

CONFLICT/NEGOTIATION “STONES”[©]

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Three Questions Surrounding Conflict:

1. What is really happening?
2. Why do other people behave as they do?
3. What can I do about it?

What Does Not Work:

1. Assume that the problem is someone's personal failing instead of a system problem. This is called the Fundamental Attribution Error.
2. Assume the problem is caused by the other person(s).
3. Develop a private, unilateral diagnosis and solution.
4. Because the other person is the cause of the problem, get that person to change, using one or more of these basic strategies:
 - i. Facts
 - ii. Logic
 - iii. Rational persuasion
5. If the other person resists or becomes defensive, it confirms that they are the cause of the problem.
6. If your efforts are unsuccessful or less than successful than hoped, it is the other person's fault. You need feel no personal responsibility.

What More Often Works:

1. Emphasize common goals and mutual influence
2. Look for the systemic problem – the root problem and all the contributing factors.
3. Communicate openly, and publicly test assumptions and beliefs.
4. Combine advocacy with inquiry
 - i. Advocacy includes statements that communicate what the speaker thinks, knows, wants, or feels.
 - ii. Inquiry seeks to learn what others think, know, want or feel.
5. A realization that a problem will not be solved with the same level of thinking that created the problem in the first place. (Consider analyzing from both the: Dance floor and the balcony).

(Above Adapted from: Bolman, Lee and Terrence Deal. Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice & Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 1991)

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PAGE 2

Below are the negotiation “stones.” Typically, you can only stand on one stone at a time. Think about which “stone” you tend to stand on most of the time. The best possible situation is when we can move freely and thoughtfully from one “stone” to the next.

0/100

Accommodation or Smoothing

This is where you give up and someone else gets 100%.

100/100

Collaboration or Problem Solving

This is where everyone wins (*happens less than 5% of the time – but is a good goal.*)



50/50

Compromise

This is where you give in 50% and someone else gives in 50%.



0/0

Avoidance

This is a stalemate where no one moves, and the problem stays the same.

This is the worst stone.

100/0

Competition or Command

This is when one person gets it all and others completely give in.