

Working in Teams and Conflict Resolution Workshop

International Master in Sustainable
Development (IMSD)

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TEACHER
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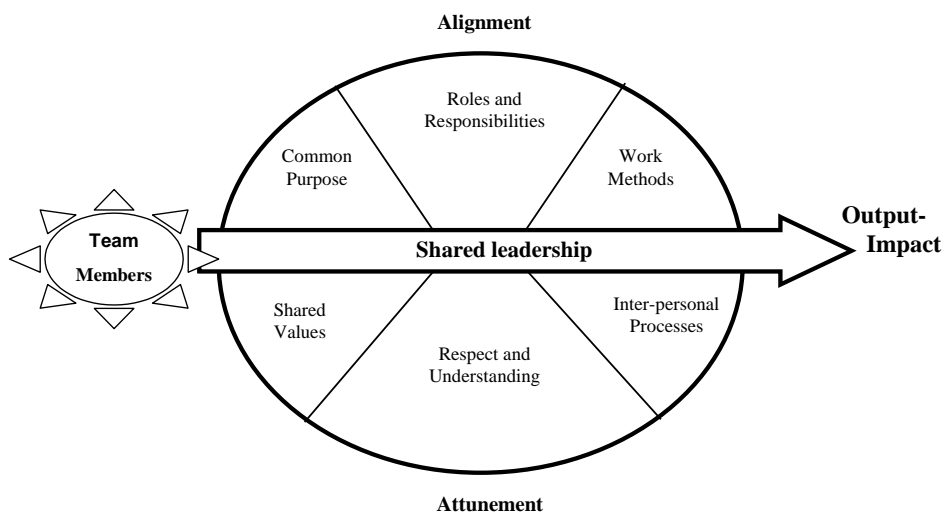
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1. Working in Teams

1.1. Team Definition and Characteristics

A team is an organized group of people who are mutually dependant on each other and respectful of each other, working together with commitment towards a common objective for which they are mutually accountable.



A team is much more than a group of people working together for a common purpose. Team members must be aligned in the way they do things and attuned to the way they behave towards each other. While there will be a designated leader of a team, the qualities of leadership should be shared, as is the accountability and credit for the results.

First and foremost, teams need to know where they are going and why. Teams are aligned through a clear, common purpose and attuned by holding shared values:

- **Common purpose.** Any time a group of people comes together to work, for either a short or a long period of time, the individuals need a clear understanding of the group's common purpose.
- **Shared values.** The group's purpose and goals must be supported by an underlying base of shared values to which all members are committed.

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Both roles and responsibilities and respect and understanding focus on what and how individuals are allowed to contribute toward the group's goals and how the group allows or helps individuals to develop:

- **Roles and responsibilities:** All members of the group need to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This refers to the function each team member will carry out. Responsibilities include taking action, overseeing action, following up on implementing decisions, etc. It is equally important for group members to have a clear sense of one another's roles and responsibilities.
- **Respect and understanding:** In spite of shared values, all individuals bring differences to the team: different cultural values and assumptions, different personalities and experiences, different gifts and blind spots. For the group to equal more than the sum of its parts, all members must respect and aim to understand the others. All members need to feel valued for their contribution. Both work methods and interpersonal processes define how team members work together:
- **Work methods:** The group needs to develop procedures for the activities it carries out to accomplish its goals. This may include decision-making and problem-solving methods, as well as systems for co-coordinating production activities.
- **Interpersonal processes:** The group must also pay attention to how members work together. The quality of communication deserves special attention. Conflicts, which invariably arise, should be viewed as opportunities to increase understanding and trust. They must be resolved in such a way that the group grows from the experience.

Effective teams have the following outcomes:

- **Results:** The team delivers the goods. Projects are formulated and completed according to an agreed-on schedule. The quality of output is high and it has a positive impact on the organization.
- **External relations:** The team shares responsibility for and spends time developing key outside relationships, mobilizing resources and building credibility with important stakeholders in other parts of the organization.
- **Learning:** Team members are continually seeking better ways of working together and enjoy learning from one another. Personal development is encouraged. The team atmosphere creates

learning opportunities. And as team members learn, the team as a whole learns and influences organizational learning.

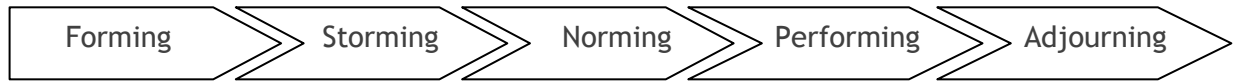
- **Team member fulfilment:** Team members derive a high level of satisfaction from their role in the team and grow through their membership on the team. They are challenged by their team role and tasks.

Let's drill down a bit more into interpersonal processes as it is so important. Consider the key characteristics of effective interpersonal processes:

- **Open communication:** Team members feel free to express their opinions and feelings. There are few hidden agendas. Active listening and feedback are practiced. Members use inquiry and advocacy skills effectively.
- **Civilized disagreement:** Team members are willing to give and receive constructive and non-aggressive criticism without fear or offence. Team relationships are discussed openly.
- **Problem solving and decision making:** The team strives for decisions that are acceptable to all or most members. Differences of opinion are discussed openly and decisions are usually reached through consensus.
- **Energy and creativity:** Team members gain strength from one another. Collectively they feel more potent and find team activities renew their vitality. Synergy is evident. The team is creative, imaginative and not afraid to take risks. No idea is considered absurd.
- **Using diversity effectively:** The team is balanced in composition of gender, culture, age and experience. The team actively seeks out and welcomes new members who add to its diversity. All views and opinions (deriving from this diversity) are encouraged and used to enhance the team output.

1.2. Team Life Cycle

All team types have life cycles. All pass through developmental stages, one categorization of which is¹:



The progression through these stages is often not sequential, some stages may be skipped, the length of time a team remain in a stage may vary considerably and “one step forward, one step back” experiences may be common. When the team is facing change or new challenges, or when conflicts arise, even if the team has been performing quite well, there may be a need to return to previous stages. If the team has indeed skipped storming and/or norming, for example because all the members have taken a stance of polite political correctness, the team may be able to perform well until important differences of opinion arise.

In teams with changing memberships, clearly the arrival of a new team member (particularly of course, the team leader) can impact the life cycle. New members must be integrated into existing teams that may be at different stages. Imagine the difficulty of a new member integrating into a team that is in the performing stage. This can be extremely disruptive to the team, which may discriminate against the new member. Finding a way to integrate the new member is often a considerable challenge. At times however, where the team is well established and the relationships are robust, there may be little disruption.

Conversely a new member should “read” the status of the team they join and take this into account when attempting to be accepted and integrated. This is, however, a useful tool for the team to reflect on the state of the team development.

The table below explains the characteristics of each stage and a series of questions have been posed to help you in your role as a manager and team leader to recognize these and deal with them in a pro-active and effective manner.

¹ Tuckman, Bruce (1965). "Developmental sequence in small groups". *Psychological Bulletin* 63 (6): 384-99.

Stage	Characteristics	As an effective team player:
Forming	<p>This is an exploration period. Team members are often cautious and guarded in their interactions, not really knowing what to expect from the other team members. They explore the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. At this stage, members are generally polite and noncommittal. There is a tendency to rely on the formal leadership. Productivity is generally low.</p>	<p>Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice when any members are excluded, make them feel welcome and included • Notice when issues of diversity become barriers to effective participation • When you have information to share, make sure all team members are included
Storming	<p>This stage is characterized by competition and strained relationships. It is here that members deal with issues of power, leadership and decision-making. Team members may challenge team objectives and sub groups may form. The leader is challenged overtly and covertly. It is the most crucial stage that the team must work through. Task orientation is often more pronounced than building relationships.</p>	<p>Exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you demonstrate that ownership of output and achievements will rest with the team as a whole? • Are you open to new ideas and do you encourage the safe expression of all views? • Can you quickly establish ground rules acceptable to all? • How will you encourage collaborative team efforts? • How do you establish mutual accountability?
Norming	<p>This stage is characterized by cohesiveness amongst team members. They learn to appreciate their differences, problem solve together, and feel more harmonious as a team. Leadership issues are resolved through interdependent behaviour. Trust begins to evolve.</p>	<p>Solidarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you encourage open discussion about issues and concerns of the team? • Do you give constructive feedback? • Do you keep focussed on the big picture and the overall objectives of the team?
Performing	<p>By this stage, team members have learned how to work together as a fully functioning team. They can define tasks, work out relationships, manage conflicts and work effectively towards their goals. This is the most harmonious stage. Communication is open and supportive. Leadership is shared and participative.</p>	<p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you contribute most effectively to team processes and outcomes? • Will you make the most use of team member skills? • How will you encourage team learning? • Can the team learn from its mistakes and encourage each other to strive for a higher level of excellence?

Adjourning	At this stage the team recognises that its task is complete. At times changes in the composition of the team or the circumstances surrounding the team may be such that it loses its performing characteristics. Whatever the reason, the leader or the team collectively must effectively reform or disband.	Closure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you recognise time for closure or resist change? • How can you celebrate the successes and learn from the failures? • How will you show gratitude for a task well done? • How will you contribute to the organization learning from the team experience?
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1.3. Team Roles

This is one categorisation of Team Roles according to Dr. Meredith Belbin² (www.belbin.com) which has become widely accepted as a good model.

PLANTS (PL)

CHARACTERISTICS: Plants are innovators and inventors and can be highly creative. They provide the seeds and ideas from which major developments spring. Usually they prefer to operate by themselves at some distance from the other members of the team, using their imagination and often working in an orthodox way. They tend to be introverted and react strongly to criticism and praise. Their ideas may often be radical and may lack practical constraint. They are independent, clever and original and may be weak in communicating with other people on a different wavelength.

FUNCTION: The main use of a PL is to generate new proposals and to solve complex problems. PLs are often needed in the initial stages of a project or when a project is failing to progress. PLs have usually made their mark as founders of companies or as originators of new products.

RESOURCE INVESTIGATORS (RI)

CHARACTERISTICS: Resource Investigators are often enthusiastic, quick-off-the-mark extroverts. They are good at communicating with people both inside and outside the company. They are natural negotiators and are adept at exploring new opportunities and developing contacts. Although not a great source of original ideas, the RI is effective when it comes to picking up other people's ideas and developing them. As the name suggests, they are skilled at finding out what is available and what can be done. They usually receive a warm reception from others because of their own outgoing nature.

² Belbin, M. R. *Team Roles at Work*

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RIs have relaxed personalities with a strong inquisitive sense and a readiness to see the possibilities in anything new. However, unless they remain stimulated by others, their enthusiasm rapidly fades.

FUNCTION: RIs are good at exploring and reporting back on ideas, developments or resources outside the group. They are the best people to set up external contacts and to carry out any subsequent negotiations. They have an ability to think on their feet and to probe others for information.

COORDINATORS (CO)

CHARACTERISTICS: The distinguishing feature of Coordinators is their ability to work towards shared goals. Mature, trusting and confident, they delegate readily. In interpersonal relations they are quick to spot individual talents and to use them in the pursuit of group objectives. While COs are not necessarily the cleverest members of a team, they have a broad and worldly outlook and generally command respect.

FUNCTION: COs are well placed when put in charge of a team of people with diverse skills and personal characteristics. They perform better in dealing with colleagues of near or equal rank than in directing junior subordinates. Their motto might well be 'consultation with control' and they usually believe in tackling problems calmly. In some settings COs are inclined to clash with Shapers due to their contrasting management styles.

SHAPERS (SH)

CHARACTERISTICS: Shapers are highly motivated people with a lot of nervous energy and a great need for achievement. Usually they are aggressive extroverts and possess strong drive. SHs like to challenge others and their concern is to win. They like to lead and to push others into action. If obstacles arise, they find a way round. Headstrong and assertive, they tend to show strong emotional response to any form of disappointment or frustration. SHs are single-minded and argumentative and may lack interpersonal understanding. Theirs is the most competitive team role.

FUNCTION: SHs generally make good managers because they generate action and thrive under pressure. They are excellent at sparking life into a team and are very useful in groups where political complications are apt to slow things down; SHs are inclined to rise above problems of this kind and forge ahead regardless. They are well suited to making necessary changes and do not mind taking unpopular decisions. As the name implies, they try to impose some shape or pattern on group discussion or activities. They are probably the most effective members of a team in guaranteeing positive action.

COMPLETER-FINISHERS (CF)

CHARACTERISTICS: Completer-Finishers have a great capacity for follow-through and attention to detail. They are unlikely to start anything that they cannot finish. They are motivated by internal anxiety, yet outwardly they may appear unruffled. Typically, they are introverted and require little way in the way of external stimulus or incentive. CFs can be intolerant of those with a casual disposition. They are not often keen on delegating, preferring to tackle all tasks themselves.

FUNCTION: CFs are invaluable where tasks demand close concentration and high degree of accuracy. They foster a sense of urgency within a team and are good at meeting schedules. In management they excel by the high standards to which they aspire, and by their concern for precision, attention to detail and follow-through.

TEAM WORKERS (TW)

CHARACTERISTICS: Team Workers are the most supportive members of a team. They are mild, sociable and concerned about others. They have a great capacity for flexibility and adapting to different situations and people. TWs are perceptive and diplomatic. They are good listeners and are generally popular members of a group. They operate with sensitivity at work, but they may be indecisive in crunch situations.

FUNCTION: The role of a TW is to prevent interpersonal problems arising within a team and thus allow all team members to contribute effectively. Not liking friction, they will go to great lengths to avoid it. It is not uncommon for TWs to become senior managers especially if line managers are dominated by Shapers. This creates a climate in which the diplomatic and perceptive skills of a TW become real assets, especially under a managerial regime where conflicts are liable to arise or to be artificially suppressed. TW managers are seen as a threat to no one and therefore the most accepted and favoured people to serve under. Team workers have a lubricating effect on teams. Morale is better and people seem to co-operate better when they are around.

MONITOR EVALUATORS (ME)

CHARACTERISTICS: Monitor Evaluators are serious-minded, prudent individuals with a built-in immunity from being over enthusiastic. They are slow in making decisions preferring to think things over. Usually they have a high critical thinking ability. They have a capacity for shrewd judgements that take all factors into account. A good ME is seldom wrong.

FUNCTION: MEs are best suited to analysing problems and evaluating ideas and suggestions. They are good at weighing up the pro's and con's of options. To many outsiders the ME may appear dry, boring or even over-critical. Some people are surprised that they become managers. Nevertheless,

many ME's occupy strategic posts and thrive in high-level appointments. In some jobs success or failure hinges on a relatively small number of crunch decisions. This is ideal territory for an ME; for the man who is never wrong is the one who scores in the end.

IMPLEMENTERS (IMP)

CHARACTERISTICS: Implementers have practical common sense and a good deal of self-control and discipline. They favour hard work and tackle problems in a systematic fashion. On a wider front the IMP is person whose loyalty and interest lie with the company and who is less concerned with the pursuit of self-interest. However, IMPs may lack spontaneity and show signs of rigidity.

FUNCTION: IMPs are useful to an organisation because of their reliability and capacity for application. They succeed because they are efficient and because they have sense of what is feasible and relevant. It is said that many executives only do the jobs they wish to do and neglect those tasks which are distasteful. By contrast, an IMP will do what needs to be done. Good IMPs often progress to high management positions by virtue of good organisational skills and competency in tackling tasks.

SPECIALISTS (SP)

CHARACTERISTICS: Specialists are dedicated individuals who pride themselves on acquiring technical skills and specialized knowledge. Their priorities centre on maintaining professional standards and on furthering and defending their own field. While they show great pride in their own subject, they usually lack interest in other's fields. Eventually, the SP becomes the expert by sheer commitment along a narrow front. There are a few people who have either the single-mindedness or the aptitude to become a first-class SP.

FUNCTION: SPs have an indispensable part to play in some teams, for they provide the rare skill upon which the firm's service or product is based. As managers, they command support because they know more about their subject than anyone else and can usually be called upon to make decisions based on in-depth experience.

1.4. Interpersonal Communication (Advocacy/Inquiry)

Advocacy and inquiry is useful tool for improving communication. The term advocacy refers to making our thinking process visible and publicly testing our conclusions and assumptions through the use of the following three techniques:

- Giving examples to illustrate thinking;
- Sharing the data or steps used to reach conclusions; and

- Thinking systemically.

In advocacy, the person providing the information recognizes that others may have a different view.

Inquiry involves asking others to make their thinking process visible. It too involves three techniques, as follows:

- Encouraging challenges;
- Probing others' thinking; and
- Seeking others' views.

To use advocacy and inquiry well you need to present your own position and ideas clearly and persuasively, and you need to understand other people's messages.

Every individual enters into communication with a unique perspective that is influenced by a variety of factors: culture, personality, mood, context, experience, education and professional training, to mention only a few. These influences all combine in the form of conscious reasoning and unconscious assumptions. Because we each bring unique perspectives into a dialogue, effective communication requires a balancing of advocacy with inquiry. This kind of open and non-critical communication is effective precisely because it allows all parties involved to learn.

The table below summarizes the key attributes of advocacy and inquiry.

Advocacy	Inquiry
Stating <i>my</i> point of view	Trying to understand <i>someone else's</i> point of view
About <i>me</i> <i>my perspective, opinions, objectives, etc</i>	About <i>you (the other)</i> <i>your perspective, opinions, objectives, etc.</i>
Wanting to be <i>understood</i>	Wanting to <i>understand</i>
<i>Stating</i> assumptions	<i>Suspending</i> assumptions
"Here's what I have to say, and here's why I say it"	"What would lead you to say that?"
Most of us do this naturally/automatically	For most of us this requires awareness/intentionality

You demonstrate effective advocacy when you:

- State your own assumptions;
- Explain your reasoning;
- Describe the context;
- Give examples;

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- Invite testing of your assertions;
- Reveal where you are least clear or least sure of your assertions; and
- Refrain from defensiveness.

You demonstrate effective inquiry when you sincerely:

- Gently probe to understand;
- Draw out the other person's reasoning;
- Explain your reasons for inquiring;
- Ask for examples;
- Check your understanding;
- Listen with an open mind; and
- Refrain from preparing to destroy the other person's agenda or promote your own agenda.

It's tempting to think that speaking is advocacy and that asking questions is inquiry. Unfortunately, reality is more complex than that. It's possible to be in advocacy mode while asking questions (using leading questions to try to confirm your point, for instance), as well as to be in advocacy mode while listening (preparing your answer, for example).

Most of us have more practice advocating than we do inquiring. This is especially true for men who have often been raised in cultures that reward strong advocacy behaviour. Even when we think we're inquiring because we're asking a question, we're often actually trying to discredit the other person's perspective in favour of our own.

Inquiry is more difficult because it requires us to suspend our own thinking and judgment long enough to truly understand the thinking of others from their perspectives. Listening to others also means listening to our own automatic reactions to others. An emotionally intelligent individual has well-developed inquiry and advocacy skills.

We all recognize low-quality advocacy: the report that consists of a few general headlines that leave the listener with more questions than answers about what happened, a project leader who uses such technical jargon about his or her work that no one knows for sure what the project is about, the focus on irrelevancies that obscure the key issue. There is a tendency in groups to tolerate these things as personal foibles of the speakers and sit in quiet ignorance as no information gets across. However, these practices are precisely the opportunities you can use to strengthen your communication skills, as well as those of the team.

High-quality advocacy takes place when a message is clear in and of itself and the listener understands how the speaker came to hold the position advocated and how the message is relevant

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to his or her own work. A quality message is always tailored to the audience to which it is being delivered. High-quality advocacy reveals the thinking behind your point of view and offers examples.

We have also all experienced low-quality or lazy inquiry: the meeting in which no one has any questions and then participants mutter on the way out that they can't understand what's going on; comments disguised as questions: "But can you give us some idea why on earth you visited 'ABC' anyway?"; and questions that lead the group off on a tangent.

High-quality inquiry explores others' thinking or assumptions and suspends judgment. Because we naturally tend to advocate more than we inquire, we may have to sustain inquiry mode longer than feels natural if we want to achieve high-quality inquiry. A single question-and-answer exchange is rarely deep enough to qualify as high-quality inquiry. The techniques described in the section on active listening will help you improve the quality of your inquiry.

