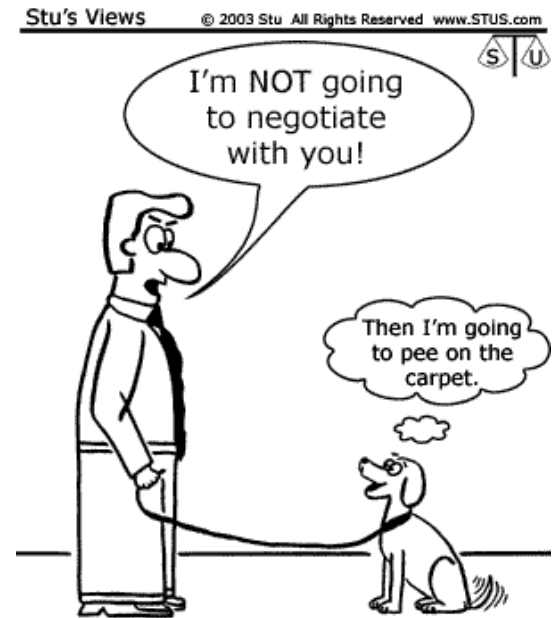


Conflict & Negotiation

Yes, conflict can certainly be scary whether you one of the parties or just an innocent bystander. There are several styles to recognize and steps to go about resolving conflict. When resolved properly, conflict can bring groups closer together and increase cohesion.

“Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.”
African Proverb



How to Resolve A Conflict:

Conflict has a poor reputation because most leaders fumble through and lack the skills to effectively manage tense situations. When you are the mediator, there are a few principles to keep in mind as you begin to work through the situation:

- Ask participants if they have cooled off and are ready to begin mediation before you gather them together. If somebody is still in the heat of the moment, the mediation could turn into a shouting match.
- Keep all participants on the same physical level. For example, do not have one roommate sit on the bed and the other sit on the floor. That creates a visual power difference.
- Make participants speak to each other and not through you.
- Ask participants to take a short recess if things are not going anywhere. They may need 5 minutes to get some water or reflect before reconvening for a resolution.
- Keep yourself neutral at all times. Even if you can empathize with one of the parties, refrain from taking sides so that both parties feel respected. Make sure the situation remains about the conflict and you are a non-biased facilitator.

Conflict Management Styles:

When you are involved in a conflict, leaders must know how to appropriately respond. There are five natural styles that you can use and should be able to

recognize in others. The more familiar you are with these styles, the more conflict will produce positive results. To find your own style, take the conflict style inventory at this website:

<http://peace.mennolink.org/cgi-bin/conflictstyle/inventory.cgi>

AVOIDANCE	<p>Description: Delay or avoid response; withdraw; be inaccessible; divert attention.</p> <p>Perspective on Conflict: Conflict is hopeless; avoid it. Overlook differences, accept disagreement, or get out.</p> <p>When To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You don't care that much about the issue. • You (or someone else) are very angry and need time to cool off before discussing the issue. • You are in a dangerous situation and don't need to be there. <p>When Not To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You rarely want to deal with the conflicts in your life. • You care about an issue but are afraid to speak up. • You keep being bothered by a disagreement with someone you care about. <p>Mottos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I leave. • I'd rather not deal with it now.
ACCOMODATING	<p>Description: Accept the other's view; let the other's view prevail; give in; support; acknowledge error; decide it is no big deal or it does not matter.</p> <p>Perspective on Conflict: Conflict is usually disastrous, so yield. Sacrifice your own interests, ignore the issues, put relationships first, and keep peace at any price.</p> <p>When To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are, or were, wrong about something. • You care more about the other person than you do about the issue. <p>When Not To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It happens a lot and you wish you could speak up more often. <p>Mottos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I give in. • I don't care that much; have it your way.
FORCING	<p>Description: Control the outcome; discourage disagreement; insist on my view prevailing.</p> <p>Perspective on Conflict: Conflict is obvious; some people are right and some people are wrong. The central issue is who is right. Pressure and coercion are necessary.</p> <p>When To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to do something quickly. • Your conscience tells you to do or not do something that displeases others. • You know you are right and it is important to you that the others recognize that. <p>When Not To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You use it often with people you care about or will need to spend time with in the future. • You want people to feel they can discuss and disagree with you openly. <p>Mottos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I take charge. • Might makes right.

COLLABORATION	<p>Description: Assert your views while also inviting other views. Welcome differences; identify all main concerns; generate options; search for solution which meets as many concerns as possible; search for mutual agreement.</p> <p>Perspective on Conflict: Conflict is natural and neutral so affirm differences; prize each person's uniqueness. Recognize tensions in relationships and contrasts in viewpoint. Work through conflicts of closeness.</p> <p>When To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have the time and want to work something out that satisfies all sides. • You care about the other person(s) and feel strongly about the issue. • You want to get thoughts and feelings out on the table and deal with them, so they do not cause problems later. <p>When Not To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You do not care that much about the issue. • You need to do something quickly. ("Fire! Everybody out!") <p>Mottos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving. • We both win. • Two heads are better than one.
COMPROMISING	<p>Description: Urge moderation; bargain; split the difference; find a little something for everyone; meet them halfway.</p> <p>Perspective on Conflict: Conflict is mutual difference best resolved by cooperation and compromise. If each comes halfway, progress can be made by the democratic process.</p> <p>When To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need a quick solution and can both give up something. • You both want exactly the same thing and it can be divided up or shared. • You are willing to let chance decide it (flip a coin). • You have tried to satisfy each one completely and it is not possible (or would take too long). <p>When Not To Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might work a little longer and find a solution that pleases each one better. <p>Mottos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We meet halfway. • Let's split the difference.