



unpacking conflict

PRESENTED BY

STUDENTS FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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“LISTENING: THE MOST VALUABLE SKILL THAT NOBODY TEACHES.”

MAY 11, 2015

Please remember that no training in the world can alter the course of a toxic environment. It must be dismantled and begun anew.

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LISTENING

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EVALUATION: ON A BLANK PIECE OF PAPER, TELL US WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM TODAY AND TELL US HOW WE

CAN DO BETTER IF THERE IS A NEXT TIME.

May 11th, 2015

Greetings to all of you from Aaron, Aziz and Harrison,

We appreciate the invitation to share our project with you and we invite you to be present and mindful of how difficult it can be to stand up in front of people and speak. Our primary theme today will be on the “gift of both conflict and listening.” Two of the many reasons that conflict is a gift is because it is inevitable and does not care what you think of its existence. And the second reason that conflict is a gift is because without it, the world would be dull and boring and most importantly, it allows people the opportunity to resolve their differences. Listening is the most valuable skill that nobody teaches. It is a critical skill but there is seldom any practice courses on how to listen. Today we are going to ask you to listen carefully to what is being shared and hopefully you will listen to understand rather than listen to respond. Listening is a skill that promotes dialogue and welcomes others into the conversation. For us, the most important piece about listening is it welcomes the contributions of others. Welcome to this day.

DRAMA

Attempts to scare the one listening

Is meant to silence the other

Masks the dashed expectation or fear of not being in control with false sense of control

Blames the other for their feelings

Is a strategy that masks a demand that the other change

Is violent, aggressive, out of control, derisive, punitive

Represses the true feeling

Obstructs other's feelings

TRUE ANGER

Informs and creates attention in the listener

Is meant to communicate with the other

Contains sadness/regret and these are acknowledged

Takes responsibility for their own feelings

Asks for change but allows the other to or not

Is non-violent, always in control and stays within safe limits

Expresses true feelings

Coexists with feelings of other's

(How to be an Adult, David Richo 1998) , Spiritual and Psychological Integration 36-41)

AN EXAMPLE OF APPLYING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRUE ANGER AND DRAMA

TO THE EXPERIENCE OF REJECTION, NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE IN REACTIONS:

DRAMA

Drama is a belligerent reaction to rejection that punishes by creating further distance

TRUE ANGER

Anger is an intimate response to rejection that bridges the distance or allows it without long held resentment

Drama is based on indignation and entitlement: believes itself entitled just because.

Displeased by what happened but aware that feeling is based on personal interpretation

ANGER AND BELIEF

**Anger, like all feelings, is not caused by an event but by our belief or interpretation of event
A-Action Occurs (Open to my interpretation), B- My belief interprets the action in specific way
C-Consequence occurs: the feeling is based on the belief that was triggered by the action.**

**Conclusion: A: What happened, B: What I believe happened, C: What I feel about what I believe
In reality(depending on what your reality is) one stimulus does not cause another but can
be triggered,
as in A triggers B and B triggers C. This explains why it is so important to be responsible
for your own feelings. Other people can trigger us but we are responsible for our
interpretation.**

(How to be an Adult, Richo 1998)

OLD SCHOOL VIEWS	VIEWS ON CONFLICT	CURRENT VIEW
1. Conflict is avoidable	Conflict is inevitable	Conflict arises from many causes, including organizational structures unavoidable differences in goals, perceptions, values
2. Conflict is caused by management trouble makers		Conflict contributes and detracts from performance
3 Conflict disrupts organizations and prevents optimal performance		Task of management is to manage level of conflict and its resolution Optimal organizational performance requires certain level of conflict
4. The task of management is to eliminate conflict		
5 Optimal organizational performance is removal of conflict.		

