Mediating in a Multilateral World
Learning to collaborate through conflict resolution

When?  
Wednesday 29 April 2020  
5:30 pm - 7:30 p.m.

Where?  
ONLINE! To attend this online session, please register with your name and email address at:  

Why?  
1. Understand the role of mediation and conflict resolution in an international context.
2. Understand the link between conflict resolution and learning.
3. Get insights on how to encourage dialogue and collaboration for resolving issues and creating sustainable change.

Programme:  
Is there a way to learn and collaborate when mediating and resolving conflicts? How can we discuss diverse views, in ways that allow us to increase our empathy and jointly solve problems? In this session, experienced mediator and author Ken Cloke will address these issues as he guides participants through concepts from his own experience and his books. In particular, the session will take a closer look at conflict and different responses to conflict, the role of communication and listening, conflict resolution approaches (including in the workplace or in mediation settings), and how we can learn from conflict and encourage dialogue.

The session will also include insights from Dr. Olga Klimecki, who’ll share developments on research into the role of emotions in conflict resolution. You’ll have the chance to ask your questions and share your insights in this interactive session.

This session is a collaboration between the Knowledge & Learning Commons, Ken Cloke, the International Mediation Institute, the Swiss Chamber of Commercial Mediation and the Swiss Center for Affective Sciences at UNIGE.

Speakers:  
Mr. Kenneth Cloke  
Mediator

Mr. Jeremy Lack  
IMI & SCCM (Section Romandie)

Dr. Olga Klimecki  
Senior Researcher UNIGE

Knowledge & Learning Commons @UNGeneva  
FOR UN STAFF, DIPLOMATS, INTERNS
Commons Night Class (April 29th 2020; 17h30-19h30 CEST)

COMMONS NIGHT CLASS
Mediating in a Multilateral World
Learning to collaborate through conflict resolution

Speakers:
Jeremy LACK, Esq. (IMI & SCCM)
Kenneth CLOKE, Mediator
Dr. Olga KLIMECKI (UNIGE)

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Conflicts as Icebergs

A dispute is never about what it is about ...

Although the “objective” aspects of the dispute may be apparent ...

... the “subjective” aspects remain to be discovered.

The Facts
The Law(s)
The Positions

Misunderstandings
Perceptions
Emotions
Interests
Concerns
Feelings
Beliefs
Values
Needs
Fears
The Choices: **Appropriate** Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Least Evaluative
Least Structured
Least Formal

Most Evaluative
Most Structured
Most Formal

Consensual
Partners in control

Adversarial
Third party in control

Source: J. Kalowski, JOK Consulting
What type of negotiation are the partners seeking?

Two monologues

A dialogue
Adjudicative Processes (Arbitration/Litigation) ...

The 4 main differences between Arbitration & Litigation Tribunals:

**Litigation:**
1. Judges appointed by state
2. State laws of civil procedure apply
3. Binding judgment, with appellate review
4. Limited recognition & enforceability of judgments in other countries

**Arbitration:**
1. Arbitrators appointed by disputants
2. Institutional or ad-hoc rules apply
3. Binding award, with limited appeals possible
4. Greater recognition and enforceability in other countries (UNCITRAL New York Convention of 1958 (156 countries))

Source: Joanna Kalowski
... Conciliation (an expert who guides the discussion) ...

Resolution by parties

Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA)

Conciliator

Proposals

Legal doctrine

Positions

“Relevant” facts

Statutes

Precedents

Party 1

“OBJECTIVE” JUSTICE

Party 2

Source: Joanna Kalowski
... Mediation

Resolution by parties

- No ZOPA
- No proposals
- Interests, not Positions
- No facts are irrelevant (emotions, relationships ...)
- Law is a benchmark, not a driver for outcomes

“SUBJECTIVE” JUSTICE

Source: Joanna Kalowski
What is the impact of each process on the disputants?

A. Facilitative Non-Evaluative
B. Directive Non-Evaluative
C. Facilitative Evaluative
D. Directive Evaluative

Proposals:
1. Start at A?
2. Move around?
3. Combine?

Source: Based on L. Riskin “The New Old & New New Grids”
The Impact of Neurosciences on Process Design & Outcomes

- Neurosciences are providing new insights (e.g., neuro-digital interfaces)
- We can build on innate human heuristics ("polarities")
  - Emotional Regulation
  - Social plasticity
  - Attention orientation

$O_2$ & $C_6H_{12}O_6$ are limited
The TRI-O/S Model: 1 Hardware + 3 Operating Systems (O/S)
Social plasticity: 2 innate behavioural patterns in discussions

• **Mode 1:** Reward and pro-social engagement

• **Mode 2:** Threat and antisocial disconnection

Process design & its potential impact on innate O/S 1-3

1. Disagreement: The Problem
2. Debate + polemic: The people
3. Actions, not words
4. Images and coalitions
5. Deliberate loss of face
6. Management of threat
7. Limited destructive blows
8. Fragmentation of the enemy
9. Together into the abyss

O/S 1-3: Mediation can be effective for de-escalating the conflict at any stage and orienting attention to interests (i.e., rewards)

O/S 1-3: Entering into the images/coalition zone (Level 4) can mean the “Neutral” may become a threat and/or used competitively (= coalitions!)

O/S 3: Arbitration/Litigation can be effective for managing late stage conflicts

Target zone for conflict resolution?

Inspired by: Tina Monberg
F. Glasl’s “Confronting Conflict”
Tonight’s Speakers

Ken Cloke - 1st
Mediator, Arbitrator, Alternative Dispute Resolution Consultant and Contractor
Greater Los Angeles Area • 500+ connections • Contact info

Olga Klimecki - 1st
researcher at Université de Genève
Geneva, Canton of Geneva, Switzerland • 82 connections • Contact info

Places mediated:
• Armenia
• Australia
• Brazil
• China
• Cuba
• Greece
• India
• Nicaragua
• Pakistan
• Zimbabwe

Founder:

https://www.kencloe.com/

https://www.unige.ch/cisa/research/topics/specific-research-project/emotions-and-conflict/
Thank you!
An Overview of Conflict and Resolution

Kenneth Cloke
“We have thought of peace as passive and war as the active way of living. The opposite is true. War is not the most strenuous life. It is a kind of rest cure compared to the task of reconciling our differences... From War to Peace is not from the strenuous to the easy existence; it is from the futile to the effective, from the stagnant to the active, from the destructive to the creative way of life... The world will be regenerated by the people who rise above these passive ways and heroically seek, by whatever hardship, by whatever toil, the methods by which people can agree.”

Mary Parker Follett 1868-1933
Overview of Conflict
Alternative Definitions of Conflict (1)

1. Conflict represents a lack of awareness of the immanence of death or sudden catastrophe.

2. Conflict arises wherever there is a failure of collaboration or community.

3. Conflict reflects an ignorance of our essential inter-connectedness, of the beauty of the human spirit.

4. Conflict is a lack of acceptance of ourselves that we have projected onto others, a way of blaming someone else for what we perceive as failures in our own lives, of diverting attention from our mistakes.

