

# Courageous Conversations, Effective Communication & Conflict Resolution



# Objectives

- Understand the nature of conflict at work
- Recognize your conflict style
- Learn tools for dealing with difficult people
- Develop skills to effectively resolve conflict at work
- Receive resources for ongoing support



“  
*Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.*  
”

– William James





# The Nature of Conflict



Control



Power



Contrasting Beliefs



Hurt feelings/bruised egos



Fear



Misunderstanding



# Causes of Conflict at Work

- Lack of role clarity
- Poor communication
- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of support or community
- Low morale
- Lack of work/life balance



# Cultivate a Positive Workplace Culture

- Create a collaborative, positive team environment
- Provide trainings for professional development
- Set realistic performance expectations
- Provide support from supervisor & HR
- Promote mental wellness





# Conflict Styles

- Avoidant
- Passive
- Passive Aggressive
- Assertive
- Aggressive



# Dealing with Difficult People



Feelings → Anger, Frustration, Irritation, etc.



Thinking → Judgment, Negativity, etc.



Behaviors → Reactivity, defensiveness, engaging in conflict



# Who Are These “Difficult People”?

- People who are:
  - Under stress
  - In challenging phases of life – family care, elder care
  - Handling new situations – isolation, new roommates, new community
  - Dealing with grief
  - Trauma survivors
- ALL OF US, at times!



# Consider What You Don't Know

- Context
- Stressors
- Lack of support
- Lack of emotional/relational skills
- Trauma history



# Difficult Personality Types

- The Know-It-All Expert
- The Bully
- The Procrastinator
- The Chronic Complainer or “Whiner”
- The Unresponsive or “Silent Type”



# The Know-It-All Experts

- Avoid confrontation over facts
- Give praise & recognition
- Ask lots of questions to benefit from their expertise and win them over
- Recognize these people are often insecure
- Make the solution their idea
- Have realistic expectations







# The Bully

- Detach
- Be professional
- Ask questions such as “What can I do to help?”
- Use I statements
- Be assertive
- Don’t get hooked
- Hang onto your confidence

# The Procrastinator

- Understand the role of perfectionism
- Communicate regularly about what needs to be done—break goals into small tasks
- Provide positive feedback on any progress
- Explore the real reason for the delay
- Ask them for help in resolving issues with any delays
- Encourage them to develop deadlines for themselves and to report progress as it occurs.





# The Complainer/ Whiner

- Don't let the complainer get you down—be a duck
- Ask questions such as “What is it you want?”
- Avoid suggesting solutions
- Neither agree or disagree
- Use effective listening skills



# The Unresponsive, Silent Type

- Ask open-ended questions
- Avoid doing all the talking
- Use a “friendly, silent stare”
- Comment on the process and what you are feeling
- Try writing
- Schedule a follow up





How can you  
turn a difficult  
conversation into  
a productive  
dialogue?



# SILENCE YOUR INNER CRITIC & DETACH FROM NEGATIVITY



"The primary cause of unhappiness is never the situation but the thought about it. Be aware of the thoughts you are thinking. Separate them from the situation, which is always neutral. It is as it is."

~Eckhart Tolle

# DISCOVER THE POWER OF INTENTION



“OUR INTENTION CREATES OUR REALITY.”

~WAYNE DYER, *The Power of Intention*



# Develop Your Emotional Intelligence

- 1 Know your emotions.
- 2 Manage your own emotions.
- 3 Motivate yourself.
- 4 Recognize & understand the other people's emotions.
- 5 Manage relationships (manage the emotions of others.)

