



Navigating Workplace Conflict

We all know when we are in a dysfunctional relationship, it drains our energy and we anticipate and, dread interacting. To move successfully through conflict, all parties need to firstly, want to and, secondly, take responsibility for their part in the conflict.

Conflict at a Glance*

Types

1. Relationship
2. Task
3. Process
4. Status

Considerations

1. Past experiences
2. Cultural norms
3. Office context
4. Gender norms

Options

1. Do nothing
2. Directly address
3. Indirectly address
4. Leave the relationship

Natural Tendency

1. Avoiders
2. Seekers

*This is taken from the HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict, written by Amy Gallo



Key roots of conflict

- Gaps in knowledge and understanding
- Ineffective communication
- Unexpressed and unmet expectations
- Assumptions and judgments
- Unconscious and conscious bias
- Personal triggers

What do I do when dealing with a toxic relationship?

It is challenging to move through conflict when parties are blaming the other person's defective personality. He's lazy, dishonest, mean, not very bright...

Labeling the other person creates a dynamic where the party feels powerless to impact the situation.

When people are in conflict they become entrenched in their point of view. It is important to create an opportunity to interrupt conscious and, unconscious assumptions, and process new information.

Slow it down and shift the focus from the personalities and historical stories to the desired behaviors and motivation to work well together.

Biases that stop the processing of new information

Confirmation bias: Cognitive dissonance:

- Selective listening and only process things that support our preconceived ideas

Reactive devaluation:

- Devalues information because it comes from the opponent

Selective perception and memory:

- Only see information that validates what they think they should see and remember

Fundamental attribution error:

- Attributes a decision to the character of the other person

Need to slow down, how do we do that?

- Open-ended questions - yes/no questions trigger defensive behavior
- Information gathering questions
- Problem-solving questions
- Reality-changing questions
- Hypothetical questions



Tools During Difficult Conversations

- Actively and Empathetically listen
 - * Restate and Reflect back emotion
- Acknowledge
 - * The I statement
- Focus on ideas and behaviors rather than personality
- Be solution-oriented
- Brainstorm
- Take a break
- Focus on your breath
- Stay on track using your answers to logical questions

Blocks to Empathetic Listening*

Advising: “I think you should...” “How come you didn’t...?”

One-upping: “That’s nothing; wait’ll you hear what happened to me.”

Educating: “This could turn into a very positive experience for you if you just...”

Consoling: “It wasn’t your fault; you did the best you could”.

Story-telling: “That reminds me of the time...”

Shutting down: “Cheer up. Don’t feel so bad.”

Sympathizing: “Oh, you poor thing...”

Interrogating: “When did this begin?”

Explaining: “I would have called but...”

Correcting: “That’s not how it happened.”

*Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg



Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg

Feelings

<p>AFRAID apprehensive dread foreboding frightened mistrustful</p> <p>ANNOYED aggravated disgruntled displeased exasperated frustrated</p> <p>PAIN agony anguished bereaved devastated grief</p>	<p>ANGRY enraged furious incensed Indignant</p> <p>AVERSION animosity appalled contempt disgusted dislike hate</p> <p>CONFUSED ambivalent baffled bewildered dazed hesitant</p>	<p>DISCONNECTED alienated aloof apathetic bored cold detached distant distracted</p> <p>DISQUIET agitated alarmed discombobulated disconcerted disturbed perturbed uncomfortable uneasy upset</p>	<p>EMBARRASSED ashamed chagrined flustered guilty mortified</p> <p>FATIGUE beat burnt out depleted exhausted lethargic listless Sleepy</p> <p>YEARNING envious jealous longing</p>	<p>TENSE anxious cranky distressed distracted edgy fidgety nervous overwhelmed restless stressed out</p> <p>VULNERABLE fragile guarded helpless insecure leery reserved sensitive</p>
---	--	---	---	---

Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg

Needs

<p>CONNECTION acceptance affection appreciation belonging cooperation communication closeness community companionship compassion consideration consistency empathy inclusion intimacy love</p>	<p>CONNECTION cont. respect/self-respect safety security stability support known to be seen to understand and be understood trust be heard</p> <p>MEANING awareness celebration of life challenge clarity</p>	<p>MEANING cont. competence consciousness contribution creativity discovery efficacy effectiveness growth hope participation purpose self-expression stimulation to matter understanding</p>	<p>HONESTY authenticity integrity presence</p> <p>PLAY joy humor</p> <p>PEACE beauty communion ease equality harmony inspiration order</p>	<p>PHYSICAL WELL-BEING air food movement/exercise rest/sleep sexual expression safety shelter touch water</p> <p>AUTONOMY choice freedom independence space spontaneity</p>
---	---	---	---	---

Not Feelings: I feel good/great - (satisfied, excited, happy, jubilant), I feel rejected - (lonely, hostile, dejected), I feel liked/hated - (contented, lonely, ashamed), I feel manipulated - (angry, brokenhearted, despairing), I feel attacked - (sad/terrified/shocked).



Preparation Checklist

What is your motivation, feeling, and need?	
Do you need to have the conversation? Best time and place? Who needs to be in the room?	
Organizational/gender/cultural context considerations?	
What is your desired outcome?	
What are other potential outcomes?	
What do you think the other party's perspective is and what outcome do they want?	
What is your role in this conflict?	
What can we agree on?	
Prepare answers: What do I want for myself? For the other person? For the relationship? How would I act if those things were true?	
Practice	

The Conversation Outlined

Start with common ground:	
Identify the behavior without interpretation	
Own the feeling	
Express the need	
Brainstorm the solution	

Informed by Nonviolent Communication by Marshall B. Rosenberg



GOTO SOLUTIONS
INC

My Notes: