

# Healthy Conflict

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**LEADERSHIP  
ROUNDTABLE**  
*Service. Excellence. Church Management.*



# Workshop Agenda

In today's workshop, we will explore essential conflict management skills and how conflict handled well can be creative and productive.

The learning objectives include:

- Explore our own attitudes and behaviors towards conflict
- Appreciate why conflict management skills are essential for pastoral ministry
- Build the capacity to use conflict management skills as a tool for creative innovation

# Check-in Exercise

Turn to your neighbor and take a few minutes to share:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word “conflict”?
- How do you define a difficult conversation?





# Why is this topic essential?

We are human, and we all experience conflict regularly. We discuss conflict management because there is no such thing as conflict elimination.



More damage can occur from the dysfunctional strategies we use to deal with conflict, rather than the conflict itself. Avoidance and time do not heal all things.

In pastoral ministry, conflicts often go unresolved because some believe people who care about one another or being a good Christian means avoiding conflict.

Conflict handled well can create connection and understanding. Innovation comes from creative conflict.



# Impact of dysfunctional strategies

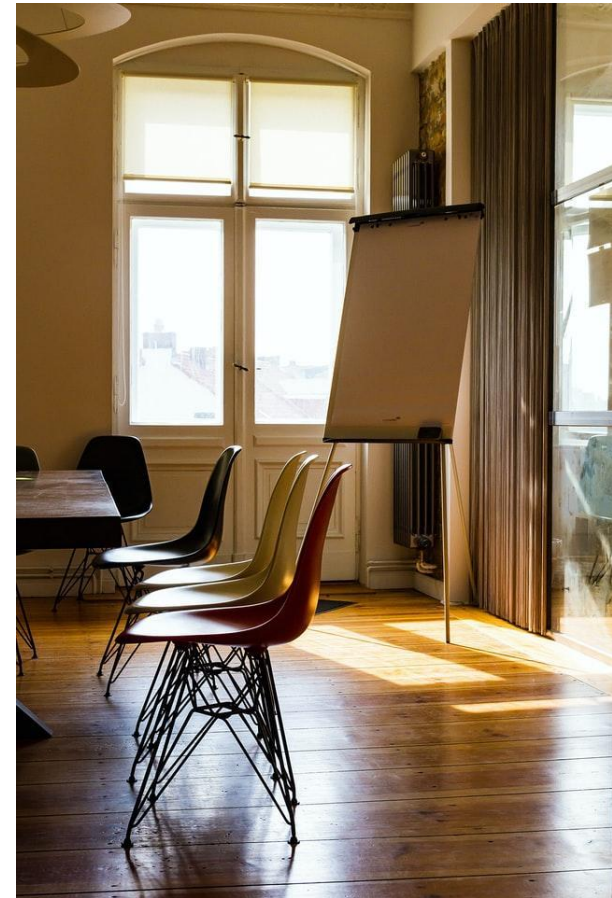
Sometimes more damage occurs in conflict from dysfunctional strategies rather than the conflict itself.

***What are some examples of dysfunctional strategies?***

# Win-Win Results

Four elements of *principled negotiation*:

1. Separate people from the problem.
2. Focus on interests, not positions.
3. Generate options for mutual gain.
4. Insist on using objective criteria.



*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In,*  
by Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 2011

# Win-Win Results



## **Separate people from the problem.**

Focus on observable events or behaviors rather than the person's character. Once we label someone, we tend to be in conflict with the person, not the problem.

*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In,*  
by Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 2011

# Win-Win Results

## Focus on interests, not positions.

What I perceive to gain or lose is my “interest.”  
Examples of interests are security, inclusion, achievement, control, recognition.

My “position” on an issue is my attitude or opinion.  
If I take a strong position, I may not see other ways to satisfy my interest.

In conflict, we both have interests. If we talk about our interests rather than positions, we can seek solutions that satisfy both of our interests.