Balance is the key

There are, of course, many roles people can play in conversation. There are probably a dozen distinct combinations of varying levels of inquiry and advocacy, each with a different impact.

Consider the following matrix which provides a practical categorization of advocacy and inquiry, and illustrates effective and ineffective uses of both:

	High	Explaining Imposing	Mutual learning Constructive Dialogue
ADVOCACY		Observing Withdrawing	Interviewing Interrogating
	Low	Low	High
		INQUIRY	

Adapted from www.actiondesign.com

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- High advocacy, low inquiry is one-way communication even if both people are doing it. It can be useful for providing information. It makes it hard to understand what causes different perspectives to develop or to build commitment to a course of action.
- High inquiry, low advocacy is one-way in a different sense: the speaker does not state his or her views. It can be useful as a way of finding out information or of giving ample time to let someone fully express their perspective or thinking. It can create difficulty when the speaker has a hidden agenda or is using questions to get the other person to discover what the speaker already thinks is right.
- Low inquiry, low advocacy is also one-way communication: people watch but contribute little. This is okay when being an observer is useful. It can create difficulty when people withhold their views on key issues and cover this up by staying on safe subjects (“Nice day we’re having, don’t you think?”).
- High advocacy, high inquiry fosters two-way communication and mutual learning. I state my views, you inquire into my views, and I invite you to state your views and I inquire into your views.

To engage effectively in inquiry and advocacy, four key practices are required:

- Listening: carefully, actively, responsively;
- Respecting other people: their right to their own opinion;
- Suspending your own judgment so that you can be truly open; and
- Voicing your point of view, your assumptions and the data behind them.

Balancing advocacy and inquiry is one way for individuals, by themselves, to start changing a large organization from within. You do not need any mandate, budget or approval to begin. You will almost always be rewarded with better relationships and a reputation for integrity.

Use this tool whenever a conversation offers you an opportunity to learn, for example, when a team is considering a difficult point that requires information and participation from everyone on the team.

1.5. Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Intellect, cognitive ability, technical knowledge and skills are only part of the requirements for being effective in the workplace. Without a corresponding measure of emotional intelligence, technical competence alone will not allow you to reach your full potential.

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What is emotional intelligence and why does it matter? It is the learned ability to perceive, understand and express your feelings accurately and control your feelings so they work for you, not against you. This involves knowing how you and others feel, as well as what to do about it. It also means knowing what feels good and what feels bad and knowing how to get from bad to good. A person with high emotional intelligence possesses emotional awareness, sensitivity and the skills needed for long-term happiness and the ability to make others happy.

Why is emotional intelligence important? The nature of work has changed dramatically and has become increasingly complex. Individuals and organizations are all dealing with rapid change and the rising stress levels that accompany it. More and more, organizations are recognizing that how you feel about what you know and do is as important to individual performance as what you know and do. Researchers have found that emotional intelligence is twice as important as either technical or intellectual skills for successful performance of most jobs.

Emotional intelligence is based on the two major intelligences we need to be successful. The first is intrapersonal intelligence; this is the internally focussed intelligence we use to know, understand and motivate ourselves. The second is interpersonal intelligence; this is the externally focussed intelligence we use to read, sense, understand and manage relationships with others.

What is the effect of emotional intelligence on others? Emotions are contagious – other people’s emotions affect your emotions, and your emotions affect others. For example, perpetually pessimistic and negative colleagues seem to infect everyone around with a sense of negativity.

We affect each other’s emotions not only through such resonances, but also through our skills of self-management and relationship management. People react when a supervisor or a colleague loses his or her temper, stomps around the office, slams the door and raises his or her voice when speaking to those present. Everyone present would probably react both physically and emotionally to such lack of self-management. Here are some possible reactions to such behaviour:

Physical reactions

Increased heart rate
Increased blood pressure
Face flushing
Looking away or down
Sweating

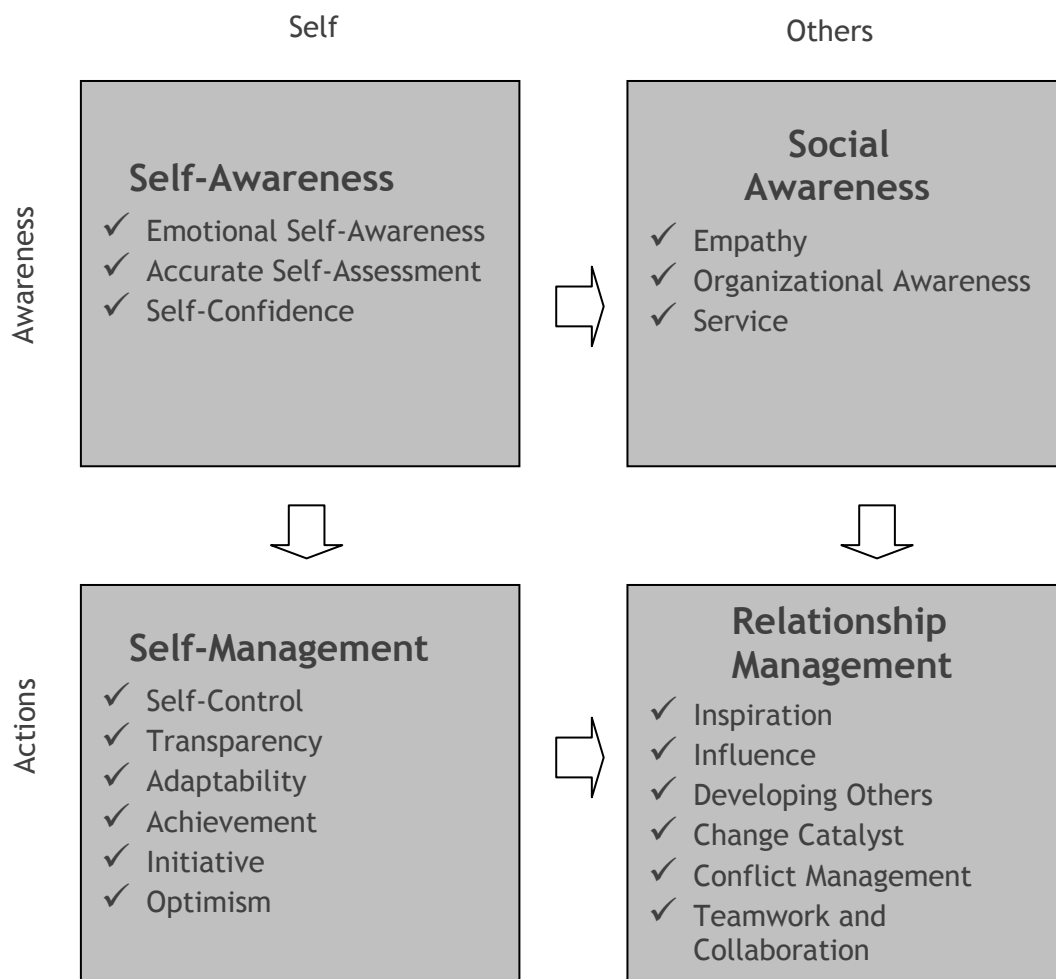
Emotional reactions

Lack of respect for the person
Embarrassment
Dislike for the person
Desire to leave
Anger

How do you measure emotional intelligence? Just as technical skills are best measured through well-defined competencies, so too is emotional intelligence. It isn’t enough to say that a person is really

good at handling his or her emotions. We need to use emotional competencies as a measure. Nearly all of these are already incorporated into the WHO competency model and are consistent with it.

Emotional intelligence has four domains, and each domain contains its own emotional competencies. Two domains are intrapersonal, focussed on the self: the first intrapersonal domain is related to awareness, the second to actions. The last two domains are focused on others, again with one domain each related to awareness and actions. The accompanying graphic shows each domain and its associated emotional competencies.



Of course, the four domains are closely linked. For example, you can't manage your emotions very well if you aren't aware of them. And if your emotions are out of control, they will certainly affect your relationships with others. Self-awareness facilitates both social awareness and self-management, and these two together make effective relationship management possible. Emotional intelligence, then, is built on a foundation of self-awareness. Yet self-awareness is the most overlooked domain in most work settings.

Self-awareness

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Self-awareness involves having a deep understanding of your emotions, your strengths, your limitations, your values and your motives—as well as their effects on others. People who are self-aware are honest with themselves about how they are—neither overly self-critical nor naively confident. Self-aware people know what feels right to them, and they act on it with no regrets. People with good self-awareness usually find their work satisfying and energizing.

The emotional competencies of self-aware individuals enable them to act with conviction and authenticity. Here are the competencies:

Emotional self-awareness	Can read your own emotions and recognize their impact on yourself and others. Can use your gut sense to guide decision making
Accurate self-assessment	Know your own strengths. Know your own limitations
Self-confidence	Have a sound sense of your own self-worth and capabilities

Self-management

From self-awareness flows self-management. If you can't recognize what you're feeling (and especially if you can't recognize the feelings that drive your behaviour), you can't manage your feelings (or your behaviour). And if that happens, your emotions are in control. This may not cause problems when a positive emotion such as enthusiasm is involved, but no one who wants to be personally effective can risk being controlled by a negative emotion such as frustration, anxiety or a fear of failure.

Self-management is the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, as well as the ability to suspend judgment – to think before acting. Self-management is like an inner dialogue that frees you from being a prisoner of your feelings and gives you the mental clarity demanded for effectiveness. It also maintains positive resonance with those around you.

These are the emotional competencies associated with self-management:

Emotional self-control	Keep disruptive emotions and impulses under control
Transparency	Display honesty, integrity and trustworthiness
Adaptability	Show flexibility in adapting to changing situations and overcoming obstacles
Achievement	Demonstrate a drive to improve your performance to meet your own inner standards of excellence
Initiative	Demonstrate readiness to act and seize opportunities
Optimism	See the positive possibilities in events

Social awareness

Social awareness is the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people, to recognize their needs and to contribute to meeting those needs. Being aware of our own feelings and effectively managing them is a good start toward emotional intelligence, but we do not exist in a vacuum and must constantly interact with others.