Adapted from Daniel Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence"



# Low EQ



- Emotionally triggered
- Aggressive, passive or passive aggressive
- Participation in:
  - Scapegoating
  - Blaming
  - Bullying
  - Gossiping

# High EQ

- Low insecurity
- High openness
- Assertive
- Self-aware
- Inclusive
- Respectful
- Takes responsibility for actions





# Use Assertive Communication

- Neither passive, aggressive, nor passive-aggressive
- “I” Statements
- Honest, direct, clear, and diplomatic
- Does not triangulate
- Face-to-face best, then voice to voice, etc.
- Avoid conflict over email or text
- Diplomacy
- Respect

# Empathy

- Must important relational tool
- Put yourself in the other's shoes
- Deep understanding
- Reflect understanding of other's feelings with kindness and compassion
- Shared emotional experience
- Keep a developmental lens
- [Useful article](#)





# Difficult Conversations Starters

- “I’d like to schedule a short call with you to discuss X.”
- “It seems like we may have had a misunderstanding. I’m wondering if we could set up a time to get back on the same page.”
- “It seems like you might be upset with me, and I would like to understand and work through it.”
- “I’m wondering if it might be easier for us to chat about this in person.”
- “I’m struggling with X and am wondering if we could please talk about it.”

# Improve the Communication Process

- 1 First seek to understand the other party
- 2 Recognize that you may not be understood
- 3 Notice when your emotional brain has been activated
- 4 Observe your process
- 5 Watch the other's reaction to you as a way toward self-awareness
- 6 Take a break and regroup
- 7 Seek help when needed
- 8 Re-engage when you are not triggered





# Set Healthy Boundaries

- Information
  - Time
  - Financial
  - Workload
  - Physical
- 
- Boundary Experts: [Cloud-Townsend Resources](#)



# Avoid Behaviors that add Fuel to the Fire

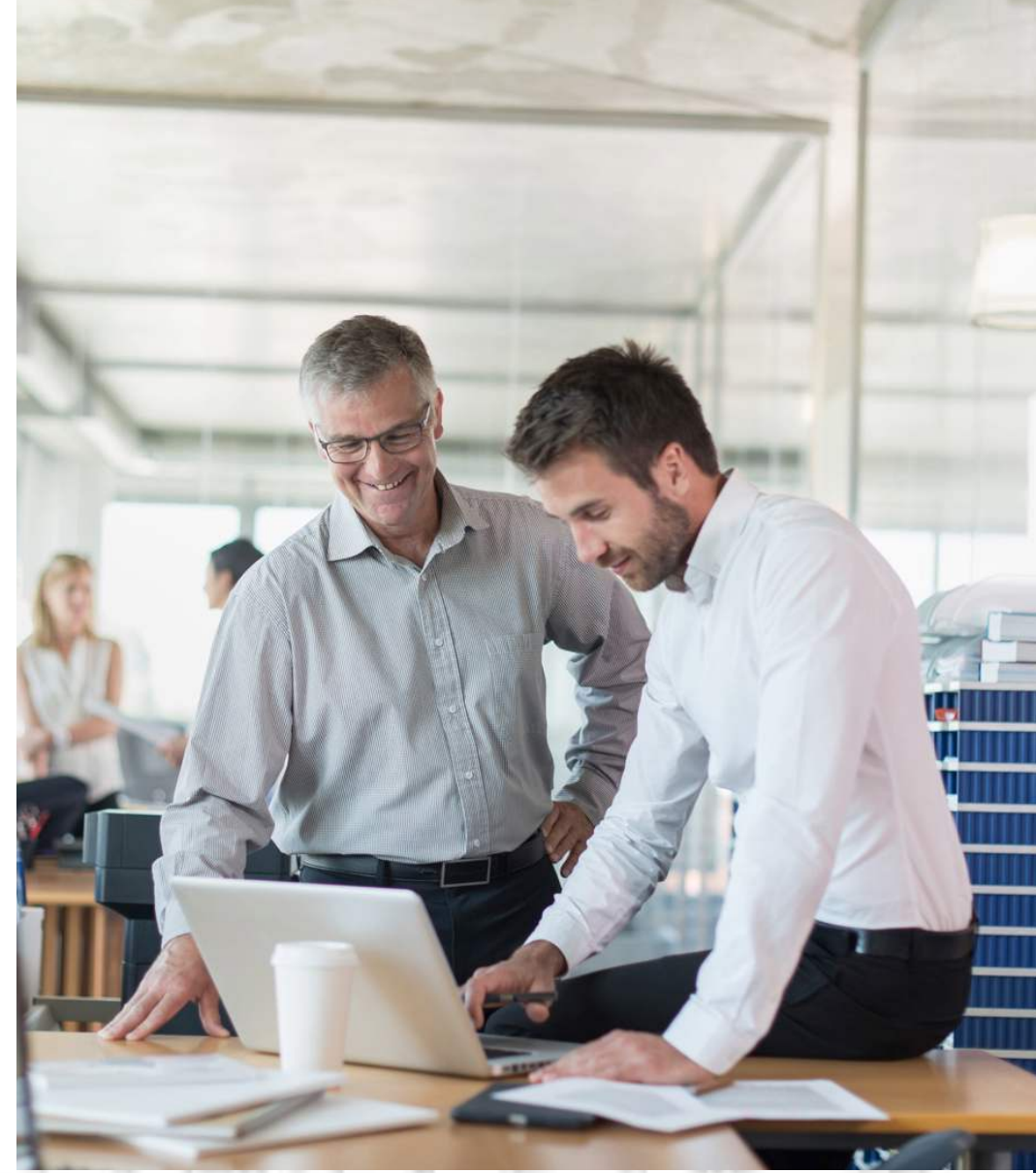
- Criticism
- Contempt
- Stonewalling
- Defensiveness