5. Conflict represents a boundary violation, a failure to value or recognize our own integrity, and therefore the personal space of others.

6. Conflict reflects a need to support or maintain a false image of who we are.

7. Conflict is a way of obtaining the acknowledgment, sympathy or support we need by casting ourselves as the victim of some evil doer.

8. Conflict is a lack of skill or experience at being able to handle a particular kind of behavior.

9. Conflict is the continued pursuit of our own false expectations, the desire to hold on to our unrealistic fantasies.

10. Conflict is a lack of appreciation of subtlety in what someone else is saying.

11. Conflict is a result of what is not communicated, of secrets, confusions and cover-ups.
12. Conflict represents a lack of effectiveness or clarity in communicating what we feel, think or want.

13. Conflict is a way of opposing someone who represents the parent with whom we have not yet resolved our relationship.

14. Conflict is the sound made by the cracks in a system, the manifestation of contradictory forces coexisting in a single space.

15. Conflict is the voice of the new paradigm, a call for change in a system that has outlived its usefulness.

16. Conflict reflects an inability to say good-bye, a refusal to let go of something that is dead or dying.

17. Conflict is a way of being negatively intimate when positive intimacy has become impossible.

18. Conflict is the antagonistic voice of half of a paradox, enigma, duality, polarity or contradiction.

19. Conflict is a superficial interpretation of difference, diversity and opposition, one that ignores their essential role in creating balance and symbiosis.

20. Conflict is an opportunity and a request for authenticity, emotional honesty, acknowledgment, intimacy, empathy, communication, understanding, growth, or learning; in other words, for a better relationship.
The Iceberg of Conflict

ISSUES

PERSONALITIES

EMOTIONS

INTERESTS, NEEDS, DESIRES

SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS

HIDDEN EXPECTATIONS

AWARENESS OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS

© Kenneth Cloke
Aggressive Responses to Conflict

If A attacks B (A→B), B can respond in several ways:

- (counter attack)
- (defend)
- (roll over)
- (blame someone else)
- (run away)
- (refuse to budge)
- (undermine A)
Collaborative Responses to Conflict

A —— B

(bring in a mediator)

A ↑ B

(focus on the problem as an “it”)

AB → [ ]

(focus on the future and/or interests)

→ B

(welcome difference, invite it in)

A ←

(create introspection)

“—”

(reframe the issue)

B —

(let it pass through you)
# Two Approaches to Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Win/Lose, Adversarial, Competitive</th>
<th>Win/Win, Cooperative, Collaborative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Guarded, secretive, deceptive</td>
<td>1. Open, honest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coercive</td>
<td>2. Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Blaming and fault finding</td>
<td>3. Little blaming or fault finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mistrust, suspicion</td>
<td>1. Trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Individualistic</td>
<td>2. Mutual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Past focused</td>
<td>3. Future focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Negative</td>
<td>5. Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Bargain from positions</td>
<td>1. Bargain from interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attack each other</td>
<td>2. Attack problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use whatever standards will</td>
<td>3. Develop fair, objective standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advance position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consider only options which</td>
<td>4. Invent options for mutual gains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will advance position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Win/Lose</td>
<td>1. Win/Win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Compromise between positions</td>
<td>2. Mutual needs met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Feeling of being overpowered</td>
<td>3. Mutual ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Battle scars, distrust</td>
<td>4. Dignity, increased trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Alienation</td>
<td>5. Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on work by Steve Erikson
Conflicts Styles

High Concern for People

Accommodation  Collaboration

Compromise

Avoidance  Aggression

High Concern for Results
## Conflict Resolution Strategies (1)

1. **Avoiding Conflict**
   - When an issue seems trivial.
   - When one has no power or can't change.
   - Where damage due to conflict outweighs its benefits.
   - In order to cool down, reduce tensions or regain composure.
   - When the need to gather information outweighs the need to make an immediate decision.
   - When others can resolve the conflict more effectively.
   - When the issue is tangential or symptomatic.

2. **Engaging in Conflict**
   - To achieve quick, decisive action.
   - In an emergency.
   - To enforce unpopular rules or discipline.
   - When the issues are vital and one knows one is right.
   - To protect one's self against people who take advantage of non-competitive behavior.

3. **Accommodating Conflict**
   - When one is wrong, or to show one is reasonable.
   - When the issue is more important to others, in order to establish good will.
   - To build up credits.
   - When one is outmatched or losing.
   - To preserve harmony or avoid disruption.
   - To help subordinates develop by letting them learn from their mistakes.

[Thomas-Kilman Instrument]
Conflict Resolution Strategies (2)

4. **Compromising**
   - When goals are moderately important.
   - When opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals.
   - To achieve a temporary settlement of complex issues.
   - To arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure.
   - As a backup when competition or collaboration fails.

5. **Collaborating**
   - To find an integrative solution when both sides find it difficult to compromise.
   - When the objective is to learn.
   - To merge insights from different perspectives.
   - When long-range solutions are required.
   - To gain commitment by consensus.
   - To empower one or both participants.
   - To work through hard feelings.
   - To model cooperative solutions for subordinates.
   - To solve problems between people who work closely together.
   - To end conflict rather than paper it over.
   - To improve morale.
   - To increase motivation and productivity.
   - When a team effort is required.
   - When creative solutions are needed.
   - When all other methods fail.
Dimensions of Conflict Resolution

- 0 Dimensions = Impasse, Chaos, Anarchy
- 1 Dimension = Power-Based, Dictatorial, My Solution, Factually Informed, Obedience
- 2 Dimensions = Rights-Based, Adversarial, Compromise, Legally Informed, Acceptance
- 3 Dimensions = Interest-Based, Collaborative, Emotionally Informed, Consensus
- 4 Dimensions = Heart-Based, Caring, Relationally Informed, Unanimity

© Kenneth Cloke
## Dimensions in Teenage-Parent Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teenager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.</td>
<td>Impasse</td>
<td>Accusations, Insults</td>
<td>“Irresponsible.”</td>
<td>“Bossy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Command</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>10 PM</td>
<td>Obedience or Punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
<td>10 PM</td>
<td>2 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Emotional Exchange</td>
<td>Empathy, Dialogue</td>
<td>Anger, Fear</td>
<td>Resentment, Shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Discussion of Interests</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Spiritual Awareness</td>
<td>Learning, Forgiveness</td>
<td>Death of Family</td>
<td>Loss of Security/Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Family System</td>
<td>Change, Transcendence</td>
<td>Prevention, Change</td>
<td>Supportive Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Crossroads of Conflict

Problems we are required to solve

Evolution of conflicts

Problem solving skills

© Kenneth Cloke
Some Crossroads in Conflict

• Whether to engage in the conflict and behave badly, or calm down and try to discuss it.
• Whether to acknowledge the other person’s truth or deny it, remain rooted in one’s own story, and slip into biased or delusional thinking.
• Whether to experience intense negative emotions and feelings, or to repress and sublimate them.
• Whether to experience one’s opponent as an equal human being entitled to respect, or to demonize him or her and victimize oneself.
• Whether to aggressively assert and hold tight to one’s position, or to search for solutions that satisfy both sets of interests.
• Whether to acknowledge and grieve one’s losses and then let them go, or hold on to one’s pain as something precious and continue reliving them.
• Whether to learn from one’s opponent and the conflict so as to transcend it, or hold on to one’s grievances and being right, and leave it bottle it up inside.
• Whether to forgive one’s opponent and release ourselves from the burden of our own false expectations, or remain isolated and wounded deep inside.
• Whether to reopen our hearts, reconcile and re-integrate with one’s opponent, or remain closed-hearted.
The Systemic Nature of Conflict

• Every conflict takes place not only between individuals, but within a context, culture, and environment; surrounded by social, economic, and political forces; inside organizational systems, structures, and technological settings; among a diverse community of people; at a particular moment in time and history; on a stage, milieu, or backdrop.

