

Chapter 1 : The Anatomy of Constructive Conflict | Athletes in Action

When the rubber meets the road in addressing conflict, the tipping point on whether that conflict will ultimately be destructive or constructive is often determined in the first few sentences of dialogue.

By Craig Runde November 8, No Comments Although conflict is inevitable, there are strategies to keep in mind that help improve relationships and increase productivity. The actions you take at the very beginning of a conflict often determine the outcome. Relying on constructive behaviors before, during, and after a conflict can transform the experience from one that is filled with tension and frustration to one that is energizing and positive. This article outlines five simple strategies to help manage conflict more effectively: Understanding, Exploring, Communicating, Re-engaging, and Contemplating. Understanding View the situation from a wider angle. Most people concentrate on how the conflict is impacting them, what the other person is doing that is annoying, and meeting their own specific needs. One of the most important skills for any resolver of conflict is to have a wider frame of reference. Realizing that well-intentioned people can see the same situation in an entirely differently way is critical to moving toward a satisfying resolution for everyone. In order to do this effectively, you have to have a mindset of authentic curiosity: Assume a positive intent. Evaluate the conflict beyond just your own perspective. To fill in the gaps and get the full picture, be willing to ask open-ended questions or solicit examples to clarify issues: Exploring Create as many viable solutions as possible. Many conflicts reach a standstill because both parties get locked into positions and feel as though neither side can get what they really want. Viewing conflicts as an exercise in creative problem solving rather than as an adversarial battle often results in fairer and more satisfying solutions for all parties. The first step after identifying your own needs is to anticipate and discuss the needs of the other party. Then brainstorm every possible solution without evaluation. Produce better solutions overall. Getting all of these issues on the table sometimes leads to a quick and easy solution. If not, move forward by identifying points of mutual agreement and interdependence. This process might take a little longer, but the additional information invariably leads to a resolution that satisfies everyone. Collaborate to get meaningful results for both parties. Cultivating a trusting environment is more likely when both parties have a flexible and collaborative approach. It is crucial to be respectful and courteous, expressing a real desire to work together toward a mutually satisfying solution. Also, be willing to compromise because your goal is to have a solution, not a victory. Communicating Communicating authentically is the cornerstone of establishing trust in a relationship. Being yourself and letting people know your true emotions is a key factor to healthy communication during a conflict. Most of the time, a lack of authenticity leads to poor decisions and seriously erodes a culture of trust and collaboration in an organization. One potentially destructive way a person can respond to conflict is by concealing his or her true emotions. Then there is the risk of the other party speculating inaccurately about the nature of the emotions, complicating matters even more. Even worse, trying to contain emotions might lead to an eventual explosion of anger, or if directed internally, result in a stress-related illness or depression. Providing this information to the other person indicates the issue is important to you, but, more significantly, that you care enough about your relationship with him or her to be direct. One aspect of conflict resolution involves telling the truth. To have trust and collaboration, people need to feel it is safe to be honest and open with one another. Reasons for not being totally honest stem from being overly polite to fearing possible negative outcomes, but the backlash from avoiding the truth is often more harmful. A lack of candor is not an effective, long-term strategy for sustainable resolution or change. Re-engaging Admit responsibility for your contribution to the conflict. One of the first steps to making amends after a conflict has occurred is to get the communication started again. One of the best ways to do this is to acknowledge your own contribution to the problem. Doing this in a genuine way often enables the other party to do the same in a non-defensive way. At this point, the door is opened for further dialogue. Move the relationship back on track. These kinds of gestures are appreciated by all of us, and, in many cases, they will produce a positive reciprocal response from the other party. Active listening skills are essential here because the other party may not be willing to move forward until his or her own point of view is recognized. Cultivate an optimistic mindset. After a conflict has occurred,