*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In,*  
by Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 2011





## Pairs Discussion: Focus on interests, not positions

Think of an example when you defended a certain **position** to achieve an **interest**. Were there other possible options (or positions) that you could have explored to meet your interest?

***Example:** My **position** is that I want a new office. My **interest** is for recognition, acknowledgement, appreciation of my work.*

*What are some other ways my **interest** could be met instead of a new office if that wasn't a viable solution?*

# Win-Win Results



## **Generate options for mutual gain.**

In almost all conflicts, there usually are multiple ways of reaching an agreement where both parties have something to gain. Approaching a situation by offering a “yes” or “no” ultimatum doesn’t work. Alternatively, you can ask the other person to help you generate multiple options, remembering that we have a shared mission.

*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In,*  
by Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 2011

# Win-Win Results

## **Insist on using objective criteria.**

The options that both parties generate should be based and measured on objective criteria.



*Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In,*  
by Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 2011



# Action Steps to Manage Conflict

1. Define the conflict issue
2. Decide
3. Arrange a meeting
4. Have the meeting
5. Agree
6. Follow through on the agreement

*The Art of Conflict Management: Achieving Solutions for Life, Work, and Beyond,*  
*Great Courses, Michael Dues, Ph.D., University of Arizona*



# Define the conflict issue

Name the situation that is bothering you and identify why it is bothering you.

The issue must be articulated by describing the other person's objective and observable behavior, not by your interpretation of the other person's intentions, emotions, attitudes, or character.





## Define the conflict issue

In preparation, ask yourself these reflection questions:



*Why do I want to resolve this conflict?*

*How has this affected me?*

*What are my needs in this situation? (There are relatively few deep needs that motivate most behavior - security, acceptance, accomplishment, etc.)*

*What am I hoping for in this dialogue?*

*Am I seeking to understand their point of view? Or am I looking to persuade them?*

*If we seek understanding, what questions can we explore that will us better understand?*

*What do we have in common? To what values are we both committed?*

# Decide



You need to decide whether or not you want to resolve or avoid the issue.

You might think that certain conflicts are not significant enough to address. You can use minor conflicts to practice conflict management skills.

Practice with people you trust to provide you with psychological safety.



# Arrange a meeting



Contact the person you are in conflict with and request a meeting (preferably in person) to address the issue.

Give the other person an equal say on when and where the meeting occurs.





# Have the meeting

- Share your concern, focusing on how the situation has affected you. *When you do this, this is how it affects me ...*
- Express your interests and ask the person to express their interests. Seek to find common interests on which to focus.
- Suggest solutions, but do not be overly committed to your solutions.
- Give the person your full attention.





# Have the meeting

- Paraphrase by restating what you heard the other person say without necessarily agreeing. *“What I hear you saying is... is that correct?” ...*
- Instead of responding defensively, respond with curiosity. *“This feels important to you. Why do you think it is important to our discussion today?” ...*
- Confirm your understanding by asking open-ended questions.
- Acknowledge emotions that arise even if you do not agree or understand them.
- If the statement is in the form of a complaint, ask them to reframe in the form of a hope or aspiration. *“What is it that you would hope to see as an outcome of our conversation today?” ...*



# Agree

- The two of you agree about what each will do to solve the conflict.
- The agreement must be explicit and address actions (not attitudes) that can be observed by following through on the agreed-upon terms.
- Summarize the agreement and then check to ensure that the other party has the same understanding.





## Follow through on the agreement

- You must do what you agreed to.
- If the other party also does what was agreed to, acknowledge and express appreciation for their behavior.



## Reflection Exercise

Turn to your neighbor and take a few minutes to share:

*What is something from today's workshop that you are interested in trying to further develop your conflict management skills?*



## Putting into practice

- Following today's workshop, encourage you to spend some time in reflection to consider a conflict situation that has been on your mind. Define the conflict issue and ask yourself the reflection questions.
- You can use minor conflicts to practice these conflict management skills. Practice with someone you trust.
- If you are attending this session with colleagues you work with, you can discuss how as a team you can begin to practice these skills.





## Contact

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