Empathy – the ability to read another person’s emotional state – is the fundamental element of social awareness. Empathy is not the same as sympathy, which is more sharing the feelings of another. The sympathetic person thinks, ‘Oh, she hurts so I hurt with her’ while the empathetic person thinks, ‘Oh, it looks as if she’s hurting. I wonder how I can best respond to her?’ Empathy involves accurately recognizing and responding appropriately to the feelings of others without necessarily feeling the same emotions yourself. It is this tuning-in ability that enables an emotionally intelligent individual to inspire others by catching their common dream, articulating it and triggering a sweep of positive emotion.

Empathy is the greatest requirement for real social effectiveness at work. It makes you approachable, helps you listen well and helps you identify the emotional messages that so often lie beneath the words. It makes the people who interact with you feel understood and accepted.

In addition to empathy, social awareness includes the emotional competencies of organizational awareness and service:

Empathy	Sense others’ emotions, understand their perspective and take active interest in their concerns
Organizational awareness	Read trends, decision networks and politics at the organizational level
Service	Recognize and meet client needs

Relationship management

Managing relationships skilfully essentially involves managing other people’s emotions by being attuned to your own and being able to empathize with others. The first requirement is authenticity – acting from your true core values. People are quick to pick up on any note of falseness and to become distrusting at any hint that they are being manipulated. Friendliness is important, but managing relationships is more than just being socially skilled.

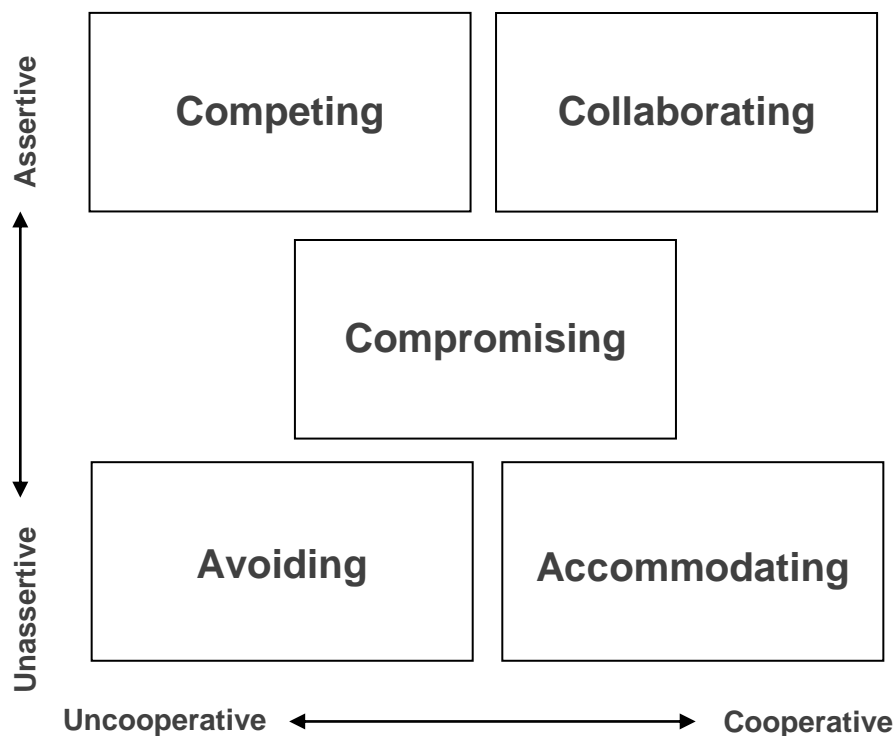
Here are the emotional competencies associated with relationship management:

Inspiration	Raise people’s spirits by stating or embodying a purpose and values that resonate with them
Influence	Use a range of tactics that others find persuasive
Developing others	Take a genuine interest in the goals of others, offering feedback and support
Change catalyst	Initiate, manage and lead in new directions
Conflict management	Understand differing perspectives, help find common ground that others can endorse
Teamwork and collaboration	Contribute to an atmosphere of friendly congeniality, acting as a model of respect, helpfulness and cooperation. Cultivate and maintain relationships.

2. Conflict Resolution

2.1. Conflict Management Styles

There are five conflict management styles



The five styles vary along two scales: how assertive the style is and how cooperative the style is:

Competing: When you pursue your concerns at the other person's expense. This is a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to advance your position.

Collaborating: This involves trying to work with another person to find a solution that fully satisfies both your concerns. It means digging into an issue to identify the underlying concerns of the two individuals and finding an alternative that meets both sets of concerns.

Compromising: The objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties. It falls on a middle ground between competing and accommodating. Compromising might mean splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position.

Avoiding: You do not immediately pursue your own concerns or those of the other person. You do not address the conflict. Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or withdrawing from a threatening situation. There is a chance, however, that the underlying conflict will return.

Accommodating: When accommodating, you don't focus on your own concerns but instead on satisfying the concerns of others. There is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode. Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's orders when one would prefer not to or just feeling the battle is not worth the outcome.

Conflict Styles: When to Use Which³

Response	Uses	Limitations
<p>Competing</p> <p>Pursuing personal concerns at another's expense. Can mean standing up for your own or others' rights, defending a position that you believe is correct, or simply trying to win.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When immediate action is needed • When principles or rights are at stake • When rules must be enforced or challenged • To maintain stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidates people so they are afraid to admit problems and give you important information • May harm relationship when others' needs are not considered • Atrophy of gifts in others • Stagnation

³ Open Source Leadership Strategies, Inc. (Adapted from The Thomas- Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and Ron Kraybill's Personal Style Inventory).

<p>Collaborating</p> <p>Working with someone by exploring your disagreement, generating alternatives, and finding a solution that mutually satisfies the concerns of both parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can result in creative decisions that are legitimate, as well as stronger relationships • Helpful when you need a decision that addresses the concerns of both parties to achieve long-term stability • Others blossom and develop new gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not as helpful for minor decisions or when time is limited • Cannot happen when there is an imbalance of power or when resources do not allow a true collaborative effort • May not work when questions of right and wrong need to be resolved • Analysis paralysis
<p>Compromising</p> <p>Seeking a middle ground by “splitting the difference”. The solution partially satisfies (and partially dissatisfies) both parties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fast decision making on minor disagreements • When all else fails • When finding some solution is better than stalemate • When two parties of equal strength are committed to mutually exclusive goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Losing sight of larger issues and values and possibly not pleasing anyone • A more creative solution may be missed by a rush to give in • May lead to mediocrity and blandness • Possibly unprincipled agreements • Not appropriate if important principles are at stake • Likelihood of patching symptoms and ignoring root causes
<p>Avoiding</p> <p>Not addressing the conflict, either by withdrawing from the situation or postponing the issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When confronting is too dangerous or damaging • When a situation requires “cooling off” • When you need more time to prepare • When an issue is unimportant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues may never get addressed • May lead to explosions of pent-up anger • Slow death of relationships through stagnation and dullness • Loss of accountability • Your view might make a difference in the resolution
<p>Accommodating</p> <p>Yielding to another person’s point of view; paying attention to their concerns and neglecting your own.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you see that you are wrong • When the issue is of little importance to you • When you want harmony to build the relationship or credits toward a more important issue • Demonstrates self-discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may never get your concerns addressed • Resentments may build • Stunted growth of personal gifts • Denies others benefit of healthy confrontation

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How would you handle the following situation? Choose the conflict handling style that you think would be the most appropriate. Each example requires a different approach. Choose the best match.

1	I cannot believe it. How can she give me such a bad performance appraisal? She said I am not working hard enough and am de-motivated. That might be true, but she should realize it's because she micro-manages and gives all the good tasks to others in the team. Why does she tell me this now? We have never had a proper performance discussion. She has never made clear her expectations and she is so hard to talk to. How shall I deal with this?	<input type="checkbox"/> Competing <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating <input type="checkbox"/> Compromising <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodating
2	You are in a meeting in which the most senior person in the room makes a suggestion which you know will simply not work. You feel strongly about this and would like to make the point that it will not work. You have lots of reasons. Why is it, you wonder, that senior managers never consult the technical staff about the viability of a project? In any case, when the idea is raised at the Management Board you know it will not be approved.	<input type="checkbox"/> Competing <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating <input type="checkbox"/> Compromising <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodating
3	I wish the proposal from the consultants had been under \$20,000. Now I will have to prepare a request for a waiver of competitive bidding in order to comply with the financial rules and I have enough to do. So much bureaucracy, but I know if I don't do it that it will come back to haunt me one day. In any case, I believe firmly that one should adhere to financial rules, not only for risk of being audited, but because it is the correct thing to do. My supervisor insists however that I split the contract into two parts to avoid the inconvenience and delay in following the waiver request process. What should I do in relation to my supervisor's request.	<input type="checkbox"/> Competing <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating <input type="checkbox"/> Compromising <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodating
4	This is the fourth time we have met on this subject. The amount of time we have spent on this is enormous. It is certainly an important issue and critical for the effective functioning of the team. There seems to be a split between the "old timers" in the work unit and the staff who have joined in recent years. Rather odd and I suppose if we wanted to spend more time exploring the reasons we could, but not this year with the exceptional emergency in which we find ourselves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Competing <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating <input type="checkbox"/> Compromising <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodating
5	There has been a restructuring in the office and your whole work unit is being moved to a new floor at head office. You will be moving to another country office after some months and were looking forward in the meantime to a room on the shaded side of the building. You discover that your colleague, who will be your main interlocutor when you are abroad, also wants the office on which you have your eye. Your supervisor proposes you draw straws.	<input type="checkbox"/> Competing <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborating <input type="checkbox"/> Compromising <input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodating

2.2. Negotiation Skills

To transform destructive conflict into a dispute with a positive outcome, it is necessary to explore some of the major causes of disputes. In this section we will:

- Seek to understand the causes of workplace conflicts - relationship issues, data matters, value differences, structural factors, and incompatible interests; and
- Identify strategies for addressing conflicts arising from each of these areas

The Circle of Conflict

Conflict is a frequent precursor to negotiation. In fact, the reason we enter negotiations is because we have unmet needs, or interests, and we believe that the other negotiator has some ability to fulfil those interests. The conflict cannot be transformed or settled without these needs being addressed in some way. Needs do not exist in a vacuum, however. They are embedded in a constellation of other forces - value differences, relationships problems, data disputes and structural obstacles - that often escalate conflict and obscure the parties' real needs.

