



Conflict Management in the Workplace
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What Causes Conflict?

- Stressed employees and supervisors
- Differences in opinion
- Burnout

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Conflict

- Conflict is neither good nor bad
- Conflict is inevitable
- Conflict does not have to result in winners and losers
- When in conflict, both parties tend to believe that their opinion is fact

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Causes of Conflict

- A party is required to engage in an activity that is incongruent with his or her needs or interests.
- The two people have different preferences
- A party wants some mutually desirable resource that is in short supply

Rahim, M. A. (2002) Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict. The International Journal of Conflict Management, 13, 206-235.

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Conflict at Work

- Not enough hours in the day
- Opinion not being heard
- Staff member voicing concern you do not agree with
- Workplace evaluations
- Complaints in general
- What else?

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Conflict Resolution Guidelines

- Treat ourselves and our coworkers with the same respect with which we ourselves expect to be treated.
- We will communicate with each other directly and, where appropriate, in privacy.

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Conflict Resolution Guidelines

- We will acknowledge our differences of opinion and practice styles and value the contribution each member makes to the community we share.
- When we become aware of a very different practice style of a partner, we will endeavor to learn the basis for this practice and to help each other to evaluate the efficacy and safety of that particular practice.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, PREVENTION, AND RESOLUTION IN MEDICAL SETTINGS. By: Andrew, Louise B., Physician Executive. OBPS 2759, July 1, 1999, Vol. 23, Issue 4

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Conflict Resolution Tips

- Do
 - Be assertive rather than aggressive
 - Examples?
 - Accept the person, not the behavior
 - Examples?
 - Be nice to the difficult person
 - Learn what angers/bothers the person (and avoid it if possible)
 - Make compromises when appropriate
 - Use active listening (repeat what you are hearing)
 - Determine what is causing the conflict
 - Distance yourself when you feel the person could become violent

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Conflict Resolution Tips

- Don't
 - Don't yell or try to show your authority
 - Don't match the person's aggressive body language
 - Don't label the person as immature, bad, or a troublemaker
 - Don't cut them off (The person needs to be heard)
 - Don't ignore signs that the person is going to be violent
 - Clenched fists, fast breathing, pacing
 - Don't be afraid to leave the conflict or call for help

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De-escalation

- Take inventory of your own feelings
- Keep a calm voice
- Show relaxed body language
- Place yourself by the door
- Don't take anger personally
- Use active listening
- Escape the situation and call for help, if needed

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Working with Employees

- Avoid power struggles with employees.
- Let the employee have some power.
- Respect employee's free will.
- If you feel you have to frequently "force" employees or strongly persuade them, burnout will occur much more quickly.
- Adopt an attitude of working with employees.

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Stress Adds to Conflict

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Eustress

- Eustress
 - Stress that is healthy, or gives one a feeling of fulfillment or other positive feelings. Eustress is a process of exploring potential gains.
 - What good has come from stress?
- Meeting or engaging in a challenge.
- Coming in first place in a race.
- Getting a promotion at your job.
- Watching a suspenseful or horror movie.
- Riding a roller-coaster.

Source <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eustress>

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Distress

When stress becomes too much...

- No longer a motivator
 - You freeze.
 - You are exhausted.
 - You make poor decisions.
 - Your relationships suffer
- Health Problems
 - Heart problems
 - Sleep problems
 - Weight gain
 - Ulcers
 - Higher rates of cancer

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What are Your Stresses?

- Job-specific stress?

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Beyond Stress: Burnout

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What is Burnout?

Burnout is a psychological term for the experience of long-term exhaustion and diminished interest.

- Emotional exhaustion
- Reduced sense of personal accomplishment
- Cynicism

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burnout_%28psychology%29

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Burnout

"It represents an erosion in values, dignity, spirit and will -- an erosion of the human soul. It is a malady that spreads gradually and continuously over time, putting people into a downward spiral ..."

Source: Christina Maslach & Michael Leiter
Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What To Do About It

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Symptoms of Burnout

- Exhaustion
- Cynical detachment from work
- Talking negatively about those you serve
- Feelings of ineffectiveness
 - Schedule Imbalance
 - Intense Work Days
 - Office and Inter-Agency Politics

Source: <http://thesocialworker.com/socialworkburnout.htm>

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Engagement- Opposite of Burnout

- Engagement is characterized by
 - Energy
 - Involvement
 - Efficacy (making a difference)

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Combating Burnout

- Don't participate in office gossip
- Embrace social groups
- Take a mini vacation
- Eat well and exercise

(I know...this is everyone's favorite!)

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Work-Life Balance

- Leaving work at work
 - Literally
 - Leave the paperwork behind.
 - Try to limit your electronic ties to the office.
 - Figuratively
 - Find positive things to concentrate on in your life, instead of dwelling on work issues while at home.
 - Spend plenty of time doing social activities.

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Focus on something positive

- The law of attraction
 - What you focus on is what you are going to get!
- Don't think of a pink elephant

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Quick Quips

- Stress is energy. Are you going to use this energy for something productive or destructive?
- Will it matter tomorrow? Next week? Next Month?

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Attitude

Every day is a vacation day ...



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Humor 😊

- Laugh!
- More importantly, laugh at yourself.
- Keep a journal of absurdities.
- Find the comedies in the tragedies.

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Stress Reducers

- Exercise
- Hobbies
- Learning Communication Skills
- Journaling
- Sleep
- Connect with others

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Relaxation

- Deep breathing and muscle relaxation
- Yoga
- Meditation

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My Interview with Alex Debogorski from Ice Road Truckers

Listen to my phone interview with Alex about work/life balance and staying positive on the ice road.
www.TruckerTherapy.com



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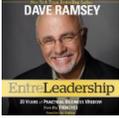
Final Thoughts

- People will make you angry
- There will be conflict
- Find a way to resolve it because you cannot afford the ongoing stress of unresolved conflict.

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Resources

EntreLeadership: 20 Years of Practical Business Wisdom from the Trenches
By Dave Ramsey

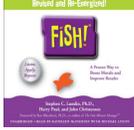


He also has free podcasts.

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Resources

Fish!: A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results
By: Stephen C. Lundin, John Christensen, Harry Paul, Ken Blanchard



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Resources

Helpful handouts for people who need to find ways to manage anger and stress

<http://truckertherapy.com/resources>

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More Information

For more handouts and information

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