the road back toward reconciliation can be long and stressful. If you decide that the conflict is irresolvable, then it certainly is. Pessimism about the chances for success brings about a self-fulfilling prophecy. Contemplating Consider the best response. Not all conflict situations require immediate responses. Sometimes it is valuable to slow down the process, allow for some reflective thinking, and analyze the situation carefully from many angles in order to choose a positive response. As mentioned earlier, conflict can be stressful. Be aware of your own personal triggers that may signal the need for a time-out. Are you raising your voice or re-stating the same point over and over? Try to remind yourself of what you really want in this interaction. Often your true goals are the long-term types of issues such as improving the relationship or maintaining balance rather than the immediate incident at hand. Encourage flexibility and change. Is it bringing a dormant issue to light? Is it surfacing concerns that have been buried? Is it increasing the capacity for straightforwardness and the ability to solve other types of problems? Being flexible and adaptable along the way increases the chance of a positive outcome. The concepts contained in this article correspond to the Constructive scales on the CDP: For more information, go to www.

Chapter 2 : 5 Stages of Conflict Process: How it Works within Organization

Constructive conflict embraces differing ideas and worldviews, in an effort to move the company toward its goals and mission. This type of conflict increases productivity, rather than hampers it.

Constructive Conflict Management Constructive Conflict Management Conflict inside an organisation can seriously weaken its ability to stay in touch with customer needs and deliver satisfaction. We could repeat scenes like this in almost every organisation, with varying degrees of disruption and hostility. Even at the highest level damaging conflict can break out; some years ago the Chairman and Managing Director of a blue-chip company were asked to resign after the two simply could not work together. Failure to resolve internal conflict directly impacts on the customer. Unresolved conflict can lead to poor staff morale, rivalry and bickering. Most importantly, it diverts attention away from the customer, who can be left feeling annoyed and bewildered at the staff? Yet the majority of companies do little to prepare their managers or staff to recognise and successfully deal with conflict, both within the organisation and outside it, so the advantage lies with those who prepare themselves to be skilful in this difficult, and often uncomfortable, area. One company that has managed conflict successfully is G. In this article the authors describe how to tackle conflict as a development opportunity, not as something to be ignored. Well managed open debate, where differences are deliberately brought out into the open can be very positive in facilitating. Exploration of the terminology and problems as well as flushing out underlying discontent. It tests out solutions and at the same time can promote common values and mutual respect. Four Stage Framework There are four distinct stages in resolving conflict and attention needs to be given to each of these areas. The process starts with having a practised eye at recognising conflict and assessing its growth potential early on. Stage 1 - Spot the Signals The first stage must be to spot the signs that damaging conflict is beginning and has the potential to get out of hand. There is a need to identify all the parties involved since there may be covert players hiding in the wings. Having identified the signs, an examination needs to take place to uncover likely causes. Different perceptions motives, goals, ambitions, and backgrounds make up the ingredients of many conflict situations and should not be underestimated. What is the effect of personality? We each bring our own idiosyncrasies and preferences which may clash with others. Some people, for example: Enjoy the cut and thrust of conflict, others detest it. Others enjoy sticking to defined rules. Potential personality clashes arise from: Some need data, others prefer a clean sheet. The possibilities of different personalities clashing through different work styles is endless! However, simply blaming personalities can sometimes be the easy explanation and there may be a whole set of other, underlying reasons which are causing the conflict. The way groups are constructed, their size, the quality of the communications channels, the systems and processes which support them may all lead to conflicting interests and potential for territorial and turf wars. In addition, lack of clarity of roles and purpose can lead to groups and individuals stepping on each others toes. Jealousy and anxiety in these circumstances can build up, leading to sparks flying. New teams are much more likely to be in conflict it is a distinct phase in bedding down. This needs to be understood, not suppressed as it is part of building up norms, processes and identity. A facilitated team workshop can help clarify expectations and get feelings out in the open in a controlled setting. Market pressures and rapid change within an industry or sector and the organisation itself may lead to immense pressure on resources, costs and service delivery and be a powerful contributor to organisational and individual stress. Such stress will increase the likelihood of conflict breaking out. Stage 2 - Plan the Response Having assessed the situation, a suitable response is requires and this is a second potential problem area. Many managers and staff are ill equipped to handle conflict situations. They are intolerant of ambiguity and have been brought up to expect a single right answer and to apply this in a uniform way, often based on previously learned habits. They may also overly focus on the immediate and short term situation without seeing the wider picture. Their one right way and now approach can result in missing some important nuances and complexities, and implementing solutions which are insufficiently tailored to the work environment and possibly too late. The positive news is that skills and approaches can be taught. To help develop understanding, the authors employ a conflict handling strategy model. This is very