The Circle of Conflict represents the major factors that make a situation conflictual. It is a framework to help us figure out what is going on in a conflict, and what can we do to help solve it. It includes an "inner circle" and an "outer circle."

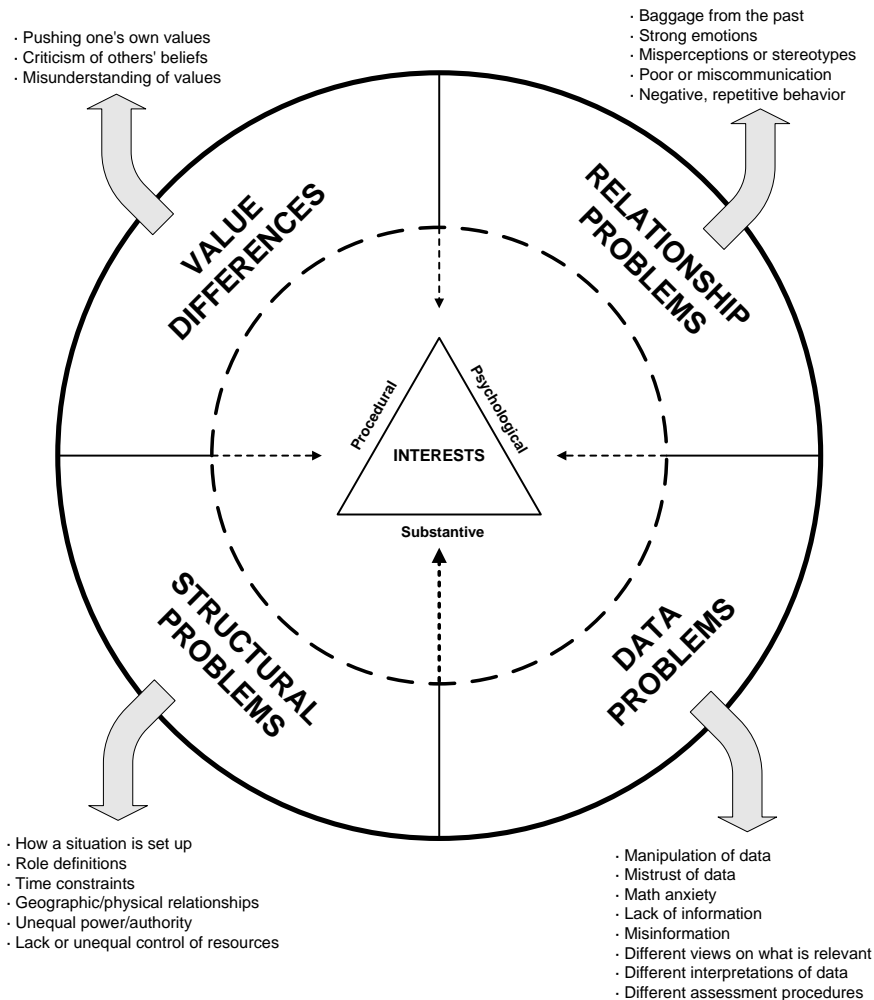
The "outer circle" has little to do with the desire for a particular outcome and won't be satisfied by a good solution. It refers to those ways that problems are manifested that often cloud the issues, and create barriers or obstacles that interfere with the discussion of them.

Parties who are primarily dealing with the "outer circle" are struggling with emotions, relationships, structural concerns, misinformation, and values. Until these are dealt with, a more rational approach to problem solving will be difficult.

It is important to work through the "outer circle" - relationship, data, structure, and value problems - so that people can focus on the "inner circle" and be more effective problem solvers.

The "inner circle" represents those things individuals can reach agreement about. These are substantive, procedural, and psychological interests. The triangle at the centre of the "inner circle" illustrates the three sets of needs or interests you and another party need satisfied in order to reach an agreement.

CIRCLE OF CONFLICT



The “Outer Circle” - the Sources of Conflict

Let's take a look at the different sources of conflict, define them and see how they might apply to your work. After that, we will look at possible strategies for reducing conflict related to each of these elements. Finally, we will look at the procedural, substantive and psychological/relationship needs that must be addressed in order to satisfy the parties.

Relationship Problems

Conflicts are often characterized by a negative history with the person with whom we are in conflict, the presence of strong emotions, conflicting personal styles, misperceptions or stereotypes, poor communication, and negative repetitive behaviour. These often fuel a dispute and distract the parties from problem-solving. Each of us can identify someone with whom we just have a hard time communicating or problem solving. Often these are people who we find irritating and

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who perhaps find us irritating. Sometimes we can identify specific events that have created a bad history, but not always. Diversity can also create or contribute to relationship problems. Let's look at some of the common types of relationship problems.

Negative history: Parties to a conflict often have a history of interactions. If these interactions include discussions or negotiations that have gone poorly, or if one of the parties has failed to maintain a past commitment, any future interaction can be coloured by this history.

Strong emotions: Feelings are triggered both by present circumstances and reminders of past events. By reducing our ability to listen, think clearly, or speak in a way that can be 'heard', strong emotions often reduce our ability to problem-solve effectively.

Misperceptions: Misperceptions about others can impact our willingness and ability to problem-solve collaboratively. One potential form of misperception is the stereotypes we have about Professional, Director, and General staff.

Poor communication or miscommunication: Failing to express our thoughts and feelings to others, or conversely, speaking without considering the impact our words will have on another or choosing an inappropriate time, location or form of communication (for example, using email when a face-to-face meeting is called for) can contribute to relationship conflicts.

Negative, repetitive behaviour: These are the things we do, often unconsciously, that make others uncomfortable. For example, allowing repeated interruptions during a meeting, even fidgeting during a meeting, can keep another party from being able to think clearly. What other behaviours drive you crazy?

Diversity: Culture, language, gender, age and other differences can also contribute to relationship problems. For example, the emotions that are considered acceptable and how they may be expressed vary tremendously across cultures. Actions that mean one thing among people of one group may be interpreted differently by members of another group. Lack of a shared or common language can likewise make it more difficult to accurately express thoughts and feelings.

In short, there are numerous relationship problems that can get in the way of problem solving. The goal is to get a relationship working for us, not against us, so that we can be our best selves. Later we will look at some specific strategies for managing relationship problems.

Value Differences

Values have to do with people's feelings about what is right and wrong, good and bad. When a conflict gets defined or experienced as an issue of values, it becomes more charged and intractable.

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Values are part of one's self-definition. If you feel your values are being attacked, you feel defensive; you do not want to be cooperative. We get caught up in our value differences and lose focus on the problem.

People can work together with quite different value systems. Value disputes arise when people attempt to force one set of values on others or do not allow for divergent beliefs. Some value differences are quite obvious, such as our differing religious beliefs or beliefs about marriage. It is easy to recognize when we are having a value disagreement and avoid discussions about them as it is very unlikely that we will be able to resolve them.

However, there are other value differences that are less obvious but that can engage us just as strongly. For example, one person may think that work is just a way to earn a paycheck to enable him or her to live his or her real life outside of work. Another person may see work as the source of his or her identity and self-worth. Put these two people together on a team, and you may find that the friction that occurs between them is largely due to this values difference.

Diversity also plays a role in value differences. For example, different cultures may have different norms around the topics that can be discussed openly, or how or to whom issues should be raised. Men, women, families, organizations, or whole communities may have different ideas about how transparent one should be about thoughts and plans, or they may differ as to what constitutes a successful outcome to a disagreement (e.g. compromise, winning, etc.).

Data Problems

People conflict a lot over data and information. Data conflicts create mistrust and often distract us from dealing with the real issue. Data problems can occur when:

- There is so much information, that we are overwhelmed;
- There is too little information, and we feel insecure in making decisions because of the lack of information to support our conclusions;
- Misinformation results in misperceptions and incorrect conclusions;
- There is disagreement over what is relevant information; and
- There is disagreement over what the data means.

Differences over data can also be influenced by diversity. Some individuals or groups may hold up data and especially scientific data to be the only appropriate basis for or a necessary input when addressing a conflict. Others may take a more intuitive or informal approach.

Structural Problems

Structural problems refer to the way a situation is set up. It includes processes and procedures within which we operate (and the forces underlying them), the structure of an organization, the physical layout or circumstances within which we operate, and many other factors, which are

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described below. When a structural problem occurs in a system, we often blame the person instead of the structure. But the structure creates problems for us that are totally independent of people's good will, people skills, good communication skills, etc.

What are examples of structures that can automatically set people up as adversaries? They include:

- Resource or time constraints. You are more likely to experience tension and conflict when you have insufficient staff, time, or other resources to do work.
- Decision making procedures that are adversarial in nature (courts, arbitration, voting). Each party is concerned primarily or solely with his/her needs. 'Being a team player' is unlikely to be rewarded (and could be punished).
- Geography. For example, the ability or inability for people to deal with each other face-to-face. Much communication is nonverbal. When people cannot interact in person, there is more opportunity for miscommunication.
- Roles. For example, unclear role definitions can result in being expected to manage a team without the needed support or the right level of authority.
- Rules. Legal procedures, "the contract." For example, organizational rules that favour some groups over others regarding hiring can create conflict.

"Outer Circle" Strategies

We use different interventions when people are in the "outer circle" versus when they are in the "inner circle." When there are a lot of relationship issues, strong feelings, confusion about data and/or values differences, we use communication skills to deal with people's psychological needs. We listen a lot and focus on the relationship until people have worked through those issues enough to productively problem solve. When people are in the "inner circle", they tend to speak in a linear fashion and are able to be concrete and future-oriented. Then we can use logic and linear problem-solving processes. Below are several strategies that you can use for addressing some of the "outer circle" sources of conflict.

Relationship Conflicts

When we are aware that our conflict with someone goes beyond a difference about a particular issue or decision and in fact reflects a troubled relationship, it is helpful to think about what characterizes this relationship and to consider how we can address these problems. Sometimes we may choose to avoid interacting with someone with whom we have an ongoing relationship problem, but if we need to work with them or if we are responsible for supervising them, this is usually not wise or even possible. Some specific approaches that we can use to address different kinds of relationship problems include:

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Negative history: We can sometimes choose to wall off the past and focus on the future (“to let bygones be bygones”). We have to ask ourselves whether we can genuinely let go of past grievances, and of course we can’t control whether the other people involved are willing to let it go. But sometimes, especially if the problem does not keep repeating itself, we can decide to let go of a negative history.

