Increasing Board Governance Through Effective Conflict Resolution

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Objectives

- Identify when conflict is present and when it needs to be addressed
- Identify common sources of conflict
- Understand your own conflict style
- Learn to assess the conflict style of others
- Gain skills on how to navigate conflict in your group.

Guidelines for Classroom Interaction

- Listen and respond to others with respect and integrity – one person speaks at a time.
- Information shared in class shall be considered confidential unless otherwise agreed upon. If you discuss a situation, which involves another, please change the nane and circumstances to prevent recognition.
- Work cooperatively with others to provide appropriate feedback during discussion and group work.
- Cell phones and side conversations can be distracting to others. Please leave the room is you need to text or take a call, and give your full attention to discussions.
- When addressing conflict, focus on the problem and not the person.

Introduction &
Initial Thoughts on Conflict

- Take a moment to write down your initial thoughts on conflict
  - My main interest in taking this workshop is:
  - What I do well in conflict situations is:
  - What gets me stuck in conflict situations is:

- Introduce yourself to the group by sharing your:
  - Name
  - Organization your work for
  - Position
  - One initial thought about conflict

Understanding Conflict

Activity 1 - Defining Conflict

Take a moment to create a definition of a conflict.

Defining Conflict

- "Conflict" comes from the Latin root "strike together" and can be defined as any situation where incompatible activities, feelings or intentions occur.
- Conflict can occur within a person, between two or more people, or between large groups of people.

- There are two types of conflict
  - Personal – occurs within the individual, where internal forces are at work
  - Social – occurs when people disagree over
    - Values
    - Needs
    - Beliefs
    - Perceptions
    - Expectations

Activity 2 – When is conflict present?

In this activity, you will read "Resolving Conflict at Work"
As a group, we will discuss:

- When is conflict present?
- When does conflict need to be addressed?

Sources of Conflict

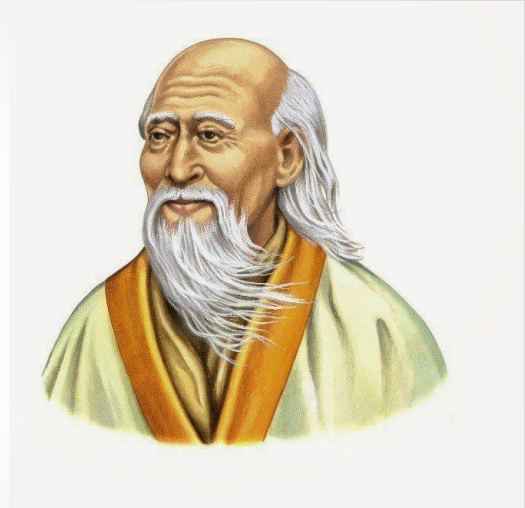Bell and Hart identified the eight causes of conflict as:

- Conflicting resources.
- Conflicting styles.
- Conflicting perceptions.
- Conflicting goals.
- Conflicting pressures.
- Conflicting roles.
- Different personal values.
- Unpredictable policies.

Conflict Styles

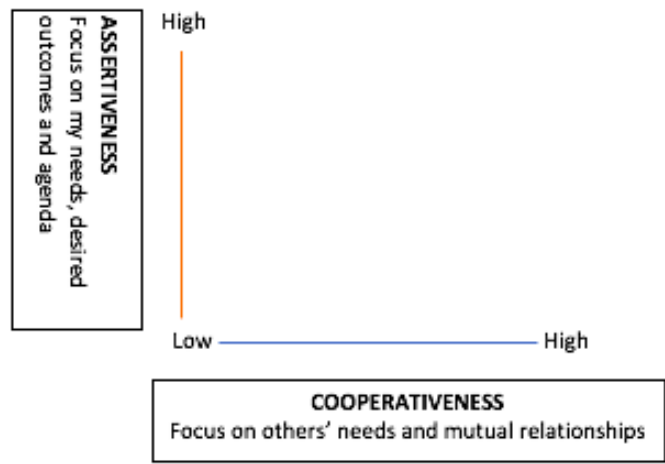"**He who knows another is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened.**"

Lao Tzu

Think about it: Why would there be an emphasis on knowing oneself first, before others?

Conflict Styles – The Thomas Kilmann Instrument

- Inventory that seeks to identify your preferred or dominant style when managing a conflict situation.

