



Making the Most of Conflict

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resolution
at Salisbury University



Making the Most of Conflict

- What is conflict?
- Attitudes and characteristics of conflict
- Elements of conflict
- Start off easy
- Impacts of conflict
- Dirty tricks
- Ways out
- Teachable moments and moving on

Attitudes about Conflict

- Negative
- Unproductive
- To be avoided
- Enemy images
- Claiming and blaming
- Seeking advantage over others
- Win-lose





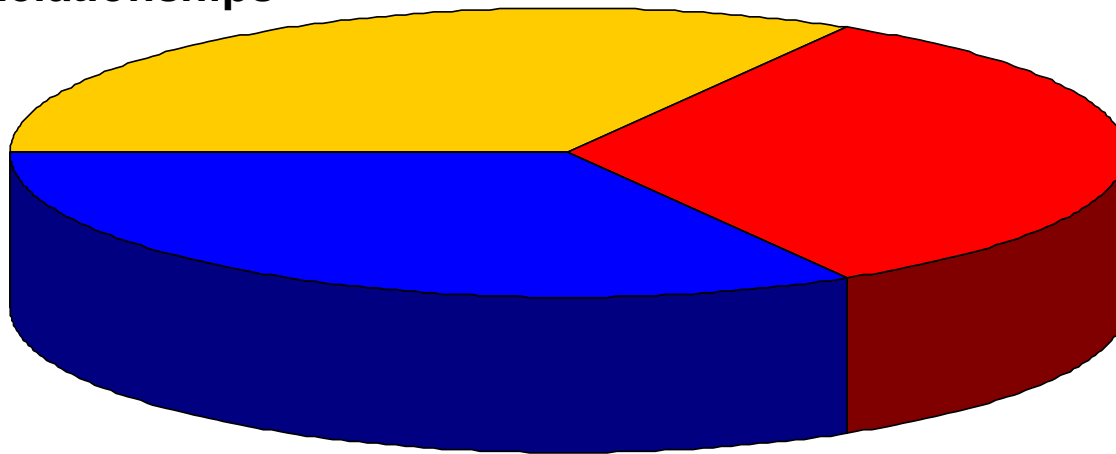
Characteristics of Conflict

- Time
- Distraction from primary role and responsibility
- Physical changes
- Emotional distress
- Maladaptive responses
- Numerous organizational costs



Elements of Conflict

Relationships



**Emotions -
Affect**

**Issues and
Interests**

A Typical Philosophy of Conflict

- “When the other guy is down step on his neck and run like hell!”
- “It was like that when I got here.”
- “Blame it on the guy who isn’t there!”



Conflict is an indication of:

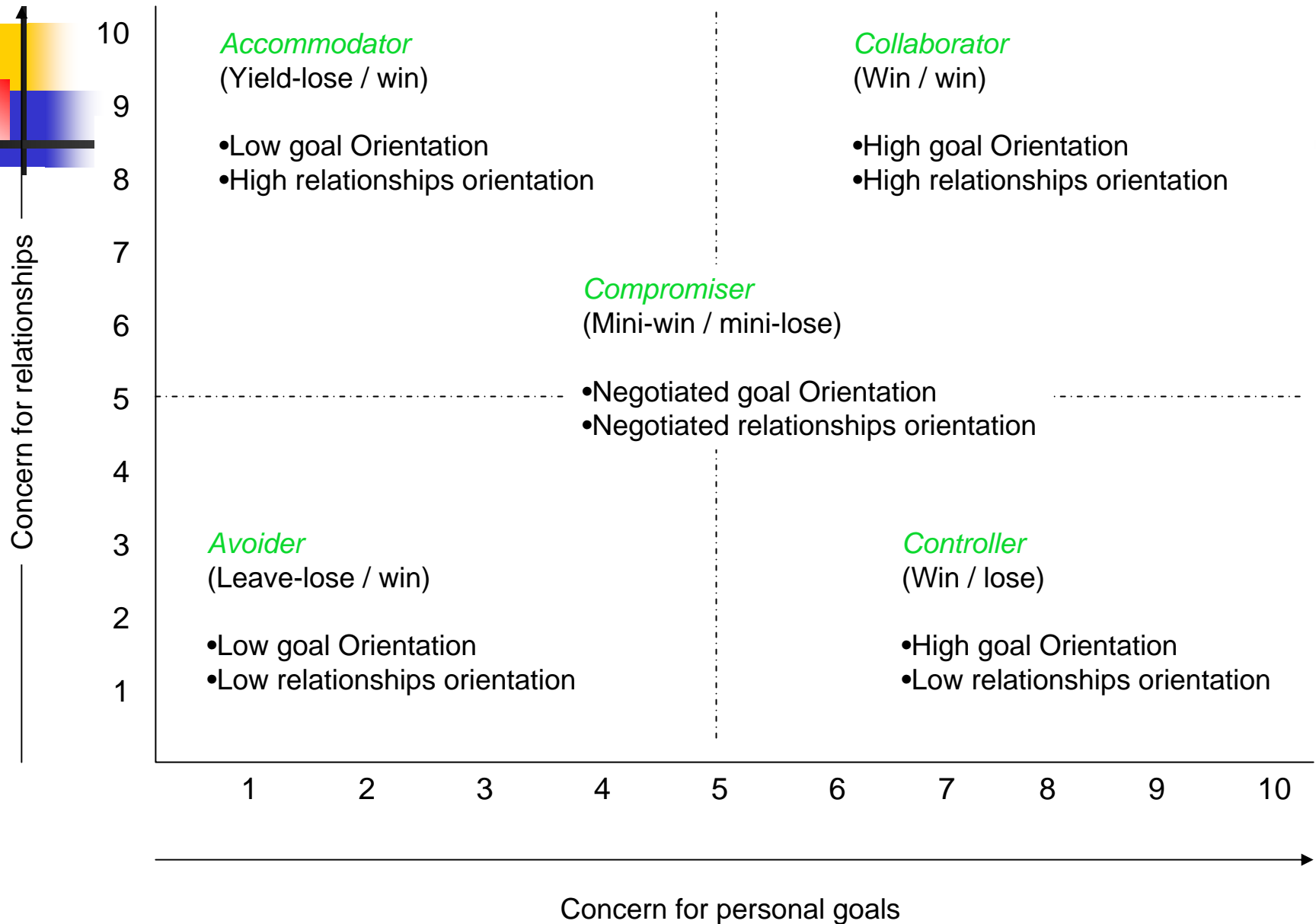
- Strained relationships
- Group tensions
- Organizational challenges in structure or system

But it can also be:

- An opportunity for change
- A self correction process
- The most powerful form of social interaction as it:
 - Clarifies roles, rule, and relationships
 - Clarifies boundaries (social, moral, legal)
 - Reinforces contracts individuals make with society



Two-Dimensional Model of Conflict





Start off Easy

- Don't jump to far fetched conclusions
- Don't buy into conspiracy theories
- Focus on the problem and not the other person
- Create objective criteria
- Let the data do the talking
- Triangulate and verify
- LOOK for the Misses!