(Structure and Function of Conflict: Concepts and Models (Louis Pondy, Admin. Sci Quarterly vol.12 (Sept 1960 296-320)

TYPES OF CONFLICT

FUNCTIONAL - FUNCTIONAL CONFLICTS SUPPORT THE GOALS OF THE GROUP AND IMPROVES ITS PERFORMANCE

DYSFUNCTIONAL - DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICTS HINDER GROUP PERFORMANCE

FUNCTIONAL CONFLICTS CAN BE DIFFERENTIATED FROM DYSFUNCTIONAL CONFLICTS ON THE BASIS OF THE FOLLOWING THREE ATTRIBUTES:

- 1. TASK CONFLICT: RELATED TO CONTENT AND GOALS OF THE WORK**
- 2. RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT: FOCUSES ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**
- 3. PROCESS CONFLICT: PROCESS CONFLICT RELATES TO HOW THE WORK GETS DONE**

(Functional & Dysfunctional Aspects of Conflict, Edu. Research Assoc, Vol B, Issue 1, 2013, ISSN 2094-5337)

DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING CONFLICT: TRUE ANGER AND DRAMA

- DISCUSSIONS ABOUT CONFLICT MOST OFTEN INVOLVES EMOTIONS SUCH AS ANGER
- WHEN ANGER DIFFERENTIATES FROM DRAMA, CONFLICTS CAN BE PREVENTED
- **ANGER NOT ALWAYS SECONDARY FEELING, IT CO-EXISTS WITH OTHER FEELINGS, NEVER MASKS**
- **IT IS THE NEED FOR DRAMA THAT MASKS TRUE FEELINGS AS A WAY TO GET ONES OWN WAY**

DEFINING TRUE ANGER

- NATURAL HUMAN FEELING THAT EVERYONE EXPERIENCES THAT REQUIRES EXPRESSION
- EXPRESSED ACTIVELY WHEN WE SHOW IT DIRECTLY
- UNEXPRESSED ANGER BECOMES DRAMA THAT PUNISHES OTHERS DURING CONFLICT
- DEALING WITH ANGER REQUIRES ABILITY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ANGER AND DRAMA, ANGER IS INEVITABLE, DRAMA IS OPTIONAL (ANGER IS A TRUE FEELING WHEREAS DRAMA IS AVOIDANCE OF TRUE FEELINGS)

(How to be an Adult, David Richo, 1998)

FUNCTIONAL AND DYSFUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF CONFLICT

FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

- STIMULANT FOR CHANGE
- CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION
- GROUP COHESION
- AVOIDANCE OF TENSION
- IDENTIFICATION OF WEAKNESS
- CHALLENGE

DYSFUNCTIONAL ASPECTS

- RESIGNATION OF PERSONNEL
- TENSIONS
- DISSATISFACTION
- CREATION OF DISTRUST
- GOAL DISPLACEMENT
- ORGANIZATIONAL WEAKENING

- There is a direct correlation between Organizational performance and levels of conflict.
- Organizations that are functional tend to produce high levels of performance.
- Organizations that are dysfunctional tend to produce lower, unacceptable levels of performance which increases the dysfunction

(Structure and Function of Team Conflict, Journal of Conflict Management, April 11, 2015 Issue 2)

TOOLS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT

- MOST OF US REACT TO OUR PERCEPTION OF WHAT HAPPENS IN ANY SITUATION RATHER THAN THE SITUATION ITSELF BECAUSE OUR BUTTONS HAVE BEEN PUSHED, PAUSE, LEARN TO BE MINDFUL OF WHAT THE REAL PROBLEM IS
- BY LEARNING TO LISTEN, WE THEN LEARN TO BE INFORMED RATHER THAN EFFECTED BY THE BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS
- WHEN HIGHLY EMOTIONAL, ALWAYS SPEAK TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN PERSON OR ON THE PHONE, USING TEXT MESSAGES AND EMAILS LEAVES YOU VULNERABLE TO THE LIMITATIONS OF WORDS
- UTILIZE THE PHRASE, "I UNDERSTAND" WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THIS SUPPORTS YOUR NEED TO BE SAFE AND STAY PRESENT WHEN TENSION IS HIGH AND THE NEED TO FIND COMMON GROUND IS ESSENTIAL
- LISTEN TO WHAT IS BEING SAID, RESIST TEMPTATION TO DEFEND YOUR POSITION, RESIST YOUR OWN ANGER
- MAKE REQUESTS RATHER THAN DEMANDS TO BE HEARD *(Don't ask for the power)*
- TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN FEELINGS, SUSPEND DESIRE TO ASSIGN BLAME
- **ABOVE ALL ELSE, LEARN TO LISTEN AND LISTEN TO LEARN**

(Structure and Function of Conflict, Journal of Conflict Management, April 13, 2015)