

# Dealing Effectively with Conflict in the Workplace

By: Isabel Alfonsin-Vittoria

November 30<sup>th</sup> 2018

# Missed Opportunity



# Managing Expectations



**What am I  
here to  
learn?**

**Why  
am I  
here?**

# Workshop Objectives

- Learn about conflict
- Identify your own conflicts (personal or collective) that you need to learn to manage more effectively
- Understand the dynamics of conflict
- Learn proactive conflict avoidance behaviors
- Learn different conflict management strategies
- Identify personal strengths and challenges in managing compromise toward conflict resolution

# What is Conflict?

“Real or perceived threat or opposition to one’s needs, interests, principles, concerns or security.”

“ A state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas or interests; a clash.”



# The Impact of Conflict

- 85% of U.S. employees experience conflict and spend 2.8 hours/week dealing with it.
- Significant loss of organizational productivity and resources - costs \$359 billion in paid hours a year.
- 31% of managers think they can handle conflict effectively while 78% of employees disagree.
- 27% of employees witnessed personal attacks.

# Impact continued...

- 25% say avoiding conflict results in sickness/absences.
- 75% employees report positive outcomes from conflict that would not have been realized without conflict.
- 95% of those who receive training say it is the biggest driver for success - but nearly 60% have never received training.

Sources: CPP Global Capital Report 2008; Harvard Law School Special Report on Managing Conflict 2009

# Conflict Situations





# A Different Outlook...

- Conflict is a natural part of the human experience.
- Conflict occurs on a daily basis.
- Conflict often presents many learning opportunities.
- Conflict brings about change.
- One can effectively develop problem-solving skills when dealing with conflict.

**FIU**

Herbert Wertheim  
College of Medicine

# The Pursuit of Peace

**“PEACE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT BUT  
THE PRESENCE OF CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES  
FOR RESPONDING TO CONFLICT -  
ALTERNATIVES TO PASSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE  
RESPONSES, ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE.”**

DOROTHY THOMPSON

© Lifehack Quotes

# Types of Conflict

- Intrapersonal (within)



- Interpersonal (with others)



# Intrapersonal Conflict

Intrapersonal conflict is the self-dialogue or internal dilemma that continuously occurs inside our heads.

Some of these conflicts manifest by themselves in our dreams, reflections, self-talk, our analytical thoughts, prayer or meditation, our non-verbal gestures while we think or in our writings.

Example of an intrapersonal conflict: We volunteer for a project that we are not satisfied with but we continue on.

# Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflicts involve another person or a group of people and affects how people communicate their thoughts, ideas, feelings and wishes toward them.

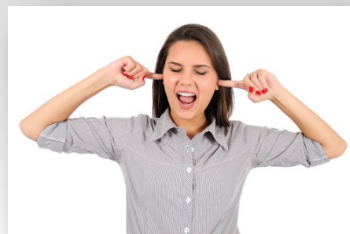
Not all conflict is verbal. Sometimes the most conflict - ridden messages are sent via eye contact, physical location/distance/proximity, gestures/body language, posture and facial expressions. It is this type of conflict that leads to so many misunderstandings.

Example of an interpersonal conflict: The promotion of a work colleague that questions merit.

# Conflict in the Workplace

- Personality differences
- Stress
- Excessive workloads
- Ineffective supervision and management
- Differences in beliefs/values
- Substandard performance
- Limited resources
- Non-compliance with policies and procedures
- Negative attitudes
- Confusion/duplication with responsibility/authority
- Poor communication
- Passive aggressive behaviors
- Resistance/fear of change
- Generational tensions
- Inconsistency
- Professional disrespect
- Inner conflict
- Cultural differences

# The Faces of Conflict



# Proactive Management Responses

- Manage (Do the job)
- Be a positive force/influence
- Pay attention to the people
- Communicate effectively & consistently
- Practice prevention through good dept./team culture, training and education
- Model appropriate workplace conduct
- Uphold performance standards
- Treat employees with dignity and respect
- Identify challenges/opportunities
- Meet challenges head-on (Deal with it)
- Be preemptive and responsive to complaints
- Conduct prompt, thorough and effective investigations
- Filter issues to determine what needs to be raised with HR or management
- Appropriately follow-through
- See the situation through resolution
- Remain vigilant - reinforcing positive change and curbing any new negative behaviors



# Proactive Employee Responses

- Focus (Do my job)
- Be a positive force/influence; act professionally
- Be mindful of personal boundaries
- Communicate effectively & consistently
- Comply with dept./team culture, training and education
- Model appropriate workplace conduct
- Uphold performance standards
- Treat colleagues with dignity and respect considering our cultural, ethnic, gender and linguistic differences
- Identify challenges/opportunities
- Improve what you can
- Consult supervisor re: challenges that you cannot and should not take on
- Be a part of the solution
- Appropriately follow-through with what has been asked of you
- See the situation through resolution
- Respect authority; understand supervisory roles/dynamics
- Know and abide by FIU policy on diversity and inclusion

# Constructive Reactive Responses

- Make good eye contact: Be sure to look the speaker in the face most of the time, especially look at the person's eyes.
- Take a listening position: Try to be comfortable and relaxed. Be aware of non-verbal cues (body-language).
- Paraphrase the speaker's message: State in your own words what someone has just said. This can help with clarifying the message. Be sure to reflect **feeling** words.
- Avoid automatic talking: Allow the person to finish their thoughts before you respond.

