Making Conflict Work

3 Strategies to Navigate Conflict Near the Top of the Organization
Introductions

With a person or two nearby, discuss:

- **Name**
- **Professional role and organization**
- **Describe a follower you know directly who is either a master or a disaster of conflict resolution . . .**
If you haven’t done so already, and would like to see what your chronic mindsets are, please go to the following URL:

https://bardsleygroup.com/self-assessment/
Three Main Questions

➢ How can we channel the considerable energies from conflict in organizations toward achieving important goals, improving relations and prospering?

➢ How can we best navigate the trappings of power in conflict?

➢ How might we increase positivity and decrease negativity in the emotional reservoirs at work?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power over</th>
<th>An ability to get another person to do something that he or she would not otherwise have done.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power with</td>
<td>This type of power as jointly developed; co-active and non-coercive. It can bring about constructive and satisfying outcomes for all. It tends to motivate people to search out each other's abilities and competencies and to appreciate their contributions, to negotiate and influence each other to exchange resources that will help them both be more productive, and to encourage each other to develop and enhance their valued abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power apart from</td>
<td>The power that comes from independence or from a lack of dependence on others; the ability to make things happen unilaterally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power under</td>
<td>The power that comes from others in authority depending on you to reach their goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary power</td>
<td>Primary power refers to the ability to affect those basic activities (such as defining the law, ideology, morality, symbolism, the media, policies, agendas, decision-making processes, etc.) that shape the playing-field.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary power</td>
<td>Secondary power (which includes relational power) refers to the exercise of power in the conventional sense – the ability to get one's goals met in a relationship.</td>
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Benevolence
Reach goals through vision, trust, and compassion

Support
Reach goals through creating healthy debate and cooperative disagreement

Dominance
Reach goals through setting clear structure and limits, and asserting authority

Appeasement
Reach goals through creating dependence with integrity, and...
4 Basic Conflict Situations

- Compassionate Responsibility
- Cooperative Dependence
- Command and Control
- Unhappy Tolerance

4 Basic Conflict Mindsets

- Benevolence
- Support
- Dominance
- Appeasement

4 Strategies of Conflict Intelligence

- Pragmatic Benevolence
- Cultivated Support
- Constructive Dominance
- Strategic Appeasement
Conflict Mindsets

- **Benevolence**: An active-cooperative orientation to conflict – Model constructive, cooperative, responsible behaviors; Value teamwork and relationships; Feel concern for others.

- **Dominance**: A more exploitive, controlling orientation to conflict – Use authority to coerce, threaten, confront, and scrutinize; Value authority, revenge, winning; Feel less empathetic.

- **Support**: An orientation of dependency and appreciative support – Attend to other carefully, listen, and cooperate in conflicts; Value relationship and mutual understanding; Feel surprised, anxious.

- **Appeasement**: An orientation of victimization and tolerance – simply try to avoid making the situation worse. Overtly tolerate but also employ more subtle, coercive tactics such as work slow-downs, absenteeism and sabotage. Feel anxious, stressed, angry.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Orientation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Strategy</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitual, pattern, often chronic, unbroken</td>
<td>Selected specifically to fit situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Default, automatic</td>
<td>Consciously or intuitively chosen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited behavioral repertoire</td>
<td>With adaptivity, all behaviors from all orientations are options at any given time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain probability of effectiveness</td>
<td>Increased probability of effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **How important are the other disputants to me?**
   Do I need them to meet my needs now or in the future?
   Do I want to stay in this relationship going forward?
   Can I walk away from this situation without consequence?

2. **Are they with me or against me (or both)?**
   Are they on my side? Do they share my goals and concerns? Are they likely to help or harm me? Should I trust them?

3. **Am I more or less powerful than they (or equal)?**
   Who is in charge here? Do they have power-over me? Me them? How about in the long run – who is really in control?
The 4 Strategies

- Pragmatic Benevolence
- Constructive Dominance
- Cultivated Support
- Strategic Appeasement
Pragmatic Benevolence

For Situations of Compassionate Responsibility: These are conflict situations where you find yourself in higher-power in relation to the other disputant, share common goals or concerns, and feel that your relationship with them is important and needs to be well-managed. This is characteristic of many more constructive parent-child, supervisor-supervisee, and teacher-student relations.
Pragmatic Benevolence Strategy

**Strategy:** To increase the lower-power party’s awareness of your shared goals, of the importance of your mutually beneficial relationship, of your priorities, and of the many opportunities for you both to enhance your resources for power and influence, while modeling a constructive form of conflict management and organizational citizenship.