First Check for the “Mis”-es

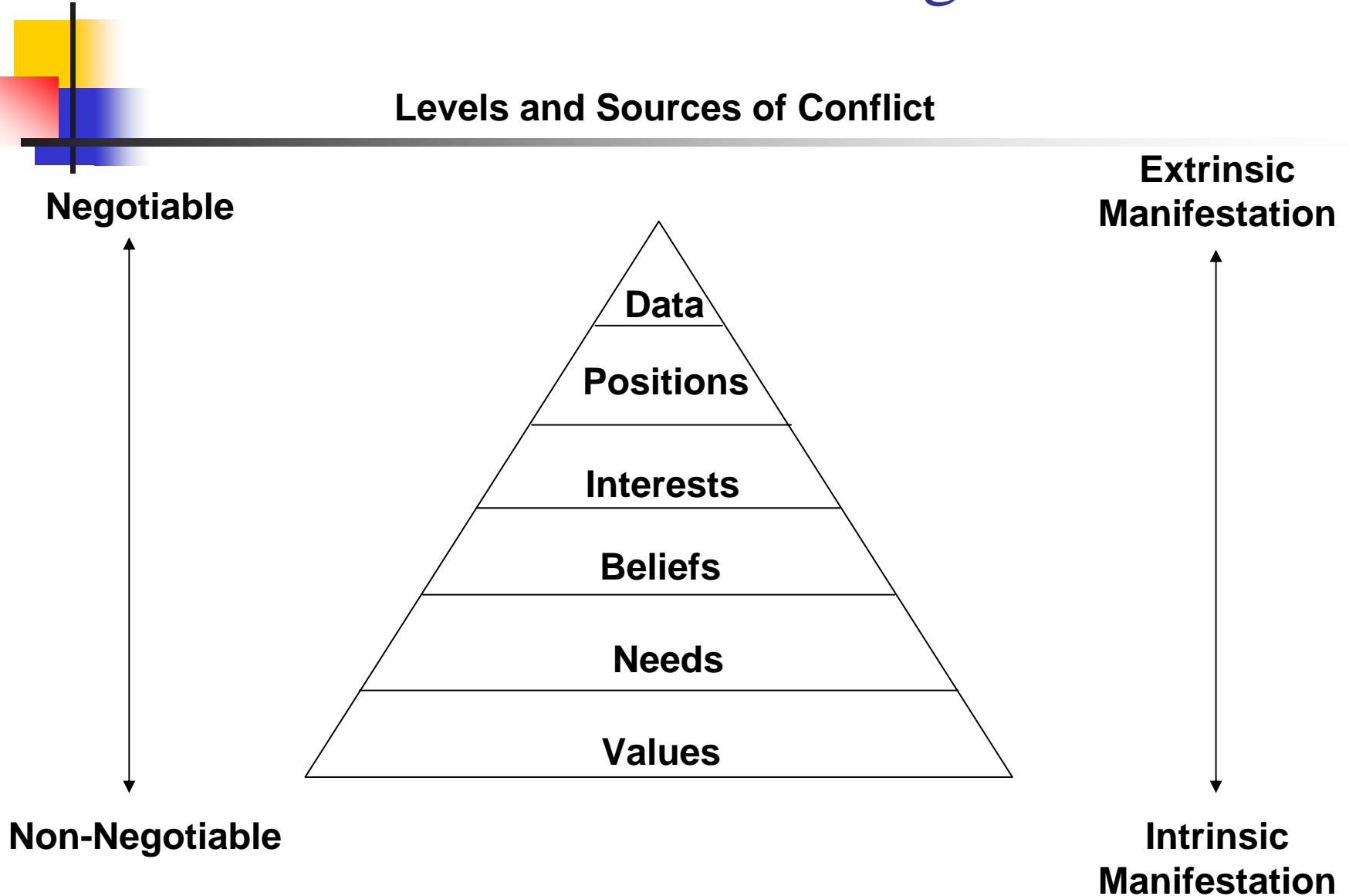
- **Be fair and smart** and first seek to rule out the causes of conflict that may emanate from:
 - Miscommunication
 - Misrepresentation
 - Misunderstanding
 - Misconceptions
 - Misperception
 - Misinformation
 - Misdiagnosis
 - Missed opportunities
- **Before provoking or escalating** the conflict on your own

“You’re either a part of the solution or part of the problem”

Eldridge Cleaver

A Framework for Understanding Conflict

Levels and Sources of Conflict



Institutional Mobbing

- High stress environments can produce unusual social dynamics
- Mobbing can begin with a shift in institutional direction or a complacent supervisor
- Colleagues sense that some people are somehow “out” and therefore become fair game
- Emotional bashing begins
- If no proper remedial intervention is made or is ineffective
- People who mob won't take responsibility for their actions or aren't held accountable
- The mobbed person quits or worse





People will use language to:

- Establish roles (victim/offender)
 - By issuing warrants against the other
 - By labeling the other unfavorably
 - By creating enemy images
 - By use of stereotypes
- Create Advantage -- tactical moves and unfair strategic advantage prior to any intervention



People have a tendency to:

- Repair back to what they know best and are familiar with in terms of:
 - Conflict demeanor
 - Conflict conduct
 - Rules of engagement
 - Means of framing issues



People have a tendency to:

- Symbolically struggle over each others' **credibility** and **expertise**
 - By direct and indirect methods including
 - Attacks on arguments
 - Attacks on data, facts, methods of collecting information and data analysis
- This is an indirect way to challenge the other person's **legitimacy** to even be at the table



People will have a tendency to:

- Take complex conflicts and **simplify** them by taking:
 - Many parties and boiling them down to a few
 - Types of parties and clumping them into “us and them”
 - Many issues and clumping into a few important categories
- **Simplification isn't always bad.**
- **WARNING:** **Simplification** can be an easy path to creating a baseless “feel good” mentality that **relies on assumptions, biases, stereotypes** and is fed by poor intellectual training.