useful in understanding what are effective strategies in handling conflict in any given situation. It suggests there are five basic strategies to handle conflict: Keep the peace This puts relationships first, even at the expense of getting the job done. Do nothing This involves leaving the problem alone and is a positive strategy only if the problem is not serious and no contact is required with the other party. Force the issue This requires you to hold firm to your point of view with the intention that you get your way and the other person has to back down. It is useful if you have the power to win and you are prepared to sacrifice the long term relationship if necessary. Split the difference This requires both parties to give a bit and take a bit. Whilst the issues and the relationship are addressed with some satisfaction on both sides, they are not fully dealt with and problems may flare up again in the future. It is essentially a pragmatic programme. Managers can usefully be taught to recognise their preferred and backup styles and strategies and those which they least use. This process can be very insightful since people frequently stick to one or more styles even in circumstances where conflict would be resolved more readily by an alternative choice of strategy. The next stage is to coach them to practise a wider range of behaviours. This can be done on a development programme through the use of a diagnostic questionnaire and observing how the manager deals with simulated scenarios which replicate situations at work. Stage 3 - Implement Having identified an appropriate strategy, putting it into practice requires considerable skill. Some suggestions on how to approach conflict situations include: Nipping Conflict in the Bud Sometimes quick action is needed to stop conflict and disagreement from mushrooming and the customer suffering. In these circumstances, rapidly: The skills which reduce harmful conflict are: Building interpersonal skills helps deal with conflict rather than suffering in dysfunction. As one manager in a software company put it: Because of the inherent complexity of conflict with which managers are dealing, they need to keep learning vital lessons of conflict resolution. A personal improvement action checklist Every customer-centres individual could benefit from considering these action points: Conclusion Conflict is a reality for all organisations who serve the customer. It can be beneficial if handled well. To ensure that customer service does not suffer through harmful conflict, managers must- Look ahead and halt destructive conflict quickly diffuse disagreement before it gets out of hand and learn to manage in such a way that differences are confronted skilfully and with confidence. Steve Macaulay and Sarah Cook. Sarah can be contacted on You may publish this article in whole or in part. The only requirement is that if in print the article must state - article by Sarah Cook, Stairway Consultancy Ltd, , www. Article by Sarah Cook of the Stairway Consultancy. The code should look like this: If you do not do this you will infringe our copyright.

Chapter 3 : Constructive Conflict

The constructive behaviors are ones that tend to help lessen tension and resolve conflict. They are further divided by whether they are active or passive in nature. Active constructive behaviors involve overt responses.

