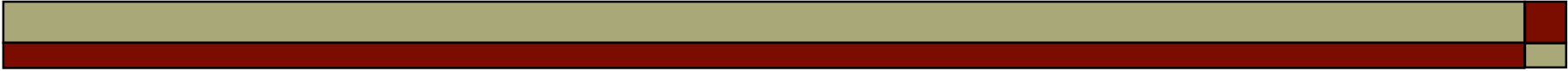


Dealing with Conflict



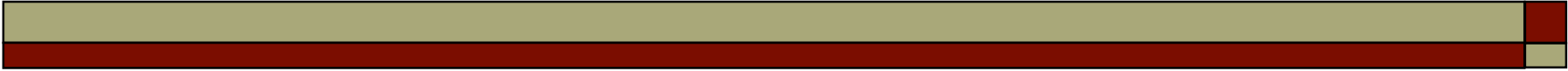
What can make a conversation difficult?

- When we feel our self-esteem is at risk
- When the issues are important and the outcome is uncertain
- When we care deeply about the topic
- When we care deeply about the other parties to the conversation



When facing a difficult conversation, what is our purpose?

- To deliver a message
- To prove a point
- To give them a piece of my mind
- To get them to do what I want



“Delivering a difficult message is like throwing a hand grenade...there's not way to throw a hand grenade with tact or to outrun the consequences.”

Difficult Conversations, pp. xvii – xviii.



Common (False) Assumptions

- Harmony is normal; Conflict is Abnormal
- Conflict is a Communication Breakdown
- Conflict is Pathological
- Conflict should be Avoided or Reduced
- Conflict result of Personality Clash

A Difficult Conversation Framework

**FIVE STEPS THAT CAN
GET YOU STARTED**

Step 1. Prepare by walking through the 3 conversations

- The “what happened?” conversation
 - Explore all sites of the story
 - Don't assume that you know the other party's intentions
- The feelings conversation
 - Leaving feelings out of the conversation won't make them go away
 - Unspoken feelings= materials stored under pressure
- The identity conversation
 - In this conversation, what is at stake for me about me?
 - What do you need to accept to be better grounded?



Step 2. Check your purposes and decide whether to raise the issue

- Check your purposes
 - What do I hope to accomplish by having this conversation?
- Decide whether to have the conversation
 - Is this the best way to address the issue and achieve my purpose?
 - Is the issue really embedded in my identity conversation?



Step 3. Start from the third story

- Describe the problem as the difference between your stories. Invite joint exploration of the problem.
- Share your purposes
 - To better understand their perspective
 - To share your own perspective
 - To talk about how to go forward together
- Invite the other party to join you as a problem solving partner



Step4. Explore their story and yours

- Listen to understand their perspective on what has happened
 - Ask questions; acknowledge feelings
 - Paraphrase to see if you have all the info

- Share your own point of view
 - Talk about where you think each story may come from



Step 5. Move to problem-solving

- Gather information
- Invent options that meet each party's most important concerns and interests
 - Separate the process of inventing options to selecting options
- Talk about how to keep the communication open as you move forward



How to regain your balance during the conversation

- Don't assume that you can control the other party's reaction
- Prepare for a variety of responses
- Ask for a break to reflect on what you've heard

Ref: Difficult Conversations