People have a tendency to:

- Play to the emotions of supporters
- Exaggerate the positions of others
- To call others on their conduct but not themselves
- To interpret and portray the actions and words of others only in the most condescending way
- Demonize the other, refer to them in the abstract

Conflict can expose a person's

- True feelings
- Inner character and personality
- Ability to handle stress
- Value orientation
- Philosophy of life
- Overall attitude, outlook, biases and hang ups
- **Work with them**



- “Conflict sheds light or draws back the curtain on the true character of people.”



Toward the end of a conflict

- If someone thinks they are losing they will:
 - Go on a suicide attack and take you down with them
 - Retreat back to non-negotiable principles or values oriented discussion
 - Sometimes gracefully concede (not a dirty trick)
- If they are winning with you they will:
 - Repair damage, reconcile differences and re-humanize the other



Dealing with dirty tricks

- Always have a prevention script in hand for any number of potential scenarios
- Always have an “escape route”
 - Move toward safety
 - DON’T run from danger -- it is fear gets you in the most trouble
- Master your impulses and your emotions
- Practice “conflict jujitsu”



Dealing with dirty tricks

■ Anchoring

- Create a (positive) emotional anchor
 - (Reverse a tragedy and create internal vision)
- Create and issue anchor -- BATNA
 - (You will know what to work toward)

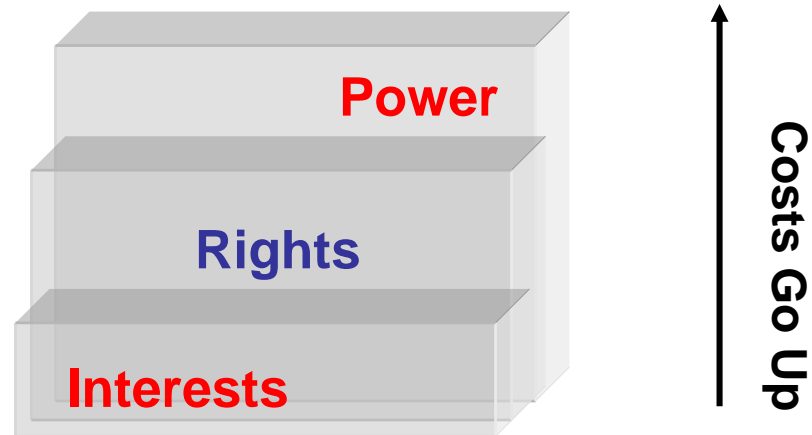
■ Mapping

- Scope the case -- be brutally honest
- Don't rely on wishful thinking
- Create a conflict map to get everyone out together



Choosing the Right Forum

Dispute Resolution Stairway





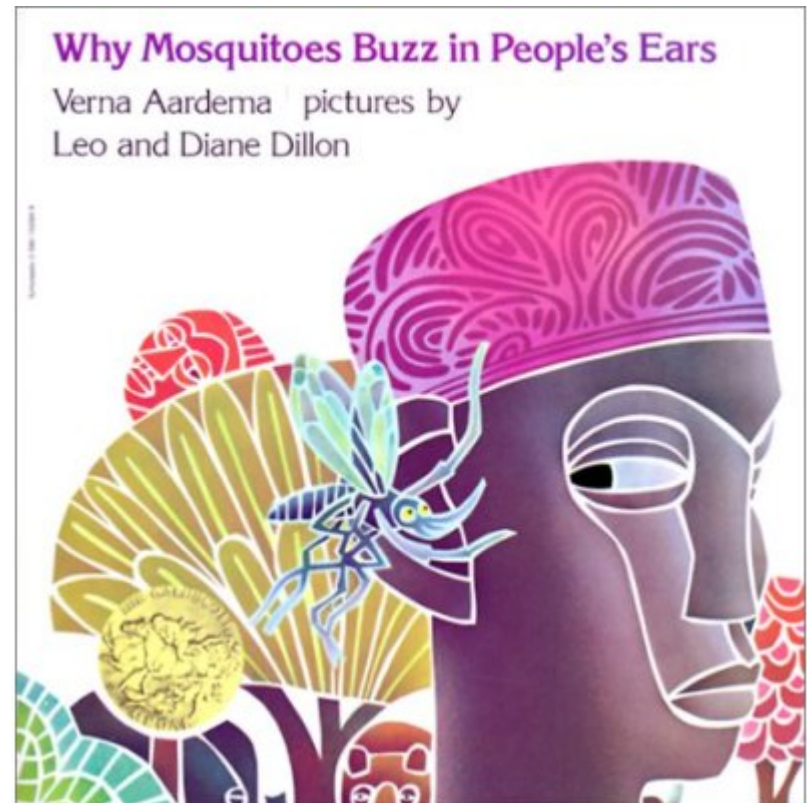
Process and Outcome

- Dispute
- Conflict
- Settlement
- Resolution

Outcome	Processes	
	<i>Dispute</i>	<i>Conflict</i>
<i>Settlement</i>	Negotiate Reconcile	Arbitrate Litigate
<i>Resolution</i>	Mediate	Incremental Intervention Steps

