

Resolving Conflict: What Is The Problem Anyway?

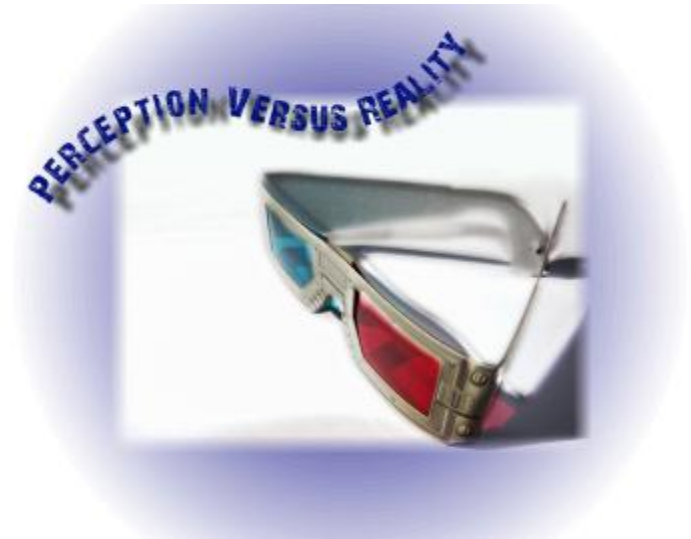
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What Is The Problem?

“Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact.
Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.”

-Marcus Aurelius



Conflict

- * Each of us interacts with people every day:

Faculty

Staff

Students

Patients

Others in our institutions



- * We will eventually need to resolve conflict.

Conflict as Opportunity

- * “During their lifetimes, every man and woman will stumble across a great opportunity. Sadly, most of them will simply pick themselves up, dust themselves down and carry on as if nothing ever happened.”

— [Winston Churchill](#)

- * Conflict can be an opportunity
- * Without conflict nothing changes:
not our minds, not our relationships
not our organizations.



What Is Conflict?

- * Merriam Webster dictionary says conflict is:
“a strong disagreement between people, groups, etc., that results in often angry argument. A difference that prevents agreement between ideas, feelings, etc.”
- * In the workplace these “strong disagreements” can be: time consuming, irritating and disruptive.
- * **BUT** can also be an opportunity for growth and improvement.



What Is Your Strategy?

- * First Strategy: Avoid the issue complete they are all adults they can fend for themselves.
- * Second Strategy: Let someone else deal with it, I am just too busy for this nonsense.
- * Third Strategy: Really isn't that what HR is for anyway?



Avoiding Conflict

- * Fear is the main culprit
- * We fear:
 - Humiliation
 - Anger
 - Embarrassment
 - Negative Emotions



Getting Past the Fear

- * Many people are afraid or not comfortable witnessing anger.
 - Timing is everything-wait to intervene.
- * Fear of not saying what is considered correct.
 - Create an intervention strategy and practice.
- * Fear of failure. Not being able to find a resolution.
 - Reframe your negative thoughts to positive.

Intervention Strategy

Remember the “Knows”

- * #1 Know the issue.
- * #2 Know your “audience”
- * #3 Know yourself.
- * #4 Know your intervention strategy.



Intervention Strategy #1

Know The Issue

- * Be an active listener to each persons version of the event.
- * Speak to any witnesses of the event.
- * Listen for any underlying issues that might contribute to the situation.
- * Do not draw your own conclusion-it's not about what you think happened.

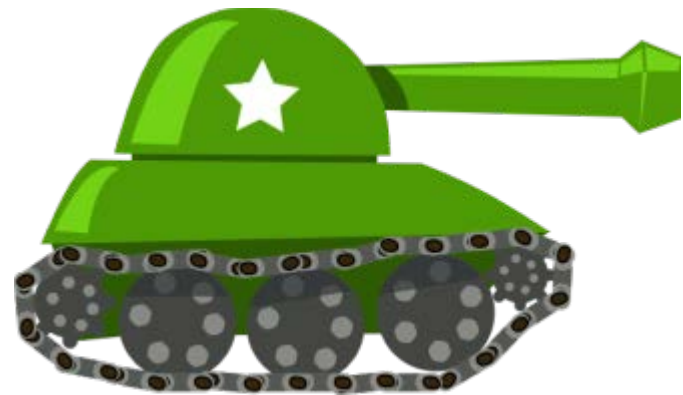


Intervention Strategy#2

Know Your Audience

* **The Tank**

- * Pushy, loud forceful. Assumes that the end justifies the means.
- * These types of people require an assertive response.
- * Hold your ground and maintain your self control.
- * Allow them peace with honor.



Intervention Strategy #2

Know Your Audience

* **The-Know-It-All**

- * Know everything there is to know and will not stop for one minute to listen to any different perspective.
- * Avoid the temptation of being a know it all yourself.
- * Be flexible, patient and clever when presenting your information.
- * Think through your intervention strategy before you begin your intervention.



Intervention Strategy #2

Know Your Audience

* **The Grenade**

- * Have a pattern of blowing up and withdrawing.
- * Get their attention before they lose control: call their name, wave your hands.
- * Wait until the person is calm before having any type of discussion.



Intervention Strategy #2

Know Your Audience

- * **The Yes Person**
- * Says yes to everything but delivers on nothing.
- * Are usually very nice people.
- * Be honest about what they can do and have them repeat it you.



Intervention Strategy #3

Know Yourself

- * Be aware of your feelings during the intervention and do not let them get the better of you.
- * Be aware of any prejudices you may have going into the intervention.
- * Be aware of any preconceived ideas you have about the issue and check them at the door.



Intervention Strategy#4

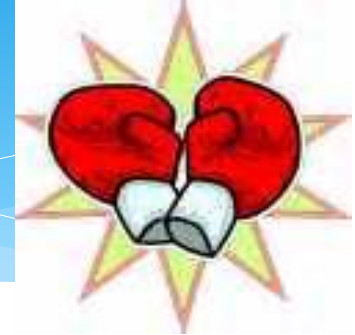
Know Your Intervention Strategy

- * Timing is everything-do not hurry into the intervention.
- * Provide a structure for the intervention-clearly state what behavior will be acceptable and what will not.
- * Keep the conversation focused on the issue at hand.
- * Be open to the possibility of multiple meetings to get the issue resolved.



Intervention Strategy

Bonus Information



- * Carefully choose your words.
- * Use words and phrases that are not judgmental.
 - EX: Avoid why, **instead** – help me understand . . .
 - EX: Avoid should, **instead** – Can we consider. . . .
- * Rephrase the issues that arise so that they are not conflictive.
 - EX: You made me, **instead** – I feel that . . .
- * Clarify what is said for a clear understanding of the issue or request.
 - EX: I want respect ask – what does that look like to you?

Summary

- * Conflict often goes unaddressed –many people are simply afraid of the emotions.
- * Conflict provides opportunity for growth and improvement if we can embrace it as a positive not a negative.
- * When intervening in a conflict be sure to know:
 1. The issue
 2. Your audience
 3. Yourself
 4. Your strategy



Bottom Line

- * Conflict will arise in your organization.
- * You will be called on to resolve it.
- * Be prepared not afraid.

**“Never let the fear of striking out
get in your way.”**

-George Herman “Babe” Ruth



Any Questions?

“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view — until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

-- Atticus Finch in "To Kill A Mockingbird," by Harper Lee