• None of these elements is conflict-neutral. Each contributes – sometimes in veiled and unspoken, yet profound ways to the nature, intensity, duration, impact, and meaning of our conflicts.

• Each profoundly affects the quality of our work lives, our personal capacity for joy and compassion, and our ability to collaborate in solving our problems.

• Like ripples in a pond, every conflict and every resolution in the workplace extends outward, impacting others and creating a “mediation butterfly effect.”

• As a result, we are each responsible as organizational citizens for building conflict resolution capacity in our workplaces.
What are Chronic Conflicts?

Chronic conflicts are those that nations, societies, organizations or individuals

• Have not fully resolved

• Need to resolve in order to grow and evolve

• Are capable of resolving

• Can only resolve by abandoning old approaches and adopting new ones

• Are resistant to resolving because they are frightened, dissatisfied, insecure, uncertain, angry, or unwilling to change

© Kenneth Cloke
Features of Chronic Conflict

Chronic conflicts can often be distinguished by their:

• Repetition
• Low levels of resolution
• Incongruity between high level of emotion and apparent triviality of the issues over which people are fighting
• Being commonly mistaken for miscommunications or personality clashes
• Tolerance of disrespectful and adversarial behaviors,
• Seeming irrationality
• Accidental misunderstandings
• Apparent idiosyncratic causes and circumstances
• Underlying similarities

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10 Reasons We Get Stuck in Conflict

- Conflict defines us and gives our lives meaning.
- Conflict gives us energy, even if it is only the energy of anger, fear, jealousy, guilt, shame, and grief.
- Conflict ennobles our misery and makes it appear that we are suffering for a worthwhile cause.
- Conflict safeguards our personal space and encourages others to recognize our needs and respect our privacy.
- Conflict creates intimacy, even if it is only the transient, negative intimacy of fear, rage, attachment, and loss.
- Conflict camouflages our weaknesses and diverts attention from sensitive subjects we would rather avoid discussing.
- Conflict powerfully communicates what we honestly feel, allowing us to vent and assuage our pain by unloading our emotions onto others.
- Conflict gets results.
- Conflict makes us feel righteous by encouraging us to believe we are opposing evil behaviors and rewarding those that are good.
- Conflict prompts change, which feels better than impasse and stagnation.

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Common Elements in Relational Conflicts

- Power
- Money
- Sex
- Intimacy
- Children
- Love
- Career
- Commitment
- Responsibilities
- Cleanliness
- Privacy
- Friends
- Control
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Health

- Personal Space
- Identity
- Expectations
- Blended Families
- Monogamy
- Religion
- Values
- Politics
- Communication Styles
- Culture
- Holidays
- Negotiation Styles
- Goals
- Aging
- Conflict Styles

© Kenneth Cloke
Common Ways of Handling Them

- Arguing
- Screaming
- Physical Violence
- Leaving
- Talking
- Hiding
- Silence
- Insults
- Crying
- Shopping
- Eating
- Punishing
- Sarcasm
- Sex/Affairs

- Alcohol / Drugs
- Illness/Injury
- Move
- Remodel
- Denial
- Avoidance
- Depression
- Medication
- Focus on Children
- Call Parents/Friends
- TV
- Become a Workaholic
- Separation
- Divorce

© Kenneth Cloke
Some Ways of Handling Them Better

• Time-Outs
• Team Meetings
• Apologizing
• Vacations or Retreats
• Setting Times to Talk
• Taking Turns Speaking
• Gifts
• Listening
• Expressing Empathy
• Socializing
• Individual Therapy
• Informal Problem Solving
• Collaborative Negotiation
• Team Interventions

• Mediation
• Restorative Justice
• Conflict Coaching
• Councils or Circles
• Appreciative Inquiry
• Dialogues
• Skill Building
• Giving Thanks
• Asking Questions
• Acknowledgements
• Expressing Gratitude
• Increased Awareness
• Meditating
• Rituals and Celebrations
Communication and Listening
A Communication Model
How We Communicate in Conflict

- **Judgmentally:** “You are a … “
- **Moralistically:** “You should …”
- **Insultingly:** “If you weren’t so …”
- **Disrespectfully:** “Who cares what you think.”
- **Negatively:** “You don’t understand a thing.”
- **Demandingly:** “I insist that you …”
- **Threateningly:** “If you don’t...”
- **Adversarially:** “You are totally wrong.”
- **Competitively:** “That’s my ...”
- **One-Sidedly:** “The truth is ...”
- **Hierarchically:** “Because I said so, that’s why.”
- **Comparatively:** “I am much more ... than you are.”
- **Absolutely:** “You always/never ...”
- **Humiliatingly:** “You don’t get it, do you?”
- **Victimizingly:** “He did it to me.”
- **Fatalistically:** “She’s never going to change.”
Conflict and Communication

- The context of adversarial conflict interferes with the usual ways we have of assessing meaning, generating an overarching distrust of ordinary meanings.

- Adversarial conflict also produces a set of contrary meanings and negative interpretations, even for common, conflict-free words such as “hello.”

- Because of distrust, nothing spoken is likely to be accepted in terms of its ordinary meaning.

- Instead, meaning is supplied by association with memories gathered from fear, anger, grief, guilt, jealousy, and similar emotions.

- These meanings become self-reinforcing, creating a cycle from which there is no obvious escape.
Communication and Conflict

Approving
Respectful
Responsive

Positive Feelings
Pride, Self-Esteem
Cooperation
Connection

Active and Passive
Communication

Acknowledgment
Listening
Collaborative
Negotiation

Agreement

Disapproving
Disrespectful
Unresponsive

Negative Feelings
Shame, Humiliation
Resistance
Opposition
No Acknowledgment

Anger
Shame
Anger
Shame

Based on research by Suzanne M. Retzinger
Interpreting Conflict Communications

1. The most important part of conflict communications is not what is said but what is meant.

2. Most meanings are ambiguous, uncertain, over-determined, non-linear, and susceptible to more than one interpretation, and the same communication may have different, even opposite meanings to different people.

3. The greater the ambiguity in the communication, the greater the potential gap between the speakers’ meaning and that described by the listener.

4. Metaphors, symbols, myths, parables, and rituals that are often hidden or disguised and organized beneath the level of conscious thought, invest ambiguity with meaning.

© Kenneth Cloke
Interpreting Conflict Communications

• All words have hidden emotional meanings that become more powerful the more emotional they are, and the less they are revealed.

• Meaning in conflict stories is communicated through words, body language, tone of voice, and facial expression, among others. Indirect forms of communication communicate meaning more accurately than words.

• Meaning is established by the intention (frequently emotional and unconscious) of the speaker, the receptivity and attitude (also emotional and unconscious) of the listener, and the larger context in which the communication takes place.

• The speaker, the listener, and the context therefore form a system that interacts with itself to create the meaning of conflict communications.
Why We Repeat Ourselves in Conflict

1. We didn’t get it right the first time.
2. We don’t feel heard, or that the other person really got it.
3. The issues are chronic, systemic and fueled at a level we have not yet addressed.
4. Something new has happened that has re-triggered or re-invigorated an old issue.
5. Something has been hidden or intentionally disguised that we have not yet discovered.
6. We have been talking around the periphery and not at the center of the problem.
Non-Verbal Forms of Communication

- Architecture and Use of Space
- Setting
- Cultural Expectations
- Use of Time
- Seating and Separation
- Facial Expressions
- Gestures
- Body Movements
- Attitude
- Balance
- Tone of Voice
- Pitch
- Duration of Speaking
- Modulation
- Pronunciation
- Scent and Odor
- Context
- Ambiance and Aesthetics
- Organization of Space
- Distance and Orientation
- Ownership and Territoriality
- Eye Movements
- Posture
- Energy and Presence
- Posture
- Breathing
- Loudness
- Pace and Rhythm of Speaking
- Quality of Voice
- Articulation
- Silence and Use of Questions
- Quality and Duration of Touch

© Kenneth Cloke
Subtle Variations in Communication

I’m glad to see you. (Even if no one else is.)
I’m glad to see you. (What made you think I wouldn’t be?)
I’m glad to see you. (Instead of just talking on the phone.)
I’m glad to see you. (But not the shlubb you came with.)
I’m glad to see you. (It’s wonderful to be with you.)
I’m glad to see you. (So stop asking me if I am.)
I’m … glad-to-see-you. (Are you glad to see me?)
I’m glad-to-see you. (And I’m drunk or I don’t really mean it.)
I’m glad … to see you. (As an afterthought)
I’m glad-to-see you. (Me Tarzan, You Jane)

[Based on Rudy Rucker, Mind Tools]
“You Always …” “You Never …”

Merely by using these words, we:

• Camouflage our requests as statements of fact
• Exaggerate the truth
• Stereotype the other person as unreasonable
• Not take responsibility for communicating our needs
• Ignore others’ needs, explanations, or reasons for acting in their own self-interest
• Fail to accurately describe what we really want from others
• Miss opportunities to become vulnerable and invite others into more intimate conversation and relationship
• Suggest that it is not acceptable to express deeper emotions directly
• Infuse frustration and disappointment into the conversation
• Convert desire into anger and hurt feelings into annoyance
• Miss opportunities to collaboratively negotiate the satisfaction of mutual needs and diverse interests
• Create a source of chronic conflict within our relationship
Which Description is More Accurate?

Lazy  Relaxed
Micro-Managing  Detailed
Gossiping  Discussing
Yelling  Concerned
Conspiring  Planning
Bad Mouthing  Critiquing
Angry  Upset
Evil  Harmful
Two-timing  Playing the field
Egotistical  High self-esteem
## Which Version Is True?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Them</th>
<th>Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. They don’t understand.</td>
<td>1. We haven’t explained it to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They are angry and out to get us.</td>
<td>2. We are not listening to their complaints or responding well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. They won’t change.</td>
<td>3. We haven’t explained clearly enough why change is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. They don’t respond to our requests on time.</td>
<td>4. We don’t follow up to make sure they understand our requests and are able to respond on time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Stereotype

1. Pick a characteristic
2. Blow it completely out of proportion
3. Collapse the whole person into the characteristic
4. Ignore individual differences and variations
5. Ignore subtleties and complexities
6. Ignore our common humanity
7. Make it match your own worst fears
8. Make it cruel
Alternative Ways of Listening

- Hearing vs. listening
- Listening at vs. listening with
- Listening for vs. listening to
- Listening in a role vs. listening as a person
- Listening passively vs. listening actively
- Listening guardedly vs. listening openly
- Listening sympathetically vs. listening empathetically
- Listening in order to vs. listening in order that
- Listening for facts vs. listening for feelings
- Listening individually vs. listening together
- Listening for commonalities vs. listening for differences
- Listening to words vs. listening for meanings
- Listening for problems vs. listening for solutions
- Involved listening vs. committed listening.
Elements of Demonization

- **Assumption of Injurious Intentions** - they intended to cause the harm we experienced
- **Distrust** - every idea or statement made by them is wrong or proposed for dishonest reasons
- **Externalization of Guilt** - everything bad or wrong is their fault
- **Attribution of Evil** - they want to destroy us and what we value most, and must therefore be destroyed themselves
- **Zero-Sum Interests** - everything that benefits them harms us, and *vice versa*
- **Paranoia and Preoccupation with Disloyalty** - any criticism of us or praise of them is disloyal and treasonous
- **Prejudgment** - everyone in the enemy group is an enemy
- **Collapse of Neutrality and Independence into Opposition** - anyone who is not with us is against us
- **Suppression of Empathy** - we have nothing in common and considering them human is dangerous
- **Isolation and Impasse** - we cannot dialogue, negotiate, cooperate, or resolve conflicts with them
- **Self-Fulfilling Prophecy** - their evil makes it permissible for us to act in a hostile way toward them, and *vice versa*

[Based partly on work by Kurt R. and Kati Spillman]
Commonly Cited Moral Rationalizations

- **Moral Justification:** “He did it first.”
- **Euphemistic Labeling:** “All I did was …”
- **Disadvantageous Comparison:** “He’s much worse than I am.”
- **Displacement of Responsibility:** “She made me do it.”
- **Diffusion of Responsibility:** “Everyone is doing it.”
- **Disregard/Distortion of Consequences:** “What I did wasn’t that bad.”
- **Dehumanization:** “He deserved it.”
- **Blaming the Victim:** “She was asking for it.”

(Based on work by Albert Bandura)
Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement

1. **Rationalizing** the possible beneficial consequences of otherwise wrong behaviors that are imagined to outweigh their negative consequences. (“If I make enough money by doing this I can help people later.”)

2. **Obscuring** or lessening personal responsibility for participating in the wrongful activity. (“I just did what I was told.” “I just played a small part.” “Other people do the same thing, so why can’t I?”)

3. **Denying** the seriousness of harmful effects on others. (“He won’t mind.” “He’s going to be fine.” “It was only a small thing.” “He can claim it on his insurance.”)

4. **Blaming**, dehumanizing, or derogating the victim. (“He was stupid.” “She was a bitch.” “It served him right.” “She shouldn’t have …“)

5. **Demonizing** the perpetrator. (“He is vicious.” “He’s not human.” “He should be shot.”)

6. **Magnifying** or exaggerating the harm that occurred. (“What he did [if a minor infraction] is intolerable.”)

7. **Distancing** or separating from both sides. (“A plague on both their houses.” “It has nothing to do with me.”)

(Based on work by Albert Bandura)
Phrases for Miscommunication

Ordering:
"You must..."; "You have to..."; "You will..."

Threatening:
"If you don't then..."; "You’d better or else..."

Preaching:
"You should..."; "You ought..."; "It's your duty..."

Lecturing:
"Here is why you're wrong..."; "Do you realize..."

Giving Answers:
"What I would do is..."; "It would be best if you..."

Judging:
"You are argumentative... lazy"; "You'll never change."

Excusing:
"It's not so bad..."; "You'll feel better..."

Diagnosing:
"You're just trying to get attention..."; "What you need is..."

Prying:

Labeling:
"You're being unrealistic... emotional... angry..."

Manipulating:
"Don't you think you should..."

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Phrases for Active Listening

**Encouraging:**
"Can you tell me more?"

**Summarizing:**
"Let me see if I understand what you just said..."

**Reframing:**
"I understand that you feel ________ when s/he _________."

**Empathizing:**
"I can appreciate why you feel that way."

**Normalizing:**
"Many people feel the way you do..."

**Soliciting:**
"I would like your advice on how we can resolve this."

**Open Questioning:**
"Why?..."; "What would you like to see happen?"

**Responding:**
"I see it this way..."; How do you see it?"

**Encouraging:**
"How would you feel if it were you?"

**Encouraging:**
"I can appreciate your willingness to be here..."

**Empathizing:**
"I can appreciate why you feel that way."

**Clarifying:**
"When did this happen?"

**Acknowledging:**
"I can see you are feeling very angry right now."

**Validating:**
"I appreciate your willingness to be here..."
What to Listen For …

• Facts
• Subjective Experiences
• Emotions
• Intentions
• Interests and Positions
• Dreams and Visions
• Humiliations
• Family Patterns
• Defensiveness
• Denials
• Insults
• Metaphors
• Stereotypes
• Openings to Dialogue
• Requests for Acknowledgement
• Universality
• Cries for Help

• Interpretations
• Modes of Perception
• Roles
• Expectations
• Wishes and Desires
• Fears
• Ego Defenses
• Self-Esteem
• Resistance
• Confessions
• Self-Doubts
• Subconscious Meanings
• Prejudices
• Offers to Negotiate
• Need for Support
• Uniqueness
• Desire for Forgiveness
## Pronouns and Conflict Resolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Form of Communication</th>
<th>Predictable Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>They</em> [Example: They are lazy and irresponsible.]</td>
<td>Stereotype</td>
<td>Prejudice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You</em> [Example: You are lazy and irresponsible.]</td>
<td>Accusation</td>
<td>Counter-Accusation/Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>He, She</em> [Example: He/She is lazy and irresponsible.]</td>
<td>Demonization/Victimization</td>
<td>Blame and Shame/Disempowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It</em> [Example: There is a lot of work here – how shall we divide it so we pull our own weight?]</td>
<td>Objectification</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I</em> [Example: I feel overworked and would like to take time off but won’t let myself and am jealous when you do. / Could you give me a hand with this?]</td>
<td>Confession/Request</td>
<td>Listening/Responsiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We</em> [Example: We haven’t been clear about how to share our joint responsibilities. How would you suggest we share them?]</td>
<td>Partnership/Collaboration</td>
<td>Consensus/Ownership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reframing Communications

- Frame statements to express what you want from the other person, rather than judging that person’s attitude or behavior.
- Frame issues so they cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no”.
- Frame problems as questions or issues, rather than as statements of opinion.
- Frame issues so that multiple solutions are possible.
- Separate issues or problems from people, and depersonalize the problem.
- Frame issue so that they are joint problems.
- Frame issues in terms of future relationships rather than past guilt or innocence.
- Frame issues so they are within an area where the person has authority and resources to make a decision and implement it.
- Frame issues in a way that does not threaten anyone’s self-esteem or dignity.
- Frame issues in an objective and unbiased manner.
- Frame issues in terms of details and specifics.
- Frame broader issues as more easily handled sub-issues.
- Frame issues in ways that encourage creative problem solving.
- Ask if you framed the problem accurately.

(Some ideas drawn from work by Howard Gadlin)
10 Easy Questions for Anyone in Conflict

1. What happened?
2. How did it feel?
3. What do you want?
4. Why do you want it?
5. What are you doing in order to get it?
6. Is that working?
7. What do you think you might do instead?
8. What is one thing the other person could do that could help solve this problem?
9. What have you learned from this experience that you want to do differently next time?
10. Is there anything else you want to say to each other before we end?
Questions for Open-Hearted Conversations (1)

1. Before we begin, can you tell me a little about yourselves?
2. What do you hope will happen as a result of this conversation? Why is that important?
3. Why are you here? Why do you care? What did it take for you to come here today?
4. What kind of relationship would you like to have with each other? Why?
5. What is one thing you like or respect about each other? Can you give an example? Another? How does it feel to hear each other say these things? What would happen if you said them more often?
6. Is there anything you have in common? Any values you share?
7. What life experiences have you had that have led you to feel so strongly about this issue?
8. What role have you played in this conflict, either through action or inaction?
9. If you had 20/20 hindsight, what would you do differently?
10. Is there anything you would like to apologize for?
11. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would each of you rank that apology? What could you do to make it a 10? Are you willing to try right now?
12. What is one thing you would like him to acknowledge you for? What is one thing you are willing to acknowledge him for?
13. What do you think she was trying to say in that apology/acknowledgment? [To her] Is that accurate? [If not] Would you like to know what is accurate for her? Why don’t you ask her?
14. How would you evaluate the effectiveness of what you just said in reaching her? How could you make it more effective? Would you like some feedback? Why don’t you ask her?
15. Is this conversation working? Would you like it to work? Why would you like it to work? What is one thing she can do that would make it to work for you? [To her] Are you willing to do that? Would you be willing to start the conversation over and do those things now?

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Questions for Open-Hearted Conversations (2)

16. What is the crossroads you are at right now in your conflict?
17. Will you ever convince him you are right? [If not] When will you stop trying?
18. What would you most like to hear her say to you right now?
19. What would you have wanted him to have said instead?
20. What does that mean to you? What other meanings might it have? What do you think it meant to her? Would you like to find out? Why don’t you ask her?
21. Can you imagine what happened to him also happening to you? What would it feel like? Would you like to know what it felt like to him? Why don’t you ask?
22. Would you be willing to take a moment of silence right now to think about that?
23. Has anything like this happened to you before? Who? When?
24. What are you *not* talking about that you still need to discuss?
25. What issues are you holding on to that the other person still doesn’t know about?
26. What price have you paid for this conflict? What has it cost you? How much longer are you going to continue paying that price?
27. What would it take for you to give this conflict up, let go of what happened, and move on with your life?
28. Do you really want this in your life? What would it take to let it go?
29. What would change in your life if you reached an agreement?
30. If this were the last conversation you were going to have with each other, what would you want to say?
An Overview of Resolution
10 Strategies to Resolve Conflicts at Work

Strategy One: Understand the Culture and Dynamics of Conflict
Strategy Two: Listen Actively, Empathetically, and Responsively
Strategy Three: Search Beneath the Surface for Hidden Meanings
Strategy Four: Acknowledge and Reframe Emotions
Strategy Five: Separate What Matters from What Gets in the Way
Strategy Six: Solve Problems Creatively and Paradoxically
Strategy Seven: Learn from Difficult Behaviors
Strategy Eight: Lead and Coach for Transformation
Strategy Nine: Explore Resistance and Negotiate Collaboratively
Strategy Ten: Mediate, and Design Systems for Prevention
6 Levels of Conflict Resolution

1. Cease Fire/Stopping the Fighting/De-Escalation

2. Settlement of the Issues

3. Resolution of the Underlying Emotional Issues and Satisfaction of Interests

4. Forgiveness and Self-Forgiveness

5. Reconciliation and Return to Open Heartedness

6. Prevention and Systems Design

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Power, Rights and Interests

Power

*Dictatorship, Autocracy and Hierarchy*
Violence, Orders, Pronouncements, Negotiation by Force

Rights

*Rules and Regulations, Policies and Procedures*
Adjudication, Arbitration, Decision, Positional Negotiation

Interests

*Needs and Desires, Consensus and Diversity*
Informal Problem Solving, Mediation, Dialogue, Collaborative Negotiation
Some Trivial Examples

**Power:**
“You must ...” “You shall ...” “You will ...” “... or else.” “... because I said so, that’s why.”

**Rights:**
“You should ...” “You ought to ...” “You need to ...” “You have a right to ...” “You are entitled to ...”

**Interests:**
“You could ...” “You might consider ...” “What would happen if you ...” “What would you like to have happen?” “Why?” “What do you think will happen if you ...”
Conflict Evolution in the Sandbox

*Power:*

- Grab the toy, hit and scream.
- Get someone in authority to solve it for you.

*Rights:*

- Create rules like “first come, first served.”
- Manipulate the rules, cite technical reasons why you are right, and appeal to a higher authority.

*Interests:*

- Offer them questions they can ask each other to find out what they want and resolve it themselves.
- Help them learn how to play together.
Why Mediation Works, from A to Z (1)

A. Mediation breaks issues down into "bite-sized" bits, isolating issues so they seem less complex.
B. The process in mediation is collaborative rather than confrontational.
C. Mediation acknowledges and values all human needs.
D. Mediation does not rely on memory or credibility.
E. Mediation allows the parties to decide the outcome.
F. Mediation encourages creative remedies.
G. Mediation is future-oriented, as opposed to law which tries to resolve what happened in the past.
H. Mediation permits parties to become human to each other and appear less like cardboard figures.
I. Mediation allows both sides to see the problem as a whole.
J. Mediation employs the synergy between the parties to bring about agreement.
K. Mediation compliments the parties as opposed to insulting them.
L. Mediation equalizes the power of the parties to compel a result, regardless of the difference in their real power outside the mediation.
Why Mediation Works, from A to Z (2)

M. Mediation surfaces hidden agendas.
N. Mediation lets quiet people speak and talkative people be quiet.
O. Mediation allows parties to "fine-tune" results or change their minds.
P. Mediation encourages the parties to actually tell the whole truth, including the subjective and emotional truth.
Q. Mediation connects parties through empathy.
R. Mediation permits the mediators to model useful behavior and techniques for avoiding future conflicts.
S. Mediation allows both sides to win.
T. In mediation, the focus is shifted from people to positions and from positions to interests.
U. Mediation permits dialogue to occur in the language of metaphor.
V. Mediation reveals the parties' deeper motivations.
W. Mediation allows for constructive feedback without the appearance of judgment.
X. Mediation empowers both sides to say no.
Y. Mediation lets the parties compromise and save face.
Z. Mediation encourages the parties to substitute internal for external constraints and avoids enforcement problems due to resistance.
25 Varieties of Mediation

1. Neighborhood and Community Mediation
2. Peer Mediation
3. Cross-Cultural Mediation
4. Prejudice and Discrimination Mediation
5. Sexual Harassment Mediation
6. Divorce Mediation
7. Family Mediation
8. Family Business Mediation
9. Marital and Relational Mediation
10. Prenuptial Mediation
11. Workplace Mediation
12. Organizational Mediation
13. Ombudsmanship
14. School Mediation
15. Victim-Offender Mediation
16. Restorative Justice Mediation
17. Public Policy Mediation
18. Social Justice and Advocacy Mediation
19. Environmental Mediation
20. Healthcare and Hospital Mediation
21. Commercial Mediation
22. Litigated Case Mediation
23. Insurance Mediation
24. Multi-Door Courthouses
25. Conflict Resolution Systems Design

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25 Conflict Resolution Processes

1. Active, empathetic and responsive listening
2. Appreciative inquiry
3. Non-violent communication
4. Emotional intelligence
5. Collaborative, mutual gain and interest-based negotiation
6. Consensus building
7. Prejudice reduction and bias awareness
8. Support for diversity and cross-cultural communication
9. Team building
10. Community organizing
11. Mediation
12. Dialogue facilitation
13. Circles
14. Opening heart-to-heart conversations
15. Restorative justice
16. Victim-offender mediation
17. Awareness, mindfulness and meditation
18. Informal problem solving
19. Conflict coaching
20. Conflict resolution consulting
21. Participatory feedback and evaluation
22. Conflict resolution systems design
23. Apology and acknowledgment
24. Forgiveness and reconciliation
25. Training and capacity building

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Some Mediative Interventions

- **Transparency**
  “What just happened in the conversation we were having?”

- **Inquiring**
  “What do you think should be done? Why do you think so?”

- **Supporting**
  “I appreciate your willingness to speak up and express your opinions. Here is an example that supports your point.”

- **Acknowledging**
  “You took a risk in making that apology/concession.”

- **Refereeing fairly?**
  “What ground rules do we need so everyone can feel we are behaving fairly?”

- **Concretizing**
  “Can you give a specific example?”

- **Exploring**
  “Can you say more about why you feel so strongly about this issue?”

- **Summarizing**
  “Is this what you are trying to say ...?”

- **Challenging decided?**
  “Is that consistent with the ground rules/what the group has already decided?”

- **Coaching**
  “Is there a way you could respond less defensively?”

- **Connecting**
  “That point connects directly with what was said earlier ... .”

- **Re-orienting real issue?**
  “I think we're lost. Can we get back on track? Are we talking about the real issue?”

- **Problem Solving**
  “What do you see as possible solutions?”

- **Uniting**
  “What can we agree on here?”

- **Contextualizing:**
  “Why did you decide to come together to discuss this issue?”

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8 Steps to Resolution (1)

1. **Set the Stage:** The mediator arranges the environment, welcomes the parties, introduces him/herself, asks those present to introduce themselves and establishes the ground rules for the session.

2. **Listen to the Stories:** Each person explains the conflict from his or her point of view. The mediator uses active listening skills to clarify, restate and summarize; asks questions that will help both parties understand the problem better.

3. **Acknowledge the Emotions:** The mediator acknowledges and validates important feelings, and identifies issues for problem solving or negotiation.

4. **Identify the Interests:** The mediator discovers the underlying interests for each party by asking not only what they want, but *why* they want it.

5. **Solve the Problems:** The mediator helps the parties search together for practical solutions to their problems, including the problem of how to improve their communication and their relationship.
8 Steps to Resolution (2)

6. **Negotiate the Differences:** The mediator helps the parties negotiate their differences collaboratively and arrive at a fair solution, by encouraging both sides to focus on problems rather than people; on interests, rather than positions; on the future rather than the past; and generate options for resolving their differences by finding mutually satisfactory solutions, prioritizing them and searching for solutions that may prevent the conflict from reoccurring.

7. **Confirm the Commitments:** Agreements are written down in a contract which is very specific in terms of who will do what, by when, etc. The agreement is balanced and non-judgmental, and signed copies are given to both parties.

8. **Close the Process:** Once agreement has been reached, the mediator compliments the parties on their success and on the lessons learned, confirms their ownership of the agreement, and sends them away feeling good about themselves and what they have accomplished.

It is possible to break the process down into 2 steps: listening and problem solving; or 20 steps or 100. What is important is to create or discover the areas in something new can happen.
20 Ways to Reduce Conflict (1)

1. Stop arguing, accusing and insulting each other, and sit down together to talk.
2. Take turns speaking and listening without interrupting.
3. Summarize, clarify and acknowledge what the other person has said and feels.
4. Repeat what you think the other person is saying. Ask if you are correct. If not, listen again.
5. Avoid accusations. Say: “I feel … when you … because …”
7. Focus on problems and behaviors rather than personalities.
8. Focus on interests rather than positions. Ask “Why do you want that?” “Why is that important to you?”
9. Break the problem down into smaller parts. Focus on the easiest.
10. Search for creative solutions. Brainstorm ideas.

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20 Ways to Reduce Conflict (2)

11. List, categorize and prioritize all possible solutions, then try to reach consensus on the best option.
12. Agree on criteria that will make the outcome fair and workable.
13. If you can’t agree, take a break and come back to it later.
14. Write down what you want and what you are willing to do to end the dispute.
15. Move on to other issues and circle back after reaching smaller agreements.
16. Split the difference 50/50. Consider what you want in exchange for agreeing to something that is important to them.
17. Consider trade-offs and ways to “expand the pie.”
18. Say what will happen and what you will do next if the dispute is not resolved, then ask if that is what you want and return to options.
20. Ask someone you both trust to mediate or arbitrate the issues.
20 Steps in Mediating Disputes

1. Welcome the parties
2. Set the stage
3. Introduce the process and yourself
4. Set the ground rules
5. Answer any process questions
6. Choose one party to start
7. Model active listening
8. Let the other party speak
9. Explore hidden agendas/ caucus if necessary
10. Set the agenda/ contract to solve the problem

11. Identify a problem to start on
12. Brainstorm options, then select solutions
13. Facilitate the negotiations
14. Fine-tune solutions
15. Resolve the impasses
16. Establish criteria for success, next steps
17. Summarize the agreements
18. Acknowledge participants
19. Confirm process, content, and psychological satisfaction
20. Celebrate successes
How to *Be* in Conflict

1. *Show up* and be as present and authentic as you can be.
2. Listen empathetically for what is hidden beneath words.
3. Tell the truth without blaming or judgment.
4. Engage in poignant, vulnerable, heart-felt communications.
5. Be open-minded, open-hearted, and unattached to outcomes.
6. Act collaboratively in relationships.
7. Display unconditional integrity and respect.
8. Draw on our deepest intuition.
9. Work for completion and closure.
10. Be ready for anything at every moment.
11. Be able to let go, yet give up on no one.

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Learning from Conflict:
How to Talk about Hot Topics
How to Talk about Hot Topics (1)

1. By creating an atmosphere, attitude and context of unconditional respect for each other, regardless of our opinions or positions on the issues
2. By being sure to include people who do not agree with each other
3. By reaching consensus on a set of ground rules or shared values that will guide our conversations
4. By agreeing to use skilled facilitators to keep conversations on track, and skilled mediators to intervene if necessary
5. By agreeing not to suppress anyone’s experiences, reflections, ideas, beliefs, passions, or emotions, while at the same time focusing on the problem as an “it” rather than a “you,” and doing our best not to personalize the problem
6. By asking questions that do not have a single correct answer, but invite people to offer their own unique answers
7. By consistently coming from a place of curiosity and learning, and probing to discover the deeper meaning of the issues to each person

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8. By acknowledging and validating everyone’s deepest interests and concerns, intentions and experiences

9. By expressing gratitude and thanking people for their dissent and diversity, their courage and willingness to learn

10. By breaking large groups up into smaller groups where everyone can participate

11. By sharing responsibility for group process, and modeling openness and honesty, empathy and compassion, listening and acknowledgement

12. By asking each small group to select volunteers to perform important tasks, such as facilitation, recording, process observation, critique of content, presentation to other groups, time-keeping, etc.

13. By stopping the process when it isn’t working, talking openly about what is not working, and agreeing on what can be done to improve it
How to Talk about Hot Topics (3)

14. By designing questions that will draw people on opposite sides into dialogue with each other

15. By asking people in small groups to brainstorm possible solutions and present them to each other

16. By reaching consensus on recommendations for action, and setting aside for future discussion all points on which there is no consensus

17. By seeking ways for those on opposite sides of an issue to agree on specific, practical steps that could improve their communications and relationships in the future

18. By inviting people to consider how they might continue and expand the dialogue

19. By applauding everyone’s efforts and acknowledging their contributions

20. By eliciting feedback, jointly evaluating the process, and making improvements
Some Questions to Encourage Dialogue

1. What life experiences have you had that have led you to feel so passionately about this issue?
2. Where do your beliefs come from?
3. What is at the heart of this issue, for you as an individual?
4. Why were you willing to participate in this dialogue?
5. Why do you care so much about this issue?
6. Do you see any gray areas in the issue we are discussing, or ideas you find it difficult to define?
7. Do you have any mixed feelings, doubts, uncertainties, or discomforts regarding this issue that you would be willing to share?
8. Is there any part of this issue that you are not 100% certain of or would be willing to discuss and talk about?
9. What questions or points of curiosity do you have for others who have different views?
10. Even though you hold widely differing views, are there any concerns or ideas you think you may have in common?
11. What underlying values or ethical beliefs have led you to your current political beliefs?
Some Questions to Encourage Dialogue

(2)