You can learn more about him at the end of the post. So while I may not win friends or influence people, I do hope to use recent exasperating events to illustrate its fundamental dynamics. According to the Congressional Research Service, the debt ceiling has been raised 74 times since March of 2011. Because breakthrough innovation typically occurs in either crisis or exceptional situations. When the reward of doing something radical is greater than the risk of doing things the same way people tend to try new things. This is true at all levels. Apple, largely acknowledged as one of the most innovative companies in the world was at the edge of bankruptcy in 2001. It scared Apple into the iPod and iTunes, and they rode the emergent positive momentum to the iPhone and iPad. Necessity is indeed the mother of invention as well as other forms of innovation. This also happens with individuals. Consider how Alcoholics Anonymous starts its celebrated treatment with a public acknowledgement of how the disease has ruined your life. This is the antithesis of the creative process. Think about how you act when you are in love. You get the picture. So in the bell curve of your life, innovation happens at the edges – the outside and works back towards the center over time. The point is that innovation requires deviation. Management is typically focused on maintaining equilibrium and continuity by eliminating variation. Freud saw this struggle as an inner contest between the three selves – Ego, Superego and Id. Darwin characterized it in the animal kingdom as the survival of the fittest – nature being red in fang and claw. In all cases, innovation is produced by the positive tensions of opposing ideas. This means that conflict, when directed towards constructive hybrids, is an essential part of the innovation process. The problem is that innovation has a limited shelf life. Like milk it goes sour. Over time, an innovation becomes a commodity and the wheel keeps moving forward. Back to Our Case in Point: Because there was no real conflict and whatever disagreement that existed was NOT constructive. While there was shouting, name calling and all manner of political maneuvering on late night television, the two sides never constructively engaged to develop plausible solutions. The end game was to unseat the other; not to develop useful and valuable hybrids – the essence of innovation. Ostensibly, this leaves only three basic courses of action: Dramatically cut programs and renege on promises or 3. Think of what could be accomplished if we actually decided to apply our ingenuity and sense of destiny to recreating how we govern ourselves. Each generation before us has chosen to keep moving forward. It requires each of us to commit to tolerating ambiguity as we move through our differences to find new routes to the undiscovered country of the future.

Chapter 4 : How to Manage Constructive Conflict to Create New Ideas | Michigan Ross

The difference between constructive and destructive conflict is there in the outcome, mainly. A conflict is a serious disagreement between two parties. Within organizational settings, conflicts arise between employees, departments, and organizations themselves.

Conflict Process consists of five stages that show how conflict begins, grows, and unfolds among individuals or groups with different goals, interests or values of the organization. These stages are described below; Stage 1: Potential Opposition or Incompatibility The first step in the conflict process is the presence of conditions that create opportunities for conflict to develop. These cause or create opportunities for organizational conflict to rise. These three conditions cause conflict. Communications Different words connotations, jargon insufficient exchange of information and noise in the communication channel are all antecedent conditions to conflict. Too much communication, as well as too little communication, can lay the foundation for conflict. The size and specialization act as forces to stimulate conflict. The larger the group and the more specialized its activities, the greater the likelihood of conflict. Tenure and conflict have been found to be inversely related. The potential for conflicts tends to be greatest when group members are younger and when turnover is high. In defining where responsibility for action lies; the greater the ambiguity is the greater the potential for conflict to the surface. Such Jurisdictional ambiguity increases inter-group fighting for control or resources and territory. Personal Variables Certain personality types- for example, individuals who are highly authoritarian and dogmatic- lead to potential conflict. Another reason for conflict is the difference in value systems. If no one is aware of a conflict, then it is generally agreed that no conflict exists. Because conflict is perceived does not mean that is personalized. It is the felt level when individuals become emotionally involved that parties experience anxiety, tension or hostility. Stage-2 is the place in the process where the parties decide what the conflict is about and emotions play a major role in shaping perception. Five Conflict-Handling Intention Competing: A situation in which the parties to a conflict each desire to satisfy fully the concerns of all the parties. In collaborating, the intention of the parties is to solve the problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various points of view. Avoiding included trying to just ignore a conflict and avoiding others with whom you disagree. A situation in which each party to a conflict is willing to give up something. Intentions provide general guidelines for parties in a conflict situation. Yet people intention is not fixed. During the course of the conflict, they might change because of re-conceptualization or because of an emotional reaction to the behavior of another party. Behavior This is a stage where conflict becomes visible. The behavior stage includes the statements, actions, and reactions made by the conflicting parties. Outcomes The action-reaction interplay between the conflicting parties results in consequences. Conflict is constructive when it improves the quality of decisions stimulates creativity and innovations encourage interest and curiosity among group members provide the medium through which problems can be aired and tensions released and foster an environment of self-evaluation and change. Conflict is dysfunctional when uncontrolled opposition breeds discontent, which acts to dissolve common ties and eventually leads to the destruction of the group. Among the more undesirable consequences are a retarding of communication, reductions in group cohesiveness and subordination of group goals to the primacy of infighting between members.

