The Obstacles & Opportunities of Conflict

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What is Conflict?
Exploring Conflict

• As an Obstacle
  – Its creation
  – Our responses
  – The destructive results
• As an Opportunity
  – Personal
  – Relational
  – Organizational
• As a Leader
Contributing Resources:

- *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande
- *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution* by Dudley Weeks
- *Unglued* by Lysa TerKeurst
- *The Advantage* by Patrick Lencioni
The Birth of Conflict

• Triggers

• Fuel

• Effects
Triggers for Conflict

• Diversity
  – Natural differences in preferences and priorities

• Misunderstandings
  – Issues with communication

• Self-focused Attitudes
  – Sense of entitlement or focus on personal needs
Fuel for Conflict

• Reactions to triggers
  – What do we do with feels that arise from diversity, misunderstandings and self-focus?

• Out-of-control desires
  – Is there anything that you want so much that you are willing to hurt others over?

• Cultural messages
  – “you’re worth it” and “have it your way”
Negative Responses

• **Explode**
  – “Fight”
  – Retaliate in words or actions
  – Verbal assault to physical violence

• **Stuff it**
  – “Flight”
  – Retaliate with silence or gossip
  – Denial to self-harm
Responding from your “Medulla Oblongata”
Negative Effects

• Open hostility
• Unpleasant environment
• Unhappy individuals
• Lack of teamwork
• Less productivity
• Loss of good people
The Redemption of Conflict

• When understood and dealt with, conflict can be embraced and harnessed as a path to greater success. It can serve to strengthen us as individuals, enhance our relationships and can move our office on to becoming more effective.
Changing the Course of Conflict

• Identify the triggers
• Acknowledge your desires
• Assessing our view of others
• Filtering messages/advice
• Altering our response
• Don’t make it personal
• Focus on the solution
Positive Responses

• Overlook it
  – After reflection if the offense was minor and can be left behind
  – No lingering effects

• Engage
  – Work one on one with the individual to explain and work through issues
  – Listen and explore mutually agreeable options

• Mediation
  – Seek the input and assistance of a neutral figure
Making Amends

• **A Proper Apology**
  – Be specific
  – Address the hurt
  – Accept responsibility & consequences
  – Change the behavior

• **True Forgiveness**
  – A promise to not dwell on it
  – A promise to not bring it up/use it against them
  – A promise to not speak to others about it
  – A promise to not let it hinder relationship
Positive Effects

• Personal
  – Live your values
  – Enjoy your work more
  – Freedom from stress & bitterness

• Relational
  – Make a friend & ally
  – Collaboration
  – Peace
Positive Effects

- **Organizational**
  - Increased Trust
  - Greater teamwork
  - Positive environment
  - Safe to present ideas
  - Safe to constructively challenge ideas
  - Better solutions
  - Accountability
  - Mission-effective
Tips for Leaders

• Recognize the existence and power of conflict
• Analyze your own contributions
• Be vulnerable and promote trust
• Address unresolved conflict
• Be objective/don’t take sides
• Train on conflict resolution
• Seek outside help
• Identify and remove toxic individuals
Final Thought

Adversity draws men together and produces beauty and harmony in life's relationships, just as the cold of winter produces ice-flowers on the window-panes, which vanish with the warmth.

Soren Kierkegaard
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