More often, however, it is useful to find a time and approach to talking about the past, to “clear the air.” This usually involves letting each person tell their story about how they perceived what happened and to clarify what were the intentions and motives that underlay the behaviour that was a problem. Sometimes it is advisable to ask for the help of a third party to facilitate this discussion.

Strong emotions: Expressing strong emotions can be very challenging. We often want to walk away from them or shut them down. But being willing to recognise these emotions is often the key to improving a relationship. Sometimes it is useful to provide an opportunity for venting, but at other times it may be better to call a “time out” to allow people to cool down before trying to talk about the conflict. For any of us who are feeling strong emotions, particularly anger or fear, it may help if we can experience someone else’s understanding and empathy. Acknowledging others’ feelings in a kind and empathic manner often helps de-escalate a highly emotional conflict. Sometimes, it is helpful to set ground rules that can guide how strong emotions are expressed (e.g. about language, personal attacks, threatening statements). The key to dealing with strong emotions is to find an adequate way of dealing with the feelings so they are neither ignored nor allowed to escalate out of control. According to Goleman⁴, while some research suggests that there is a genetic component to emotional intelligence, emotional skills can be learned. Emotional intelligence increases with age - it’s called maturity.

Personal style: Everyone has different personal styles for dealing with conflict, problem solving, and stress. Often, however, we do not understand that our style is not everyone’s style and that sometimes different styles can cause conflict. For example, some people chose to handle a conflict by avoidance and others by taking charge. If you are having a conflict with a colleague, you might like to suggest that they use the Thomas-Kilmann model to reflect on their preferred style and then share your results with each other and have a discussion about your different styles.

Misperceptions or stereotypes: We all carry around stereotypes or misperceptions of each other. In general, it is important for us to become aware of our own stereotypes of others. To the extent that you can engage in a genuine discussion of your perceptions and misperceptions, and encourage others to do so as well, you have a real opportunity to improve relationships. We want to think of people as individuals, and we want them to think of us as in that way as well. Diversity training and

⁴ Goleman, Daniel, What makes a leader, Harvard Business Review 1998

awareness can help all of us in this in this respect. Getting to know each other as people and not just as members of a group can also help. Letting others get to know more about who we are outside of the role they see us in can also be important.

Communication problems: This is of course a key part of almost all conflict. Good interpersonal communication skills and active listening are essential skills. As a general rule, we need to be willing to spend time and energy on communicating with people we are in conflict with and to “seek to understand” before we “seek to explain.”⁵

Negative, repetitive behavior: Each of us engages in certain behaviours that can be irritating to others (tapping a pencil, rolling our eyes, interrupting, pointing at someone, being late for meetings etc.), and in turn there are behaviours that others engage in that can be annoying to us. The first step in dealing with this is to become aware of what behaviours annoy us and what we may be doing that annoys others. If we can change these behaviours, that may help to defuse a conflict. It also is useful to acknowledge the impact our behaviour may be having on others and to explain the impact his or her behavior may be having on us.

Value Conflicts

Value conflict can be the most difficult to resolve because people do not readily compromise on their most deeply held beliefs. However, often a dispute that is presented as a values conflict is not really at its core about values. For example, a long term employee who has been passed over for a promotion may present the issue in terms of the organizations failure to value long term employees or fair hiring processes, but the more significant issue may be a concern about money, job responsibilities, career advancement, or travel opportunities. On the other hand, sometimes what appears to be a different kind of conflict, for example about job assignments, may in fact be covering up a genuine conflict about values.

Therefore, identifying the extent to which values are at the center of a conflict is the first thinks we need to do in order to deal with them. Several clues can alert us to the degree to which values may be involved in a conflict:

- The use of value laden language (e.g. “its not right”, “What you are doing is wrong” or “unfair”)
- Invoking “venerable sources”: (“The Bible says”; “my mother warned me”; “ the charter of human rights says”)
- Predicting dire consequences (“If we do that, this whole project will fail;” “This team can’t survive if...”)

⁵ Covey, Stephen. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and Senge, Peter. The Fifth Discipline.

- Uncharacteristic rigidity (“I absolutely refuse to even consider...”)

While all of these can be present for other reasons as well (feelings of powerlessness, fear, extreme emotions), they are signs that we should at least ask ourselves what value differences may be involved. If we can identify the value differences involved, there are several steps that we can take to address these:

State values in positive terms: Ask people to express their values, in terms of what they believe in (as opposed to against). Do the same for your values. When values are stated in positive terms, it is easier to find areas of value congruence.

Affirm the values: That is, appreciate the importance of the value to the person. Do not ask people to change their values and don’t argue about whose value is right or should take precedence. Instead, ask that an effort be made to find an acceptable solution that will not require people to compromise their values.

Reframe to interests: Reframe the issue as a disagreement about interests not values. (Rather than “what is right or who is right” discuss “what is important to each of you,” or “what concerns you each have.”)

Focus on solutions: Focus on areas of agreement and on solutions rather than on the differences you may have.

Search for an overarching value: Find one that you both can agree to (e.g. “we both agree that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect”).

Agree to Disagree: Recognize you don’t need to agree on values to solve the problem. You can agree to disagree about values but seek to meet interests.

We also need to recognize that not only individuals but organizations have values and that these too can create conflict. All organizations have both formal and operational norms. Formal norms and values are the articulated and desired norms of the organization. They are usually codified in some way and they are the standards that an organization commits itself to and asks its staff to commit to as well. Operational norms and values are those that actually govern behaviour and decisions and are not necessarily stated or even recognized.

For example, some organizations formally advocate a collaborative approach to management, but in reality, are very hierarchical and top down in structure. Many organizations espouse equal treatment for all employees and merit based hiring procedures, but in practice preferential

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practices are followed. Organizations often set in place policies to encourage employees to report any incidents of harassment or discrimination without fear of retribution, but do not protect people from adverse practical consequences.

The success of an organization is often related to how much consistency exists between these formal and informal norms and values. There is always some tension and divergence, but if the formal and informal norms are very inconsistent, organizations are less able to carry out their mission and be successful. A wise manager is aware of both sets of norms, and is mindful of when they are in conflict with one another.

There are several things managers can do when there are differences in norms. Many of these are similar to the strategies discussed above. The manager can discuss the differences openly but constructively; specifically, s/he can:

- Try to understand the interests underlying the resistance to organizational norms and try to address these in a legitimate way.
- Find ways to bridge norms (e.g. finding overarching values, by understanding how apparently conflicting norms can both be present)
- Model appropriate norms
- Provide feedback to the organization and not encourage or abet informal norms that undercut organizational policy

Data Conflict

Disagreements about data often are almost always present in conflict. This is the case because there is nearly always some information or data that not all parties have or not all parties agree on. Even a conflict about which staff member should be given an important assignment can be framed in terms of data: Who was the last person that was given this opportunity? How does that opportunity compare to this one? How many more opportunities like this do we anticipate in the future? In fact, the underlying conflict probably has to do with interests - opportunities for personal or professional growth, for advancement, fairness. Resolving data issues, while they may (eventually) enable us to move to problem solving, also threaten to indefinitely delay it. Therefore, an important approach to dealing with what at least on the surface appear to be data conflicts is to clarify data needs. The following are some suggestions:

Focus on interests: The main question should be framed in terms of the interests of the parties involved. Interests can be addressed in many ways - some of which are less data-intensive than others.

Agree on what questions you want the data to answer: This allows the parties to focus on obtaining decision-relevant information and avoid gathering information that appears to diverge

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because it actually answers different questions. This approach also provides the parties with a concrete focus for integrating different information.

Agree on what information is needed (How much is enough?): It is important to make sure that the data are really necessary to reach a solution and that the individual or group is not merely obsessing over the data as a form of avoiding tough decisions.

Agree on a credible way of collecting the data: How data is collected can be critical. A Government study on criminal activity of asylum seekers is unlikely to be accepted at face value by non-government actors.

Agree on how to interpret the data: Clarifying how the data will be interpreted will often dictate what - or even whether - data needs to be collected. If a survey of employees indicates they are “dissatisfied” with their manager, will that be accepted as sufficient evidence that the manager is doing his or her job poorly?

Use a third party: Set up a data reconciliation group: It may be necessary for disputants to choose a mutually acceptable third party to collect or interpret data. If there are multiple sources of conflicting data, it may be helpful to assign a representative group to reconcile the differences.

Structural Conflict

Structures can contribute to or minimizing conflicts or to making them worse. This not only includes organizational structures but organizational procedures and processes beyond the influence of the contractual parties. An important first step in analyzing a problem is to identify the structural problem and separate it from the people involved. For example, in UNHCR, there are a limited number of potential P-5 positions and there are possibly many more qualified applicants than available slots. In this situation, it may be easy to blame one’s manager or organizational decision makers for overlooking you or someone in your unit. In fact, the problem may be primarily structural in nature.

Following are some other approaches to structural conflict:

Explore whether the structure is conflict producing: Some structures are inherently conflict-sensitive or integrative; others are conflict-producing. For example, individual reward systems for staff can encourage competition among them - which in some cases may be appropriate. In contrast, rewards that are given only when an entire group reaches a certain level of performance can encourage staff members to help one another.

Design or modify the structure so it supports the resolution of the situation rather than exacerbating it: For example, a meeting can be organized so that participants: have a clear idea of the ground rules for the meeting, its purpose, and the expected outcome or are left to muddle through; are encouraged to express their thoughts and concerns or forced to be aggressive; are encouraged to work in distinct groups and advocate for their interests or asked to look for common interests (for example, by having individual from different groups work together).

Identify what it is about the structure you can and cannot change: Use negotiation and problem-solving procedures to change what you can. Many structural sources of conflict cannot be changed - at least in the near term. It is important that a team identify and agree on what can and cannot be changed - in the short and long term - so that they can focus their problem-solving skills on factors that are within their area of influence. (This is similar to Stephen Covey's "circle of concern" and "circle of influence")

The "Inner Circle"

We have now reviewed several sources of conflict and strategies for addressing them. Remember that these sources of conflict are not at the heart of our problem-solving efforts; they are merely obstacles that must be addressed in order to get at the real interests involved.

