



How to Stimulate a Conflict-Free Work Environment

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Objectives:



- Increase understanding of diversity issues.
- Develop a mindset of expecting and accepting daily issues and problems.
- Learn to focus on solutions instead of the issue or problem.
- Review helpful basic skills like listening and kindness.
- Discuss the importance of spending quality time together.
- Learn how managers are the key to success.

Thinking about changing our world!

Envision a world where the need for conflict resolution training does not exist.

Conflict is different around the world, as some cultures:

- value cooperation, not accepting conflict as okay or normal.
- use all conflict resolution skills upfront to ensure collaboration and avoid needless conflict later.

The methods covered today take energy and patient dialogue so both parties are satisfied with the process and outcome.

It utilizes mindful listening, self disclosure, and intentional reframing.

Increasing our value of diversity



Much conflict stems from misunderstandings due to differences.

Misunderstandings are common due to assumptions everyone is the same, therefore we *know* what their words or actions mean.

Consider lessons from the book “Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus” ...not assuming others are like us.

Most understand the “Golden Rule” ...treat others like we want to be treated.

Now consider the “Platinum Rule” ...treat others as they want to be treated.

Adding an important group to our diversity “list”



Most consider diversity as differences in culture, religion, race, sexual orientation, gender orientation, and/or political belief.

To have a workplace truly free of conflict, another important group to consider is those who do not ‘feel well’.

The tendency is to put on an “I’m fine face” at work.

Yet, many silently suffer with depression, anxiety, substance abuse, family problems or serious health issues. They do not ‘feel well’ and are often the most difficult to get along with.

Consider expanding skills to include being sensitive to this group, how best to work with them and be supportive.

Successfully working with coworkers who do not 'feel well' emotionally

- Stay calm, maintaining a calm voice tone.
- Don't take your coworker's negativity personally.
- Being a good listener is very powerful.
- Focus on positive reinforcement. Catch them doing something right.
- There is nothing more powerful than simple human kindness.



Learning to view problems free of fear or negativity

Develop a positive approach to daily problems and challenges.

- View these as opportunities for creativity.

Assume problems can be resolved without conflict.

Avoid mistaking differences between ourselves and coworkers as evidence of 'bad faith' or 'lack of common sense'.

- Common sense is cultural and individual.
- What may be common sense to one group/individual may be counterintuitive or even viewed quite negatively by others.

Understanding important basic skills

- **Listening:** Paraphrase back what you think you are hearing. Seek clarification often.
- **Self Disclosure:** For others to practice the “Platinum Rule” with you, they need to know who you are.
- **Accept workplace communication challenges:** Email, text/ instant messaging, etc. are often confusing and misunderstood.
 - When you sense this is happening, make personal contact which can quickly resolve these issues.



Taking a 'Positive Solution Focused Approach'

Humans tend to focus on the negative because it can signal danger.

- Positive information tends to be given less weight.

A Positive Solution Focused Approach:

- Acknowledges prior successes or partial successes.
- Recognizes the importance of when the problem was previously solved or partially solved.
- Assumes all problems have either been solved by us or others in the past and the situation is not hopeless.

The importance of quality time

- A common factor is present in historically significant worldly conflicts which were later resolved:
 - The groups in conflict found ways to spend time together and get to know one another as fellow human beings.
- When conflict occurs, the tendency is to isolate from the other side and cultivate negativity towards them.
 - In successfully resolved conflict, those involved found ways to spend time together and view each other more positively.



In summary

Trainings that typically focus on “resolving” conflict, focus on:

- Addressing the issues in a timely manner
- Viewing it as a learning opportunity
- Being flexible
- Setting ground rules
- Finding win-win solutions
- Using positive interpersonal skills

Our main point of today’s presentation:

- If we can learn these and other skills to ‘resolve’ conflict, we can use those same skills to ‘avoid’ conflict.

References

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