→ Dr. John Gottman



# Practical Solutions

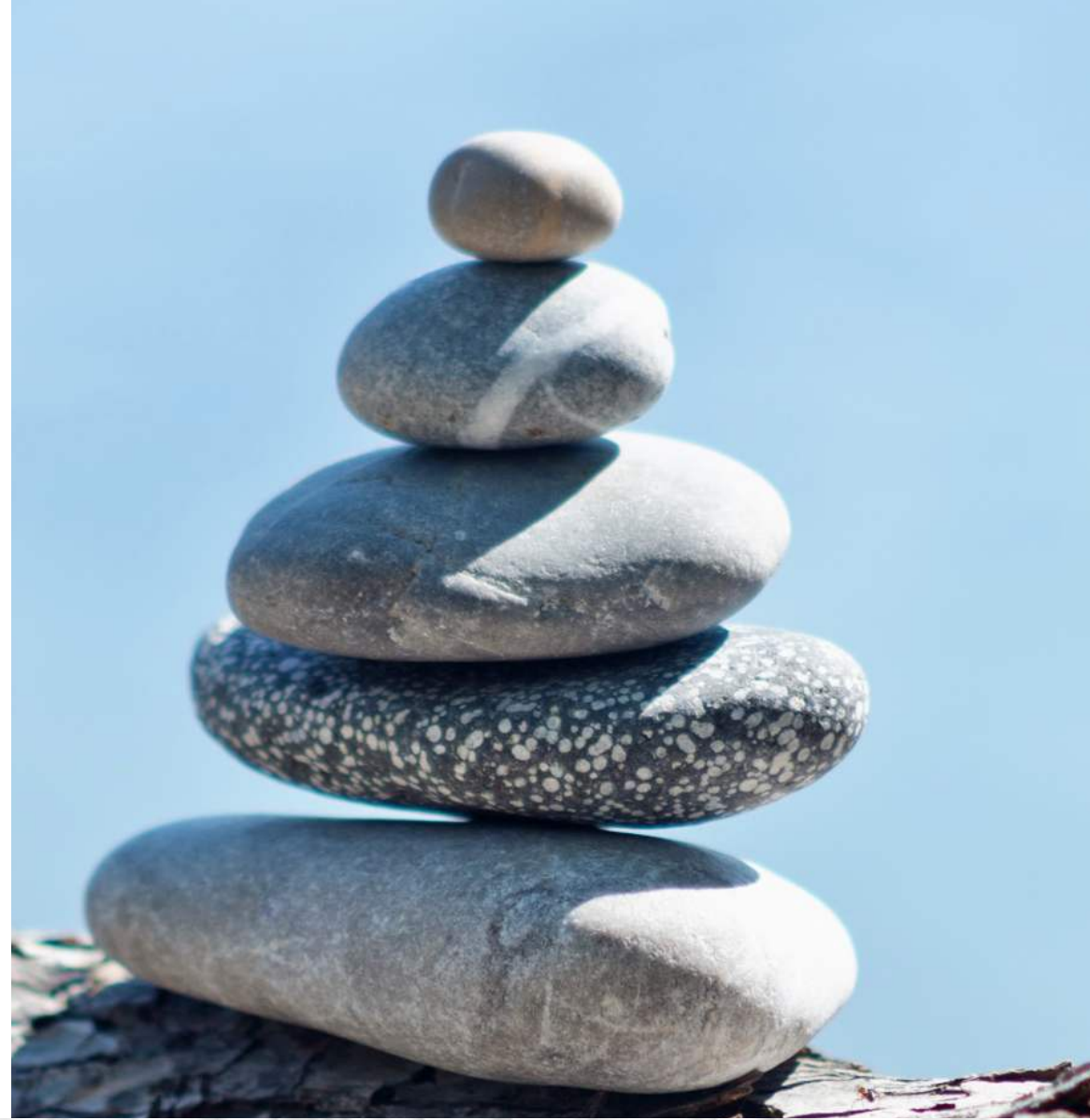
- ✓ Avoid a fight, flight or freeze response
- ✓ Avoid engaging tug-of-war
- ✓ Don't lock horns
- ✓ Unhook from the minutia
- ✓ "Zoom out" to gain perspective