Effective Communication

- Cut the Gossip
- Ignore the Rumors
- Create a Policy of “If you said it then you are the source”
- Seek Clarity and do not accept “policy on demand in the hallway”





High-Risk Responses

- **Ordering**
 - “You must do this.”
 - “Go apologize to her.”
- **Threatening**
 - “You had better do this, or else!”
 - “You’d better not try that.”
- **Moralizing**
 - “It’s your duty.”
 - “I wish you would do this.”
- **Advising**
 - “What I think you should do...”
 - “It would be best if you...”
- **Logical arguments**
 - “Do you realize that...?”
 - “Let me give you the facts.”
- **Questioning**
 - “Why did you do that?”
 - What have you done to solve it?



Sending solutions



High-Risk Responses

- **Judging**
 - “You’re acting foolishly.”
 - “That’s a stupid thing to say.”
- **Praising**
 - “You’re an intelligent person.”
 - “You’ve always made it in the past.”
- **Diagnosing**
 - “You’re just jealous.”
 - “You’re being a bit paranoid.”
- **Name-calling**
 - “You really messed up on this one!”
 - “You’re a sloppy worker.”



Evaluating



High-Risk Responses

- **Reassuring**
 - “You’ll feel different tomorrow.”
 - “Things will get better.”
- **Diverting**
 - “Think about the positive side.”
 - “You think *you’ve* got problems!”



Withdrawing



High-Risk Responses

- Ordering
- Threatening
- Moralizing
- Advising
- Logical arguments
- Questioning