Chapter 5 : Constructive Conflict - Conflict Dynamics Profile

Constructive. There are four constructive approaches to conflict, and they all work. Pragmatic: Let's look at the facts and figure this thing out. Whatever the situation, pragmatists will ask, "What can be done?"

March 9, 2 Comments Conflicts do not always have to be destructive. In fact, in many instances, conflicts are incentives that cause us to take action to accomplish a particular goal. Getting issues out in the open and on the table allows teams to evaluate an issue with more complete information and, in the end, to make a better decision. Save time, save misunderstandings and ineffective performance by encouraging constructive conflict across your organization. There are many benefits to constructive conflict. Increased participation in decision making. When a conflict develops and the result lead to everyone getting involved, it is a good conflict. When information is shared, and discussion is opened up that result in verifying or clarifying information, it is a good conflict. Only when the team has a single expert can you allow one voice to be heard. When alternative choices become apparent, it is a good conflict. An issue that requires a creative solution can be resolved when more minds are together to think of new solutions. During early stages of brainstorming, resist the urge to edit or limit suggestions. The quality of your choices will improve. When it releases negative thoughts, emotions, stress, and anxiety it is a good conflict. The enemy of every company is outside the company. Get the groups together and have it out. When cohesiveness escalates, it is a good conflict. Working toward collaboration is desired in many companies and if the process involves conflict to get there, so be it. When people grow and are able to apply knowledge they learned from conflicts, it is a good conflict. There are plenty of techniques for increasing understanding. Constructive conflict can be a very effective and time saving method. Encourage constructive conflict across the teams in your organization. They will enhance their performance. Use constructive conflict to make better decisions, to get better information, to have better choices, to encourage collaboration and to increase understanding.

Chapter 6 : 6 Benefits of Constructive Conflict | HawkeyeConsultingAdvisors

Tips and Tools for Constructive Conflict Resolution When we act, we often act in relationship to others. When considering which actions may be most constructive when acting amongst others, the following tools may be helpful.

But when handled the right way, a skillful leader can turn a seemingly negative situation toward a positive outcome. Skilled leaders are able to use the passion and energy that fuels most conflicts and turn it into a win for their teams. Effective leaders learn how to manage challenging situations so that conflict becomes constructive rather than destructive. Here are a few ways you can train yourself to become an effective conflict facilitator. According to one author, "Politics is when people choose their words and actions based on how they want others to react rather than based on what they really think. You know that feeling when you open your fridge and are greeted by a mess of leftovers, expired food, and families of condiment bottles? In the same way, the longer you let unhealthy conflict fester within your team, the more rancid and poisonous the mess will be when you finally get around to cleaning it out. When leaders can effectively address conflict head-on and facilitate a positive outcome, the tension will disappear and everyone can refocus their energy on helping the team succeed. Argue About Ideas Conflict becomes destructive when disagreements leave the realm of the abstract and venture into the messy world of personal insults. If you find yourself in the middle of a conflict do your best to keep the conversation centered around disagreement over an idea, not an attack on the person. Avoid Public Embarrassment If you see a teammate get frustrated during the course of a practice or game, use wise judgment on how you confront the issue in the heat of the moment. Most of the time handling conflicts publicly can turn out to be destructive rather than constructive because emotions can cloud our judgment. Preserving a sense of unity within your team means avoiding public embarrassment at all costs. If we can lovingly communicate the truth of a situation, people will get the sense that our intentions are genuine and our motives are pure. Communicating the truth in love is a skill that requires development. When the rubber meets the road in addressing conflict, the tipping point on whether that conflict will ultimately be destructive or constructive is often determined in the first few sentences of dialogue. A simple way to practice communicating the truth in love is to take a notepad and write down a few opening phrases that effectively strike this balance. What next steps could we take together to find a solution? How do you think we could come to an agreement together? Then when conflict arises use this language to constructively facilitate your next conflict. Pastor and author Tim Keller summarizes our goal succinctly, saying that to be most effective in our leadership we need a healthy balance of love and truth. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it.