# Practical Solutions

- ✓ Become rooted in the present
- ✓ Let go of Defensiveness
- ✓ Take Responsibility
- ✓ Appreciate the Power of Empathy
- ✓ Practice flexibility, adaptability & compromise



# 5 Steps to Effectively Resolving Conflict:

1. Pause and get grounded. Visualize it going well.
2. Request a time to talk
  - Consider place and time
  - Face-to-face or voice-to-voice preferred over email/messaging
3. Speak with healthy assertiveness, positivity and respect
4. Listen with openness, empathy & healthy detachment
5. Collaborate to find a win-win compromise or resolution



# Case Example

Katelyn has returned from maternity leave and does not seem herself. Her appearance is disheveled, she has dark circles under her eyes, and looks un-showered most days. She seems very distracted in meetings, is behind on her work, and recently snapped at one of the admin staff.

What do you think might be going on?

What would you do?





# VIEW SETBACKS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH



“Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”

~Helen Keller

# Forgive Yourself and Others

“

*Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.*

– Nelson Mandela

”



# EQ & Conflict Resolution Resources

- [Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ](#)
- [Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#)
- [Perfect Phrases for Conflict Resolution: Hundreds of Ready-to-Use Phrases for Encouraging a More Productive and Efficient Work Environment](#)
- [Resolving Conflicts at Work: Ten Strategies for Everyone on the Job](#)



Thank  
You!



[www.joyce-marter.com](http://www.joyce-marter.com)

[joyce@joyce-marter.com](mailto:joyce@joyce-marter.com)



[@Joyce\\_Marter](https://twitter.com/@Joyce_Marter)



[joyce.marter](https://www.instagram.com/joyce.marter)



[Joyce Marter, LCPC](https://www.facebook.com/JoyceMarterLCPC)



[Joyce Marter](https://www.youtube.com/JoyceMarter)



[Joyce Marter](https://www.linkedin.com/JoyceMarter)