

Leadership Forum Notes
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A Different Look at Conflict: Moving Beyond Fight, Flee or Compromise

What words come to mind when we think of *conflict*? Uncomfortable, negative, misunderstanding, opportunity, confusion, issues.

Research shows that conflict is predictable, everywhere, internal, and external. Successful corporations, organizations, and people anticipate conflict. As leaders, how can we work to help our teams navigate conflict with positive outcomes?

- 1.) Why accent the positive? Why not accent the negative?
 - a. "Shadow of the future." We are trying to maintain relationships. Boss, neighbor, co-worker, spouse, etc.
 - b. Concern for results or production.
- 2.) Conflict Grid
 - a. There are 5 different conflict management styles:
 - i. Accommodation: giving in to the other side. Can work in some cases, i.e. when it is the right thing to do or when opposing presents a very high cost.
 - ii. Avoidance: letting things ride, not engaging in the conversation. Can work in cases for either a break (when emotions run high) or when it's beneficial to pick your battles. Temperance.
 - iii. Collaboration: win/win or both sides are satisfied. Takes commitment to a solution and is difficult to achieve.
 - iv. Competition: win/lose. One side will be unhappy.
 - v. Compromise: win some/lose some. Generally the most effective when both sides are willing to cooperate.
 - b. There are instances when each style is effective and appropriate and times when they are not. When trying to figure what the best approach is, ask 2 questions:
 - i. What are the needs here?
 - ii. What will work best for the main priority?
- 3.) Interest-based problem solving (useful when people are opposed and unable to move forward):
 - a. Understand the needs, beliefs, and values of the positions on both sides. "Help me understand..."
 - b. Identify the real interests and what's at stake. Finding the true interest helps bring creative solutions and new ways to frame the conversation. To get to the interest:
 - i. Recognize the emotions. Anger. Frustration.
 - ii. Create a climate for common ground.
 - iii. Speak to common values.
 - iv. Unite for the dialogue.
 - v. Set ground rules when necessary.
 - vi. Try to bring out the best in people.
 - c. Ask what each side really wants.
 - d. Find the common ground that is best for all.

Dr. Hustedde said there is a free training manual on KELD website:
<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/cld1/cld17-fcs/cld17-fcs.pdf>