# Making it Work

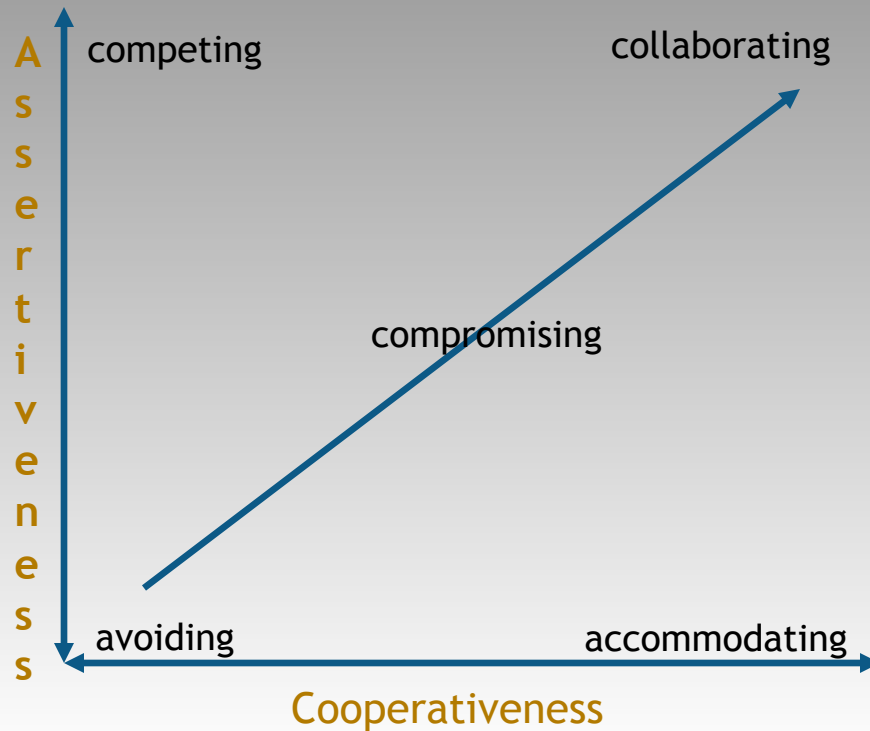
- Be aware: Be open, inviting and neutral. Empathy creates connection.
- Ask clarifying questions for understanding: If something the speaker says is unclear to you, ask the person questions to get more information. That communicates care. Ask open-ended questions when you can.
- Make comments, answer questions: Try not to change the subject and utilize silence.
- Provide appropriate feedback: Give reactions in a nonjudgmental way. Provide feedback in an honest and supportive way.

# Feeling words vs. Accusations

- I feel upset.
  - I feel angry.
  - I feel disappointed.
  - I feel discouraged.
  - I feel stressed.
- You make me upset.
  - You make me angry.
  - You have disappointed me.
  - You discourage me.
  - You stress me out.



# Dimensions of Conflict



# Reactive Responses

## Negotiation Approaches

- Compete/Dominate (win-lose) 100/0
  - Accommodate (win-lose) 75/25
    - Avoid (lose-lose) 100/0
  - Compromise (win-lose) 50/50
- Cooperate/Collaborate (win-win) 100/100

# Compete/Dominate



# Accommodate





# Avoid



# Compromise



# Cooperate/Collaborate



# What do I do?



- Nancy & Stella

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kOn8vWA4fU&t=2s>

# Lessons Summarized



- The cause of the conflict(s)
- Your perception about the conflict(s)
- The perception of others re: the conflict(s)
- Prevention & resolution of the conflict(s)
- Outcome of the conflict(s)

# Openness



- Don't ignore conflict. However, if unsure about the situation (if some of the facts of the situation are unknown or the intentions of the other party are also unknown) you are better off consulting to identify the most constructive solution.
- Under no circumstances are gossip or complaining effective strategies to resolve conflict. Gossip and complaining can actually result in more harm, so resist the temptation to do that and sort through all of your options and exercise the scenario that is most suitable to all parties.
- The outcome greatly depends on the method you choose.

CHOOSE WISELY

# Resources

- Your supervisor or manager
- COM Human Resources  
7-0621
- Employee Labor Relations  
7-4186
- The Office of Employee Assistance  
7-2469





# Commitment Towards Peace

**“PEACE HAS TO BE CREATED, IN ORDER TO BE  
MAINTAINED. IT WILL NEVER BE ACHIEVED BY  
PASSIVITY AND QUIETISM.”**

**DOROTHY THOMPSON**

© Lifehack Quotes