• Do the differences between your positions reveal any riddles, paradoxes, contradictions, or enigmas regarding this issue?
• What fact, if proven to be true, might cause you to think differently?
• Is it possible to view your differences as two sides of the same coin? If so, what unites them? What is the coin?
• Can you separate the issue from the person you disagree with?
• Is there anything positive or acknowledging you would be willing to say about the person on the other side of this issue?
• What processes or ground rules would help you disagree more constructively?
• Instead of focusing on the past, what would you like to see happen in the future? Why?
• Are you disagreeing over fundamental values, or over how to achieve them?
• Is there a way that both of you might be right about different aspects of the issue? How?
• What criteria could you use to decide which idea or approach works best?
• Would it be possible to test your ideas in practice and see which work best?
• How might you do that?
• What could be done to improve each person’s ideas?
• Could any of the other side’s ideas be incorporated into yours? How?
• Is there any aspect of this issue that either of you have left out?
• Are there any other alternatives to what you are both saying?
• What other information would you like to have in order to answer some of these questions?
• What have you learned from this conversation?
• Do you think it would be useful to continue this conversation, to learn more about each other and what you each believe to be true?
• How could you make your dialogue ongoing or more effective?
• What could you do to improve your process for disagreeing with each other in the future?
• For encouraging future dialogue?
• Would you be willing to do that together?
Talking Politics: Some Examples

• Let’s look briefly at some recent political conflicts:
  1) Abortion
  2) Gun Control
  3) Immigration
  4) #Me Too / Time’s Up
  5) Black Lives Matter
  6) Capital Punishment

• Let’s make three assumptions, common in ordinary mediations:
  1) It is not possible to completely discount or disprove any side’s beliefs on any of these issues, because they are partly non-factual;
  2) There is something legitimate and true about everyone’s views; and
  3) There are deeper issues beneath the ones that people are arguing about.

• Three larger issues that lie beneath the surface of several of these issues are:
  1) Individual Rights vs. Social Responsibility
  2) Life vs. Death
  3) Freedom/Collaboration/Equality vs. Control/Competition/Privilege

• Other issues that lie beneath the surface in these conflicts include:
  1) Patriarchy vs. Androgarchy / Hierarchy vs. Heterarchy
  2) Racial, Gender, Class and other forms of Domination vs. Equality
  3) Self vs. Other//Empathy and Kindness vs. Fear and Hatred of Others

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“[T]he ‘conflicts’ of most people are actually attempts to avoid the real conflicts. They are disagreements on minor or superficial matters which by their very nature do not lend themselves to clarification or solution. Real conflicts between two people, those which do not serve to cover up or to project, but which are experienced on the deep level of inner reality to which they belong, are not destructive. They lead to clarification, they produce a catharsis from which both persons emerge with more knowledge and more strength.”

Erich Fromm

“Now, there are many, many people in the world, but relatively few with whom we interact, and even fewer who cause us problems. So, when you come across such a chance for practicing patience and tolerance, you should treat it with gratitude. It is rare. Just as having unexpectedly found a treasure in your own house, you should be happy and grateful to your enemy for providing that precious opportunity.”

The Dalai Lama
Conflict or Cooperation – How can social emotions shape interpersonal and intergroup behavior?

Dr. Olga Klimecki
Key assumptions

1. Emotions play an important role in conflicts

2. Emotions motivate social behavior

3. Emotions and their related behaviors are malleable

Emotions play an important role in conflicts

«high-stake problems are likely to involve powerful emotions and strong impulses to action»

Daniel Kahneman, 2011
(Nobel Prize in Economy 2002)
Emotions motivate social behavior

Different Routes to Understanding Others

**Empathy**
- sharing others emotions

**Empathic distress**
- being overwhelmed by others’ suffering

**Compassion**
- concern for others’ suffering & motivation to help

**Perspective Taking**
- Cognitive understanding of others’ thoughts and intentions

Different Routes to Understanding Others

Empathic Distress
- Increases negative emotions

Compassion
- Increases positive emotions
- Increases helping behavior

Relation of these constructs to interpersonal behavior

Empathy
-> more altruism
less aggression & punishment

Perspective Taking
-> more altruism,
less punishment,
but not always!

Empathic distress
-> withdrawal or helping to alleviate own suffering

Compassion
-> altruism, reduced punishment;
more forgiveness in post-conflict Northern Ireland;
implicit biases towards out-group

Empathy inductions increase prosocial behavior, even in violent offenders (N = 50 and N = 42)

Compassion, perspective taking and activation in dorsolateral prefrontal cortex are associated with less punishment behavior (N = 40 and N = 25)
Target Characteristics also play a role!

- **identifiable victim effect**: more help to single than multiple individuals in need

- **compassion fade**: less compassion for multiple versus single victims

- **intergroup empathy bias**: empathy is biased toward members of own groups, more schadenfreude towards outgroup members

In conflicts over immigration:
pro immigration participants follow empathy and perspective taking instructions,
perspective taking instructions aggravated conflict perception in anti immigration participants!
(RCT with N = 92) Klimecki et al., revised and resubmitted Palgrave Communications

motivation to feel an emotion can stem from:
• hedonic desire to feel good
• desire to feel emotions that may serve the attainment of goals, such as the motivation to feel anger in order to win a negotiation

• motivation for empathy differs for people of different political opinions!

Phase of Conflict & Level of Trust

In phase of high conflict,
empathy induction (reading an empathy expressing speech from a Palestinian leader)
reduced willingness for reconciliation in Jewish Israelis who were low in trust

Interventions to promote conflict resolution/ prosocial behavior

Training teenagers & young adults in Humanitarian Values for 5 days increases willingness to help out-group members through increase in compassion (N = 99 in Armenia, Belarus, Gambia, Russia)
Aguirre, El May, Klimecki (in preparation)

5 week compassion training increases feelings of closeness and reduces feelings of schadenfreude towards a disliked other (RCT; N = 108) Cernadas Curotto, Sander, Halpern, Klimecki (in preparation)

Thinking about the future for 1 minute increases prosocial behavior (RCT with N = 48) Cernadas Curotto et al. (in preparation)
Beneficial Impact of Mediation

Improved conflict resolution in mediated vs non-mediated couple conflict (RCT with N = 76)
Bogacz et al., in revision Palgrave Communications

Improved conflict resolution and higher activation in nucleus accumbens when seeing the romantic partner after mediated vs non-mediated couple conflict (RCT with N = 72)
Rafi et al., in press Cortex
Impact of Stress and Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation in romantic couples increased cortisol during conflict discussion (RCT with N = 60)
Cernadas Curotto et al., in preparation

Stress induction increased cortisol levels and punishment behavior in healthy males (RCT with N = 40)
Deza-Araujo et al., in preparation
Summary

**Empathy & compassion** are associated with better interpersonal and intergroup relations.

These emotions can be increased through:
- instructions
- showing films that elicit empathy or
- training (e.g. via meditation)

Other interventions that are beneficial:
- mediation
- training humanitarian values
- thinking about the future

Attention to:
- target characteristics (single/multiple, in-group vs out-group)
- motivation (political opinion, phase of conflict, level of trust)

Adverse effects:
- stress
- sleep deprivation