conflict: Psychological Distance</th>
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**Think about how you will feel about the conflict in 1 year**

In perspective, the argument was foolish. It got out of hand. It ended up strengthening our trust. I sometimes need to learn to watch what I say.

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**Think about how you feel about the conflict right now**

I feel very angry and betrayed right now. I trusted her and she let me down. She doesn’t really appreciate me at all and I really just don’t want to deal with her right now.

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**Consider the Big Picture**

**Focused on recounting the event with detailed emotion**

*Huynh, 2017*
More tips to Diffuse Conflict

“"I" Statements

No Absolute Statements
The impact of emotion on conflict resolution
Impact of Emotion on Behavior

Positive Affect
More creative problem solving, more cooperative behavior, increase in joint gain

Negative Affect
Decreases desire to work together in the future, more competitive, decrease in joint gain
Conflict Resolution Advice

Bright light intensifies reaction

Good feels better and bad feels worse

Implications

Dim the lights if you want to cool emotion and make lights brighter if you want to intensify emotion
How does anger impact conflict resolution?
Strategic Anger

Used *early* in the process to *intimidate*

Used *early* in the process to *gain leverage*
Genuine Anger

Builds **gradually** when the person does not feel heard

**Subsides** when the person can “vent”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Anger</th>
<th>Beware! Do NOT make concessions!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genuine</td>
<td>Allow the person to vent and focus on the relationship</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Check the person’s reputation

Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior
Threats?
Threats should only be used as a last resort!

The other person is most likely to concede if the threat is made explicitly toward the end of the conversation.
Threats should only be used as a last resort!

The person making the threat is perceived to be the least aggressive if the threat is made explicitly toward the end of the conversation.
Making Wise Threats

W  You are *willing* to follow through on the threat

I  The threat will further your interests

S  *Save* face – do not make wimpy threats

E  Be *exact* in your threat. If you do not do X, then I will do X, but you can do X to stop me from following through on the threat.
### Dealing with Threats

**Diagnose the motivation behind the threat**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Pragmatist</th>
<th>Bluffer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The person is frustrated or offended and just wants to be heard and/or acknowledged</td>
<td>• A straight shooter who wants to inform you of strong alternatives and/or real constraints</td>
<td>• A showman who brandishes power out of insecurity or a desire to dominate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dealing with Threats

D: Diagnose the reason for the threat

E: If the person is a Victim, EXPRESS that you understand how they feel

A: If the person is a Pragmatist, ASK questions

L: If the person is a Bluffer, LABEL the threat
Threats

Cool, Poised, Cognitive

Anger

Hot, Upended, Emotional
WISE threats will elicit more concessions than anger

**Threats**

“If you don’t seriously modify your offer, there will be consequences. It is up to you.”

**Anger**

“I am very angry with your offer. This begins to seriously get on my nerves!”
The effect of Positive Emotions on De-escalating conflict

EMPATHY

HOPE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>An other oriented emotional state concerned with the motivation to alleviate the suffering of others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>A cognitive based emotion involving positive feelings about an anticipated and aspirational outcome</td>
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# Emotion and Conflict De-escalation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emathy</th>
<th>Negatively associated with aggressive attitudes in favor of escalation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Positively associated with conciliatory attitudes during de-escalation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Inheritance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Share of Camels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oldest Son</td>
<td>1/2 of the camels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Son</td>
<td>1/3 of the camels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest Son</td>
<td>1/9 of the camels</td>
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Solution #1

Divide 17 camels
**Wise Woman’s Solution**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Fraction of Camels</th>
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<td>Oldest Son</td>
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**Solution #1**

Divide 17 camels

**Solution #2**

Borrow an 18\(^{th}\) camel

Oldest son = 9 camels
Middle son = 6 camels
Youngest son = 2 camels

Total = 17 camels
Thank You!

As you take off and soar to new heights, I invite you to reach out with questions and comments. I’d love to hear from you!

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