Positions and interests⁶

The basic problem in negotiations lies not in conflicting positions, but in conflict between each side's needs, desires, concerns and fears. Such desires and concerns are interests. Interests motivate people and are often concealed behind the positions. Your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what caused you to decide in this manner.

When negotiators bargain over positions, they tend to lock themselves into those positions. The more you clarify your position and defend it against attack, the more committed you become to it. Your ego becomes identified with your position and your new interest is to save face, making a mutually satisfactory solution more difficult to achieve.

Reconciling interests rather than positions works for two reasons. First, for every interest there are usually several possible positions that could satisfy it. Second, behind opposed positions lie many more common interests than conflicting ones. We tend to assume that because the other person's position is opposed to ours, their interests must also be opposed. In many negotiations, however, a close examination of the underlying interests will reveal the existence of many more interests that are shared and compatible than ones that are opposed.

⁶ This section is taken from Fisher, R. and Ury, W. *Getting to Yes*, Penguin 1981

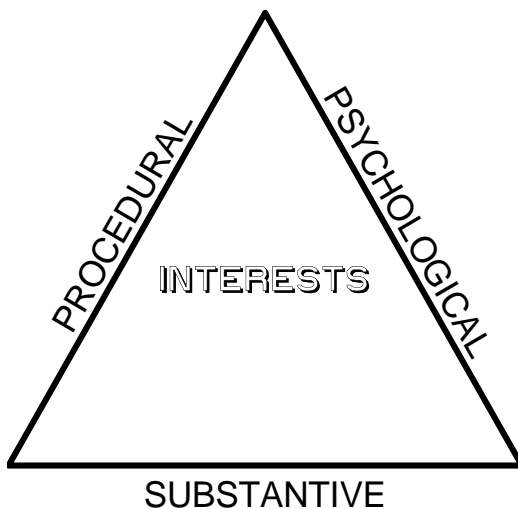
In search for the basic interests behind a declared position, look particularly for the concerns that motivate all people. If you can take care of such needs, you increase the chance of both reaching agreement, and if an agreement is reached, the other side keeping to it. Basic human needs include:

- Security
- Economic well-being
- A sense of belonging
- Recognition
- Control over ones's life

The triangle of satisfaction

At the centre of The Circle (and at the centre of cooperative or interest-based negotiation) is the Triangle of Satisfaction. The Triangle illustrates three sets of needs or interests you and another party will need to have satisfied in order to reach an agreement. These are substantive, procedural, and psychological interests.

TRIANGLE OF SATISFACTION



- Substantive interests relate to the more tangible benefits about which you are concerned. For example, when applying for a promotion, your substantive interests might be an increase in responsibilities and pay.
- Procedural interests relate to your concerns about a process or procedure for interacting, communicating or deciding—the process steps and elements you need in order to feel satisfied with a negotiation or decision making process. Using the example of applying for a promotion, your procedural interests could include your desire that the process of applying and being considered occur in a timely and orderly fashion, that you have an opportunity to talk face to face with person(s) making the decision, that someone who has a complaint with how you handled the process talk to you before complaining to your supervisor, and so on.

- Psychological interests refer to how you want to be treated and how you want to feel. You need to feel cared for, trusted, respected, be able to save face and maintain status. Failing to do so can create greater deadlocks than anything else. In the case of applying for a promotion, your psychological interests may be feeling that your qualifications are appreciated and that your application is welcomed. If you are turned down, it might be important that this is done in a way that allows you to save face. If you are hired, it will probably be important that you be welcome in your new position.

Keep in mind that, conscious or not, you and others may sometimes be more vocal about one kind of interest but be more genuinely motivated by another. Therefore, if you are careful to address psychological and procedural needs, you may achieve progress on substantive issues.

Summary

All conflict is multi-determined. That is, there are always multiple factors contributing to conflict. In order to be effective in dealing with conflict, a manager needs to decide what are the most important obstacles to moving forward in a constructive manner and then he or she needs to develop an approach for addressing those obstacles. In the end, a thorough and open examination of the various interests that underly a conflict is the most likely way that a successful resolution can be achieved. However, relational issues, data problems, value differences, and structural impediments must often be addressed before a calm and constructive approach to meeting everyone's interests can be undertaken.

Approaches to Negotiation

We will now look at how this model can be incorporated into your approach to negotiating. These can include, for example, situations in which you are negotiating with staff over what, how, and when tasks need completing or when you are negotiating with your implementing partners over project and administrative issues. As a point of comparison, we will begin this section with a discussion about Competitive Negotiation, a common approach to negotiating that is not concerned with interests. Next, we will look at Cooperative (or Collaborative) Negotiation. Because this approach emphasizes maintaining constructive relationships and addressing the interests of all involved, it tends to lead to more satisfying processes, more durable outcomes, and stronger relationships than other approaches.

1. Competitive Negotiation

You are probably already familiar with the competitive approaches to negotiation (often called positional bargaining). Indeed, this is the approach you have probably employed if you have ever bought a car. You might start by stating what you want (a certain model, colour, or price), and try convincing the other person, in this case, the dealer, that you should get what you want. The dealer also has a preferred solution (a higher price) and will argue in support of that solution. If you are skilled at competitive negotiation, you will probably start with an opening position significantly different (in this case lower) than you really expect to get. You expect to have to give in some, so you start low to give yourself some room to deal. You provide a low offer, the seller counters with an inflated price, and you go back and forth until a deal is reached -- or not.

What is Competitive Negotiation? Competitive negotiation assumes that the way to accomplish your goals is to gain a competitive advantage over the other party through the use of adversarial negotiation tactics. Competitive negotiations usually start with a proposed solution, generally referred to as an opening position. In this approach, you and the other party propose solutions to one another and make offers and counteroffers until you hit upon a solution that is acceptable to both of you (falls within your bargaining range).

For example, in a discussion of working hours, you may want one of your staff to begin work at 8:00 a.m. Your bottom line - the latest starting time you would accept - is 9:00 a.m. The staff person would like to begin work at 9:30 a.m. His bottom line - the earliest time he is willing to start work - is 8:30 a.m.

What is the bargaining range? It is the area that overlaps - here it is 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Any offer that falls within this range will probably result in a deal. Sometimes you will not have overlapping bottom lines; you will deadlock at your bottom lines, and no deal will be reached.

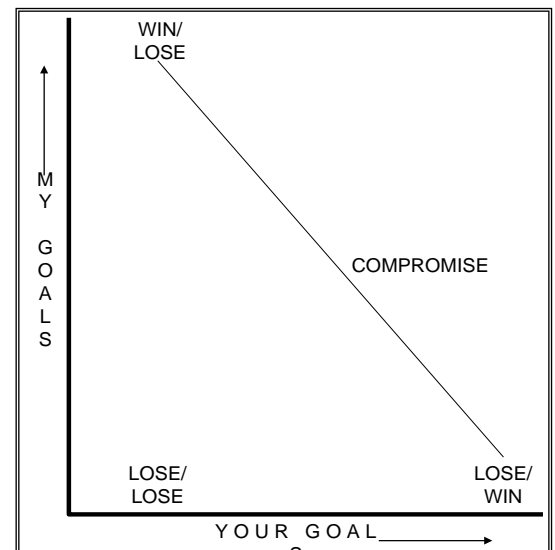
Attitudes of Competitive Negotiators. When you negotiate competitively, you are likely operating (consciously or unconsciously) under the following assumptions:

- The pie is limited
- Synergies are not explored
- A win for you = a loss for me
- You are opponents
- There is one right solution - yours
- You must stay on the offensive
- Conceding is a sign of weakness
- Relationships may be affected

When negotiating competitively, you use as much persuasion as possible to move the other person away from their opening position to a solution that is favourable to you. The tactics you use when negotiating competitively are listed and illustrated below using the example of the discussion about working hours.

- Bluffing - you suggest that the rules would prohibit starting past 9:00 AM
- Wearing down the other side - you put the staff member off repeatedly
- Devaluing what they are offering - you argue that working late is not as useful to the department as being present in the morning for whatever reason
- Threats - you threaten to withhold interesting assignments
- False praise - you tell them how much you value their timely arrival and work solely for the purpose of manipulating them

A win for you is a loss for me.



If your goal is to reach a win-win, or joint gain, and to encourage a positive relationship with the person with whom you are negotiating, you may need a different approach. To achieve this, you have to change the dynamic. Instead of competing against the other person, you need to join together to find solutions that result in gains for both of you. This is cooperative (also called collaborative or interest-based) negotiation.

2. Cooperative or Collaborative Negotiation

In cooperative or interest-based negotiation, you start by building a working relationship with the other party, not by stating a position. The next step is to consider your and the other party's underlying interests and to look for options that address both sets of interests, so there is more to work with, more to divide up. In other words, you want to create value before you claim value.

What is Cooperative Negotiation? Cooperative negotiation starts with developing and preserving the relationship. It is a strategy that focuses on determining your and the other person's needs and then looking for solutions to satisfy as many interests as possible for all. It is a problem-solving process used to reach an acceptable solution; it is not compromise. When using interest-based negotiation, you need to ask:

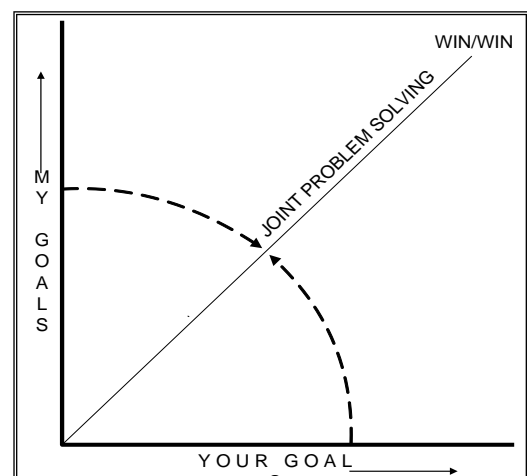
- How can I meet my interests by meeting yours?
- How can I leave the relationship in a productive place for the future?