Chapter 7 : A Journey with Iqbal: Mary Parker Follett on Constructive Conflict

4 Strategies for Fostering Constructive Conflict by Stefanie Mockler on August 3, For the last two weeks, we have discussed the benefits of teams engaging in constructive conflict and described a framework to understand types of conflict that occur in team settings.

All conflict is perceived as having negative consequences on the team, and leaders want cohesive teams working in harmony. However, not all conflict in the office is bad. Learn the difference between destructive and constructive conflict, and develop tools to use constructive conflict to your benefit. Differentiating Conflict Conflict occurs when people disagree or have differing views on topics. Destructive conflict between two people can bring down the morale of an entire department, thereby reducing productivity and efficiency. Constructive conflict embraces differing ideas and worldviews, in an effort to move the company toward its goals and mission. This type of conflict increases productivity, rather than hampers it. Although conflict can stem from any conversation or action, there are common destructive conflict scenarios seen in the workplace. More significant issues could involve harassment or discrimination. Another example is to challenge company protocol because someone sees a better way of doing things. Stopping Destructive Conflict Destructive conflict needs to be addressed as soon as it is identified or reported. Doing so prevents the situation from escalating, which would further bring down team morale and productivity. Stopping destructive conflict also prevents potential legal actions. The handbook should have a section that establishes the company policies for conflict resolution and for reporting harassing or discriminatory actions. The protocol should state how the company acts in these situations, and should state the potential disciplinary actions that can result. Train employees on their communication skills as well as company policies to help stop destructive conflict from escalating. Promoting Constructive Conflict Promote constructive conflict to help open the eyes of team members to new views, opinions and ways of doing things. Encourage people to offer opinions in team meetings and hold team-building exercises to help employees develop a real respect for each other. Hold diversity events and celebrate the cultural differences of the people on the team. Managers have a special role in working with constructive conflict: These are often stressful for everyone. When approached as a means to help employees become better in every way, the conflict of the situation changes from negative criticism to constructive development.

Constructive conflict not an oxymoron. But it is a novel concept for someone like me, who by my nature has spent much of my life as a people pleaser and a conflict avoider.

The key is not to avoid conflict but to learn how to resolve it in a healthy way. When conflict is mismanaged, it can cause great harm to a relationship, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people. Whatever the cause of disagreements and disputes, by learning these skills for conflict resolution, you can keep your personal and professional relationships strong and growing. Conflict arises from differences, both large and small. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences appear trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem. These needs can be a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy. Conflicts arise from differing needs. Everyone needs to feel understood, nurtured, and supported, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely. Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our personal and professional relationships. Think about the conflicting need for safety and continuity versus the need to explore and take risks. You frequently see this conflict between toddlers and their parents. The needs of both parties play important roles in the long-term success of most relationships, and each deserves respect and consideration. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments, and break-ups. In workplace conflicts, differing needs are often at the heart of bitter disputes, sometimes resulting in broken deals, fewer profits and lost jobs. When you can recognize the legitimacy of conflicting needs and become willing to examine them in an environment of compassionate understanding, it opens pathways to creative problem solving, team building, and improved relationships. Conflict is more than just a disagreement. It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat whether or not the threat is real. Conflicts continue to fester when ignored. Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them. We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs. Conflicts trigger strong emotions. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements. How do you respond to conflict? Do you fear conflict or avoid it at all costs? If your perception of conflict comes from painful memories from early childhood or previous unhealthy relationships, you may expect all disagreements to end badly. You may view conflict as demoralizing, humiliating, or something to fear. If your early life experiences left you feeling powerless or out of control, conflict may even be traumatizing for you. Healthy and unhealthy ways of managing and resolving conflict. Unhealthy responses to conflict: When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments, and break-ups. But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases your understanding of the other person, builds trust, and strengthens your relationships. For example, couples often argue about petty differences—the way she hangs the towels, the way he slurps his soup—rather than what is really bothering them. The ability to successfully resolve conflict depends on your ability to: Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm. By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication. Control your emotions and behavior. Pay attention to the feelings being expressed as well as the spoken words of others. Be aware of and respectful of differences. By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, you can almost always resolve a problem faster. To successfully resolve a conflict, you need to learn and practice two core skills: Using Your Senses to Alleviate Stress Being able to manage and relieve stress in the moment is the key to staying balanced, focused, and in control, no matter what challenges you face. Foot on the gas. An angry or agitated stress response. Foot on the brake. A withdrawn or depressed stress response. You shut down, space out, and show very little energy or emotion. Foot on both gas and brake. A tense and frozen stress response. Stress interferes with the ability to resolve conflict by limiting your ability to: Stress may be a problem in your life if you identify with the following: Although knowing your own feelings may