- *When consciously chosen as a strategy, benevolence becomes a way to inspire followers to see conflict as a necessary and positive aspect of working together. Conflicts are not only resolvable, but can be leveraged to increase creativity and motivation.*
I reach my goals by:
• Sharing power with my subordinates
• Negotiating our disagreements
• Remembering that our success is interdependent
• Cooperating with them because our goals are aligned
• Using direct, reciprocal, cooperative influencing tactics on those with less power
10 Tactics of Pragmatic Benevolence

- Expand the power pie
- Build up emotional bank account
- Be slow to say no
- Trust the team to take charge
- Don’t take “yes” for an answer
- Frame the conflict around others’ success
- Let go of control and the need to be right
- Make cooperation inevitable
- When you sense a covert conflict, send in Columbo
- Use your power to repair
Cultivated Support

For Situations of Cooperative Dependence:
In these situations, you have low-power relative to the other disputants, share cooperative or complementary goals, and have a high need to remain on good terms with them.
Strategy: To increase the power-holder’s awareness of your shared goals, of the importance of your mutually beneficial relationship, and to seek both clarity about their priorities as well as the many opportunities for you both to enhance your resources for power and influence, in a manner and rate that is non-threatening to the power-holder.

- *When consciously chosen as a strategy, support can empower followers to cooperate with more vitality, leveraging conflict toward more effective performance and inspiring relationships. It can also empower followers to employ informal leadership actions for the greater good of the organization. It can also have a positive influence on leaders.*
I pursue my goals by:
• Accepting the responsibility of power shared by my supervisor
• Negotiating our disagreements
• Remembering that our success is interdependent and that our goals are aligned
• Using direct, reciprocal, diplomatic, cooperative tactics to influence my supervisor
10 Tactics of Cultivated Support

• Make it positive
• Carefully construct the initial conditions
• Cultivate an information coalition
• Present problems as “ours”
• Don’t bring one problem; bring several solutions
• Wage a peaceful campaign
• Flex influence through function
• Get unstuck ASAP
• Do unto authority as you would have authority do unto you
• Distinguish between a leader’s weaknesses and fatal flaws
Constructive Dominance

For Situations of Command and Control: This refers to conflict situations where you have higher relative power than the other, and purely competing or contradictory goals or needs, but also have a high-need to remain engaged with the other moving forward.
Constructive Dominance Strategy

**Strategy:** To increase the lower-power party’s awareness of your authority and control, of their high level of dependence on you, and of your priorities, while decreasing their sense of their own power and decreasing your level of dependence on them.

- When consciously chosen as a strategy, dominance offers options for dealing with subordinates who refuse to cooperate with organizational goals, or with each other, or who ignore the greater good for their own individual ends. Dominance also empowers leaders to deal with crisis-oriented conflicts during which time is extremely limited and decisiveness is urgently needed.
I achieve my goals by:
• Asserting power from “above,” when necessary
• Dominating subordinates during disagreements
• Noticing when our goals are different
• Using direct or indirect, one way, competitive influence tactics toward subordinates in order to win
• Taking care not to overuse this strategy
10 Tactics of Constructive Dominance

- Clarify Authority
- Cultivate soft power to buffer hard
- Monitor at multiple levels
- Delegate dominance
- Dominate as an opening gambit
- Impose structure on group decisions
- Broaden your base of power
- Dial up dominance gradually
- Insulate the gifted, obnoxious, dominators
- Play hardball
Final Recommendations

1. Get to Know Yourself Better in Conflict
2. Enhance Your Competencies for Reading Conflict Situations
3. Practice the Strategies and Tactics
4. Enhance Your Capacities to Reflect on the Consequences of Your Choices
5. Always Know Your Bottom Line
Mark Your Calendars!
Tell Your Friends!

Upcoming Workshop
Location: 2000 Hamilton Street,
Philadelphia PA 19130

• November 16 - Making Conflict Work
The Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution

The Leading University
Theory-Practice Center on Conflict Resolution

Teachers College
Columbia University