Attitudes of Cooperative Negotiators

Cooperative negotiation involves a different set of attitudes than competitive negotiation. Rather than defining the other party as an opponent competing against you, you define him or her as a partner working with you against the problem. Other key attitudes that characterize cooperative negotiators:

- The pie is not limited
- The goal = win/win
- The needs of all parties must be addressed to reach agreement
- We are cooperative problem solvers
- The relationship is important
- There are probably several satisfactory solutions
- Self-esteem must be preserved

A win for you can be a win for me.



Stages in Cooperative Negotiation.

Preparation

Satisfactory performance in negotiations, as with many other forms of social and professional interaction, requires preparation. You can increase your chances of having an effective negotiation by considering the first few steps before you come to the table.

Preparing for a negotiation involves at least three strategic steps. These include identifying your own interests/needs, speculating on the other party or parties' interests/needs, and considering your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA). These are discussed below in turn:

Identify your interests/needs: What are your needs and interests? To negotiate successfully, you need to identify your needs and interests. As discussed earlier, interests fall into three categories: substantive, procedural, and psychological. Take time to identify your interests and to assess how strongly you are committed to them. Additionally, who are the people or parties that you need to negotiate with to satisfy your interests? Negotiators should consider principal parties (either individuals or groups) who must be present at the bargaining table for a successful agreement to be reached, and secondary parties, interested people or groups who will be affected by the decision and who can have an impact on how the agreement is implemented.

Speculate on the other party's interests/needs: What are the substantive, procedural and psychological interests of the other primary and secondary parties? To reach an agreement in negotiation, the solution must, at the least, meet the minimal needs of all the principal parties. To formulate proposals, you need to know these interests. Have any of the parties taken positions on the issues? A position is a particular solution that meets the needs of a party but not necessarily the needs of the other negotiators. People adhere to positions because they meet interests. Determine what interests the position is meant to satisfy. Are there ways to meet the interests other than the stated position? How important are the issues and interests to each of the parties? Which are they least likely to be flexible about? Are there any issues that might be deferred or dropped?

The Cooperative Negotiation Process

Preparation

- Identify your interests/needs
- Speculate on the other parties' interests
- Identify your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)

Negotiation

- Open the negotiation
- Seek to understand the others interests
- Educate the other on your interests
- Develop an agenda for problem solving
- Frame the problem as joint task to meet both parties' needs
- Generate multiple options for settlement
- Evaluate the options
- Final bargaining and implementation

Think about your best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA): What procedural options are available to you should negotiations fail? What potential substantive and psychological outcomes might result from these different approaches? Developing your BATNA is the best way to protect yourself from accepting proposals you should reject and vice versa. At a certain point you may need to realize that you can no longer compromise or concede any ground.

The Negotiation

Opening the negotiation. Three general approaches are used for beginning negotiation sessions: the negotiator may focus on the substance of the dispute (history of the problem, need for change the issues, positions and interests), on the process by which the substance will be discussed (the rules for interacting), or on relationship issues (the value of the relationship). There is no one correct way to begin negotiations. Select the opening strategy that best meets the parties' needs.

Seek to understand the others

interests. In this very important stage you should practice your best "inquiry" skills. The objective here is not to express your own position or interests ("advocacy") but to seek to understand the other person's interests. You will need to make an effort through genuine questioning and probing to get beyond the position of the other person and try to identify their interests. You will clearly need to ask "why" until you understand and the other person gets a sense that he or she has been heard and that you do indeed understand. It will at times be very difficult, as many people are not prepared to expose their real interests, and indeed you will need to judge how far you can proceed. Have you ever heard a conversation like this one?:

"Why don't you share ever share information with me? You are really making my job more difficult"

"Because I am insecure in my job, I mistakenly think that hoarding information is power, I perceive you as a threat and I want to be promoted before you."

Clearly, ascertaining the underlying interests is very challenging.

Other things worth considering before negotiating include:

- What means of influence do you have at your disposal to persuade the other party to meet your needs - control of the process, communication, data, experts, use of authority, associates, rewards, coercion? What are the benefits and costs of using these?
- Do you and the other primary parties have the authority to negotiate a binding settlement? If you do not have the authority to negotiate, who does? Should someone else be at the table? Ask the same questions for each of the people you are negotiating with.
- Where should negotiations take place? Consider the benefits or costs of using your venue, theirs, or a neutral location. What should be the physical setting? Should they be face-to-face, over the telephone, conducted on a one-on-one basis, or in a large group?

Educate the other on your interests. A satisfying and durable agreement is one that will meet the interests of all parties. In general, you should be frank about your interests as this will help the other party to understand what ingredients must be in a solution when it comes time for problem solving. If you do so, the other person might be more likely to be more open with you. So you may need to pursue the understanding of the others interests after you have demonstrated your own good will in sharing.

Develop an agenda for problem-solving. After each party has had an opportunity to explain their concerns, needs, and interests, it should be possible to identify a list of issues or problems that the parties want to discuss. Let's take the example of the negotiation between you and a staff member over what time the employee comes to and leaves work. In this case, there is only one issue - starting time. Imagine now that you are negotiating an offer of employment with a potential employee. In this case, there may be several issues - salary, benefits, starting time, and so on. Notice that this initial framing of the issues is done in a neutral way that doesn't show favor towards the position or interests of either party.

Frame the problem as joint task to meet both parties' needs. Framing is the manner in which a conflict situation, issue, or interest is conceptualized or defined. Defining or framing the problem in terms of interests, for example, can be a crucial factor in transforming a competitive negotiation into a cooperative one. It can also be an important way of removing emotions, demands, or threats from communications. Let's take again the case of the negotiation over starting time. For simplicity, assume you're your only interest is a substantive one - that work continues to be completed on time - and that your staff member's only interest is having her daughter safely supervised before school starts each morning (that is, she comes in late because she is waiting until she can drop her daughter at school). Framing the problem as a joint task might sound something like, "How can we ensure that the work of the office continues to be done on time and at the same time that your daughter is safely supervised in the mornings."

Generate multiple options for settlement. Negotiators and mediators begin their search for settlement options with awareness that multiple choices are needed from which to select the ultimate solution. Awareness of the need for multiple settlement options, however, is not an inherent characteristic of negotiators in intense disputes. You may attempt to elicit this awareness, or it may develop through the process of your interactions. In the latter case, awareness of the need for alternatives may result only after persuasion and pressure fail to convince you (or the other party) of the merits of a particular solution.

There are numerous processes for generating settlement options. They have some characteristics in common. First, they attempt to separate the stage of generating options from the later evaluation

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or assessment stage. This separation ensures that the search process will be more comprehensive and creative and not inhibited by premature judgments. Second, they focus the attention of the negotiators on the issue or problem and not on the other party. Third, they are designed to generate multiple options. (A more thorough discussion of these techniques can be found in Moore, Christopher W., *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*, 3rd Ed. 2003, pp 269-294., from which this section is adapted.)

- **Ratification of the Status Quo:** Identify what agreements you and the other party have reached previously or what is working in the relationship that you want to continue and include in a final agreement.
- **Open Discussion:** Open discussion is very effective if you and the other party feel you can share ideas without prematurely committing to them. You can do this by setting a ground rule that allows each of you to explore ideas without any commitment.
- **Brainstorming:** Begin by stating the problem as a “how” question that you can both agree on. Then speak one at a time and suggest as rapidly as possible a number of solutions that might meet the needs of both parties. (Suggest that you both avoid stating purely self-serving options or making verbal or nonverbal judgments while brainstorming.) Record suggestions on a notepad or wall chart.
- **Model Agreements:** Seek out agreements made in other disputes, where the parties were in a similar predicament to that faced by you and the other party. Explore and modify those agreements to meet the needs of the present situation.
- **Linked Trades:** You and the other party identify interests that you would trade for specific desired benefits. By generating such possible trades, you may be able to develop potential deals that can then be modified to better meet each party’s interests.
- **Procedural Solutions to Reach Substantive Agreements:** You and the other party work to develop a procedure that can be used either at the present or in the future to arrive at a substantive answer.

Evaluate the options. The central task of the parties at this stage is to assess how well their interests will be satisfied by any one solution or any combination of the solutions that have been generated cooperatively or offered by one party. In addition to evaluating the solution(s) against interests, you might also consider the following questions:

- If you were in the other party’s situation, would you accept the proposals that you are making now, or would you expect that more should be offered in exchange for an agreement?
- Is the offer fair? Will those you respect (colleagues, family, etc) perceive it as such?
- Is the offer in line with organizational norms?
- What is your BATNA?

Final Bargaining and Implementation. The tasks at this stage are to select the option that best meets the interests of all parties (modify it as appropriate, make final trade-offs, and reach final agreement), develop an implementation plan, and develop a monitoring plan. The implementation

plan should be specific with tasks, parties responsible, and timelines. There should also be a monitoring plan to ensure that progress is on-going and a back-up agreement or procedure in case one or both renege.

Summary

Negotiations can be characterized as either competitive (positional) or cooperative (interest based) depending on the fundamental approach and underlying attitudes of the negotiator. Managers negotiate all the time, whether they are aware of this or not. Generally, they will find it beneficial to utilize a more cooperative approach because they are usually dealing with situations in which on-going relationships are involved and because a cooperative solution is more likely to lead to a higher level of buy-in and commitment to the outcome. Few negotiations are purely cooperative or competitive. Cooperative negotiators may use some competitive tactics and vice versa. However, the underlying attitude and the core tactics used by negotiators are key to the overall tenor of the negotiation. Cooperative negotiators may find themselves negotiating with others taking a more competitive approach. Skilled and strong cooperative negotiators will not be at a disadvantage in this situation, but they will have to be very clear about their commitment to a cooperative approach in the face of competitive tactics.

Tips for Interest-Based Bargainers

- Separate the person from the problem. Define the problem in terms of interests instead of blaming it on the behaviour or attitudes of the other person.
- Avoid jumping to solutions until both parties have fully understood each other's interests. The options should be developed from the ideas that will meet the needs of both people.
- Generate options without evaluating them right away. If the parties judge and criticize an idea as soon as it is raised, it will dampen creative efforts and focus more on what can't be done.
- Use BATNA as a principled source of power and as a criterion for whether to accept a "deal."

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