sound simple, many people ignore or try to sedate strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. Your ability to handle conflict, however, depends on being connected to these feelings. Why emotional awareness is a key factor in resolving conflict Emotional awareness—the consciousness of your moment-to-moment emotional experience—and the ability to manage all of your feelings appropriately is the basis of a communication process that can resolve conflict. Emotional awareness helps you to: Understand what is really troubling other people Understand yourself, including what is really troubling you Stay motivated until the conflict is resolved Communicate clearly and effectively Interest and influence others Assessing your level of emotional awareness The following quiz helps you assess your level of emotional awareness. Answer the following questions with: There are no right or wrong responses, only the opportunity to become better acquainted with your emotional responses. What kind of relationship do you have with your emotions? Do you experience feelings that flow, encountering one emotion after another as your experiences change from moment to moment? Are your emotions accompanied by physical sensations that you experience in places like your stomach or chest? Do you experience distinct feelings and emotions, such as anger, sadness, fear, and joy, which are evident in different facial expressions? Can you experience intense feelings that are strong enough to capture both your own attention and that of others? Do you pay attention to your emotions? Do they factor into your decision-making? If any of these experiences are unfamiliar, your emotions may be "turned" down or even off. In either case, you may need help developing your emotional awareness. Nonverbal communication and conflict resolution Nonverbal Communication: Reading Body Language When people are in the middle of a conflict, the words they use rarely convey the issues at the heart of the problem. This will allow you to respond in a way that builds trust, and gets to the root of the problem. Your ability to accurately read another person depends on your own emotional awareness. The more aware you are of your own emotions, the easier it will be for you to pick up on the wordless clues that reveal what others are feeling. Think about what you are transmitting to others during conflict, and if what you say matches your body language. Tips for managing and resolving conflict You can ensure that the process of managing and resolving conflict is as positive as possible by sticking to the following guidelines: Listen for what is felt as well as said. When you really listen, you connect more deeply to your own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Make conflict resolution the priority rather than winning or "being right. Be respectful of the other person and their viewpoint. Focus on the present. Rather than looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the here-and-now to solve the problem. Be willing to forgive. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can serve only to deplete and drain your life. Know when to let something go. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on. Using humor in conflict resolution Managing Conflicts with Humor: Using Laughter to Resolve Disagreements You can avoid many confrontations and resolve arguments and disagreements by communicating in a humorous way. Humor can help you say things that might otherwise be difficult to express without offending someone. When humor and play are used to reduce tension and anger, reframe problems, and put the situation into perspective, the conflict can actually become an opportunity for greater connection and intimacy. Recommended reading CR Kit — Covers the causes of conflict, different conflict styles, and fair fighting guidelines to help you positively resolve disagreements. Conflict Resolution Network 12 Skills Summary — step conflict resolution training kit. Learn how to pursue a win-win approach, manage emotions, be appropriately assertive, map the conflict, and develop options. Conflict Resolution Network Effective Communication — Article on the art of listening in conflict resolution. Includes tips on how to make your point effectively and negotiate conflict in principled, positive way. University of Maryland Authors:

Chapter 9 : Summary of "Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution" | Beyond Intractability

Relying on constructive behaviors before, during, and after a conflict can transform the experience from one that is filled with tension and frustration to one that is energizing and positive. This article outlines five simple strategies to help manage conflict more effectively: Understanding, Exploring, Communicating, Re-engaging, and.