Sending solutions

- Judging
- Praising
- Diagnosing
- Name-calling

Evaluating

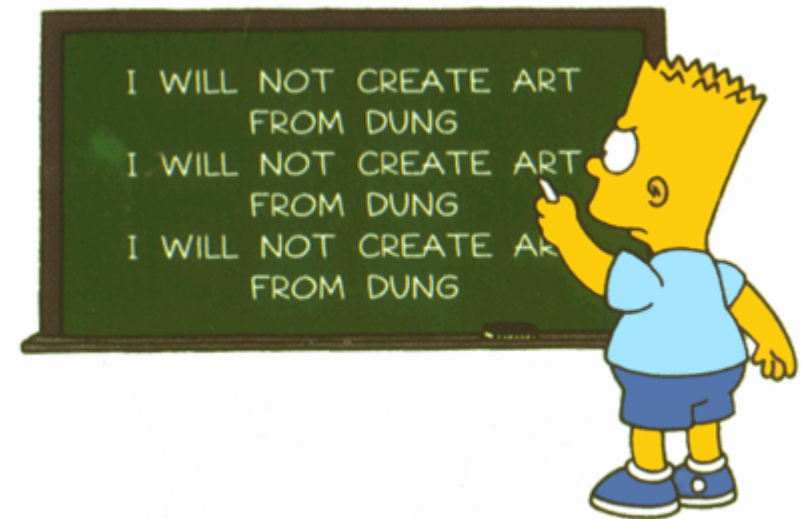
- Reassuring
- Diverting

Withdrawing

**Take the
focus off
the other**

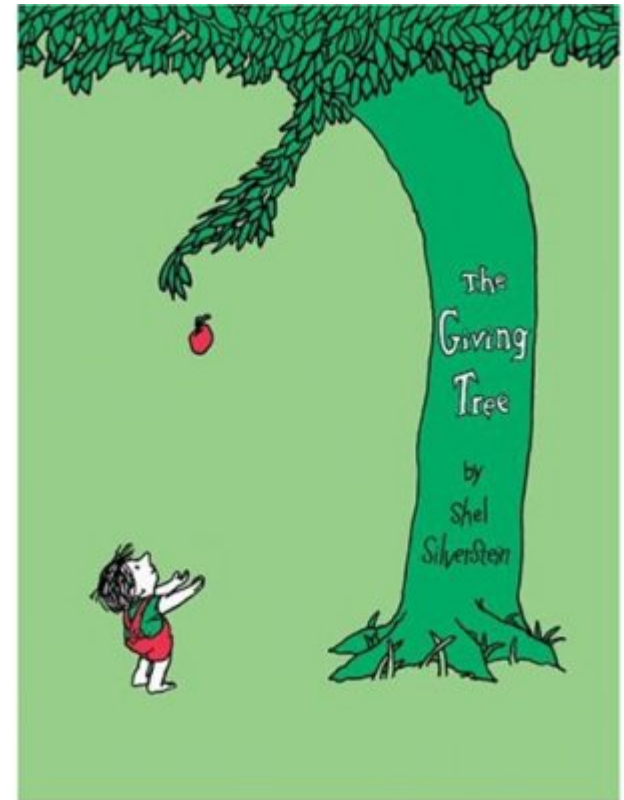
Teachable Moments

- Many conflicts do not require punishment
- In many instances conflict can be reoriented away from punitive outcomes
- We can tap into the potential “teachable moment” lessons that often pass all of us by



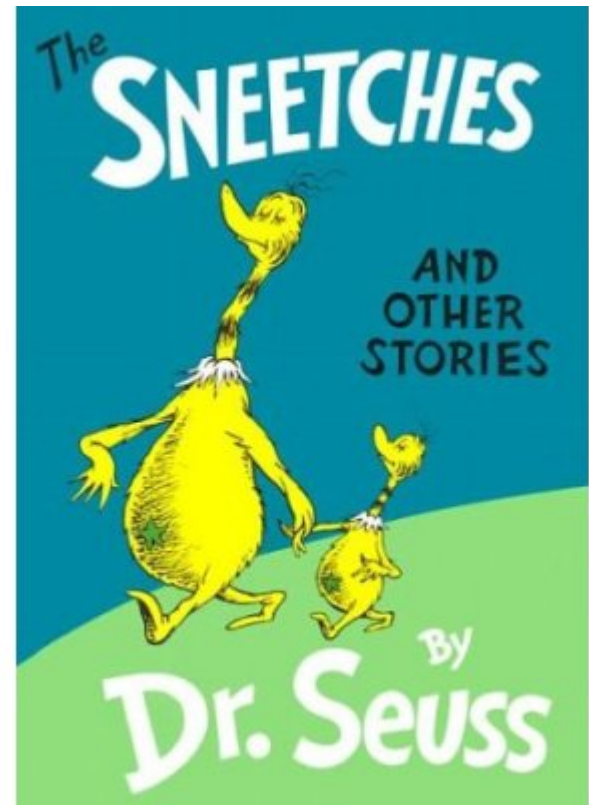
Reframing Conflict

- Carefully applying principles makes wisdom different from knowledge
- Reframe and emphasize the positive – appreciate, respect and recognize the other side – it makes it harder to hate or engage in conflict
- Create value for integrative solution “wiggle room”
- Begin conflict intervention from common ground
- Work toward the optimal solution for the other side! (John Nash)



Time to Reflect and Respond

- Internal focus
- Going from the head to your heart
- Serenity prayer
- Practice “intuition on demand”
- Practice the “strategic pause” and “make use of silence”
- Practice impulse control -- don't react





If you want to solve a problem...

- “If anybody could put the whole philosophy of nonviolence into a few words, only Grandfather could do that. And he wrote this some years ago, which is very pertinent. He says,
- Keep your **thoughts** positive because your thoughts become your words
- Keep your **words** positive because your words become your behavior
- Keep your **behavior** positive because your behavior becomes your habit
- Keep your **habits** positive because your habits become your values
- Keep your **values** positive because your values **become your destiny**.



think positive!

- Now, this in a nutshell is what non violence is all about. Nonviolence, he taught me, is about positive attitudes. One thing that he stressed in all his work, is that non violence is not a strategy, it's not something that we can use today and discard tomorrow, or use whenever it is convenient, it is something that we have to live; we have to make it a part of our lives; we have to make it a part of our attitudes towards each other. And only then will we be able to practice it efficiently and effectively. So it's about positiveness. It's about having positive attitudes. It's about being positive in our relationships.”

- Arun Gandhi
- Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi

- International Advisory Board Member
- Center for Conflict Resolution
- Salisbury University
- www.conflict-resolution.org