ASSERTIVENESS
Focus on my needs, desired outcomes and agenda

High

Low ———————— High

COOPERATIVENESS
Focus on others' needs and mutual relationships

The four basic personality types

Activity 3 – Part 1 - Thomas Kilmann Instrument

Complete the survey and tally your scores.

Activity – Part 2 - Conflict Styles

During this activity, in your style group, you will review your style.

As a group, write on your handout:

- the most important characteristics about your style (that the other styles should understand when working with you)
- how this knowledge could help you and your board

Once you are complete, you will share your findings with the group.

- Competing
- Accommodating
- Avoiding
- Compromising
- Collaborating

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to a better understanding of ourselves."

Carl Jung
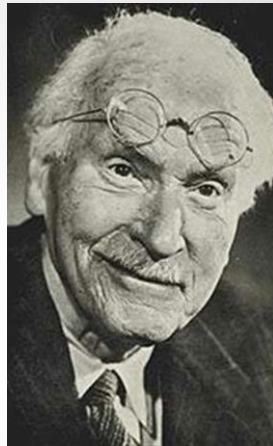
Think about it: How will knowledge of the conflict styles help you create board effectiveness?

Communication Skills are Conflict Tools

"Aren't you glad we had this meeting to resolve our conflict?"

Listening is a "key" skill in diffusing conflict

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

Stephen Covey

Think about it: Why would listening be such an important skill in conflict management?

Active Listening

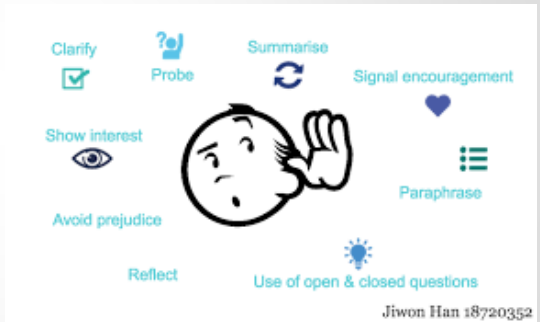*- is based upon creating a positive, supportive communication climate.*

Characteristics:

Body Language

- Facing speaker
- Eye contact
- Leaning in
- Nodding
- Showing appropriate emotion

Vocal

- Reflecting
- Asking non-threatening questions
- Watching for word choice, tone and inflection

Responding Techniques

- **Paraphrasing**
  - A concise response that states the speakers content in the listener's own words.
  - I.e. "What I heard you say was…"
- **Reflect Feeling**
  - Reflects back to the speaker the emotions, in the listener's own words.
  - I.e. "You're excited about your holiday!"
- **Empathizing**
  - Captures the content and emotions in a way that demonstrates the listener cares and understands.
  - I.e. "sounds like you're confused by this memo and angry about the change in plans?"

Responding Techniques

- **I-Message Impact Statement**
  - Explains the "impact" of situations or behavior on you
  - Gives information about you, your feelings and needs
  - Gives information in a manner that shows respect for others
  - Encourages people to be more open
  - Allows others a choice in how they react to what you have said, because information is about how it feels for you, it does not attack them.

- Formula:

When I _____ .
(describe situation)

I feel _____.
(insert emotion)

What I need/want/would like is

_____.
(describe your ideal situation)

Activity 4 – Practicing Responding Techniques

1. "That funding proposal was done all wrong and you missed the deadline. This is all your fault!"

2. "I heard that he is going to be forced to retire, he hasn't been pulling his weight around here but the executive director is too sacred to fire him."

3. "There is no money in this organizations! Do they expect us to work for free? And pay for our own supplies???"

Activity 5 – Active Listening Demonstration and Practice

Demonstration

Watch the demonstration on active (and passive) listening. What do you observe during the conversations?

Practice

- In pairs, have one person speak, and the other actively listen (without verbal acknowledgement)
- You will be given a specific time limit for this activity
- You will then switch roles with your partner and try the activity again.

- At the end of the activity, share your observations with the group about being the speaker and listener.

"We did the best we could with what we knew… and when we knew more, we did better!"

Maya Angelou

Think about it: What you learned in this course about conflict and how it applies to creating effectiveness on your board.

Wrap up – Now What?

Consider:

- What did I learn about myself?
- What do I need to keep doing?
- What do I need to change?
- What do I need to practice?

Thank you!

For information about hosting conflict resolution training and services at your organization, please contact me to discuss your specialized needs:

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