There are four constructive approaches to conflict, and they all work. Whatever the situation, pragmatists will ask, "What can be done? Here is what I am doing about it. Self-empowered people take ownership and responsibility. These people do not see themselves as powerless victims. Rather, they see a crisis as a challenge and an opportunity, and typically, they find solutions that no one thought were even possible. Before dealing with the issues leading to conflict, these people want to deal with the person; they want to make a human connection. On Monday morning when they get to work, they are likely to ask, "How was your weekend? They know from past experience that a human connection can get them through the tough times. I know we can work this out. It is critical to the conciliator that both parties walk away from the conflict feeling that their needs were met. In summary, all four of these approaches allow you to view conflict as an opportunity. The pragmatic and self-empowered approaches create new ideas, breakthroughs, and success where you have not seen it before. People who use the relationship builder and conciliator approaches often improve relationships by connecting with others and having meaningful conversation that leads to success. Time heals all wounds. Avoiders figure that if you wait it out, the problem will go away. The problem is that time does not heal all wounds; some wounds become infected. In moderation, avoidance is a useful strategy, but if you avoid every conflict, fear and resentment can build because you are not doing anything to address the underlying problems. If you speak the language of personal responsibility, you start believing in your abilities and stop being the victim. I lose and you win so you will like me. Accommodators have a strategy of winning by losing so that others will like them. To a limited extent, this works very well: Whether you win or not, you will walk away with the satisfaction of having been heard. If we do it for you, we will have to do it for everyone. Rules were written for a reason, but there is the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. If you hide behind the letter of the law, you become rigid and rules can actually work against you. What happens when you have to take action and there are no rules? Are you going to just sit there? We suggest instead that you take a look at the constructive pragmatic style. The way my boss feels about it The insulator finds a base of power and hides behind it. The problem is that insulators often become groupies rather than developing their own skills, and if the bodyguard leaves, they are lost. For example, a person who is quiet at meetings might try speaking loudly and banging on the table. Here is a warning: Do it my way. When dominators enter the room and join the meeting, they try to take control. Right or wrong, they know where they are going, and they expect you to follow. They are on the offensive, believing that this defends them from other approaches that would cause them to fail. They have a need either to control others or to do it themselves; power is important, and they will work hard to get it. We have a suggestion for the dominator: Furthermore, you may find people more willing to follow your lead because of the supportive way you treat them. When I throw a tantrum, I get what I want. To make themselves look good, they attack other people, but unfortunately, this is self-defeating. If you are an escalator, we suggest you look to the conciliator for an example of a constructive approach. I win, you lose. The competitor is the exact opposite of the accommodator—he or she sees winning as an opportunity to be respected and liked. The problem with both the accommodator and the competitor is a matter of degree; little competition and a little accommodation can be good things. With the competitor, though, things can get out of hand when winning becomes the only goal, and other people may be torn down. Remember, our goal is to get work done, and when other people are invalidated nothing gets accomplished. The key is to keep competition fun, uplifting, and a way for us to improve skills. The first thing to recognize about perfectionists is that they are great people to have on the team because they do things well. There is nothing wrong with wanting to do things right, unless it gets out of hand. Another problem is the effect that perfectionism has on the team: People can lose interest, and then you end up having to do it all yourself. We suggest a more pragmatic approach. Establish a point at which the work is acceptable, and look at what you

were trying to accomplish in the first place. Perfect the things that need perfecting, and ease off on the rest. When you get up in the morning, you know that there is going to be conflict today. You have a choice; you can be constructive or defensive. We all learned our defensive approaches years ago, and they actually work at protecting us, which is why we often jump to them when we face conflict. We conclude our workshop, *Thriving on Conflict*, with a graduation exercise. This exercise provides an opportunity to try constructive conflict styles that may be a little foreign to each person. We have seen competitors accommodate others, and accommodators become just a bit more competitive and speak up for themselves. The point of the exercise is to practice new approaches so that in the real world they become natural. There is no magic wand to prevent conflict, but we have four constructive approaches that work. Remember, with constructive conflict, something good might come out of this.