

Dealing with Conflict in Order to Reach a Win-Win Solution

This workshop can be from 90 minutes to two hours depending on the amount of participant involvement. It is important that participants are involved in each phase of the workshop. The setting should be prayerful. Materials needed:

- markers
- chart paper or overhead projector
- candle

Opening Prayer Service

For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there among them. (Matthew 18:20)

Leader: Lord, as we prepare to begin our workshop, we recall Your promise to be present when two or three are gathered in Your name. We know that without You here among us, and within each one of us, we will labour in vain.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

Leader: We rejoice that we are blessed and called together to work in Your name. We pray that we will respond generously to this opportunity to serve You and that we will grow in our Christian calling.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

Leader: Inspire us with Your Spirit of wisdom; plant seeds of Your vision in our hearts and minds; give us humour and humility as we work with one another, so that we may know the privilege of participating in the coming about of Your kingdom.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

Leader: We ask that working together will increase the communion among us as members of Your body on earth. May the communion we experience give us new courage in all that we do for You.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit.

Leader: Grant us the willingness to be open to each other, to respect each other, to listen to each other, to be honest with each other and to be supportive of each other for the sake of Your kingdom.

All: Unite us, Lord, in Your Spirit

Leader: May the true business of this workshop be our spiritual transformation and the transformation of others through us. We ask this as we begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

(adapted from *Prayers for the Servants of God*, Edward Hays, Easton KS: Forest of Peace Books, 1980)

Welcome

Introduction of participants

Participants introduce themselves by indicating two things:

- name
- why they belong to the League

Brainstorm words and images associated with conflict

- record the responses on chart paper
- debrief the list; discuss what the words have in common (all negative?)

Definition of conflict

Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines conflict "as a clash, competition, or mutual interference, of opposing or incompatible forces or qualities (such as ideas, interests or wills)."

Beliefs or attitudes (often contribute to our idea about conflict)

- "Don't get mad get even."
- "An eye for an eye."
- "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

Types of conflict

- **Intrapersonal:** within the person, e.g., want to lose weight
- **Interpersonal:** between two or more people, e.g., one car in the family and two people have planned to use it
- **Intragroup:** between individuals within a group, e.g., individuals divided over responsibilities for an activity with others lined up on sides
- **Intergroup:** between groups, e.g., two groups within the parish that want the hall on a certain night

Conflict occurs when there is a difference or differences within an individual or between individuals or groups. It can be positive when differences are aired and a resolution is reached. Resolving conflict can lead to a greater understanding of oneself and others.

Types of solutions to conflict

- lose /lose
- win/lose
- win/win

Ask the group for examples of each type of solution.

Brainstorm: What conditions would lead to a win/win solution?

Possible answers:

- cooperation
- desire to solve the conflict
- effective listening
- controlled emotions

Brainstorm: What prevents win/win solutions?

Possible answers:

- emotions out of control
- no will to solve the problem
- over-reacting
- power struggle
- making threats
- taking sides

Usually it's not what you say but how you say it

Some nonverbal blockers to conflict resolution:

- crossed arms
- eye rolling
- raised eyebrows
- facial expressions

Points to remember when trying to reach a solution to a problem

- separate the person from the problem
- focus on the problem not the person
- avoid the use of “you” messages
- **use “I” messages**

“You” messages

- blame the other person
- ask for examples

“I” messages

- focus on the speaker's wants
- ask for examples

Put this on chart paper or overhead projector

I feel ... (state the feeling)

When you ... (describe the specific behaviour)

Because ... (describe the effect on the others person's behaviour on you)

Example:

I feel frustrated

When you don't send in your expenses

Because I can not complete my report on time.

Allow participants an opportunity to practice “I” messages with a partner.

Ask the group:

What opportunities can you see for the use of “I” messages in your interactions with others?

Always remember to focus on the problem not the person. Remember the only person's behaviour that you can control is your own!!

Reflection Circle

Participants sit in a circle and pass a symbol (e.g., a rock or feather). Individuals reflect on one thing they will take away from the gathering. Participants are free to pass.

Closing Reflection

The Ninth Century Sufi, Bayazid Bastami, says this about himself: “I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was, ‘Lord give me the energy to change the world.

“As I approached middle age and realized that half my life was gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to, ‘Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come in contact with me. Just my family and friends, and I shall be content.’

“Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, my prayer now is, ‘Lord, give me the grace to change myself.’ If I had prayed for this right from the start I should have not wasted my life.”

Everybody thinks of changing humanity. Hardly anyone thinks of changing themselves.
(Anthony De Mello, *The Song of the Bird*, Anand, India: Gujarat Sahirja Prakash, 1988, pp. 174-175)

Leader: We thank You, Lord, for the gifts with which You have blessed each one of us. We pray for an open heart, glad to appreciate the riches amongst us. We pray that we may build on what we are to the realisation of Your reign. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen
(*Prayer for Parish Groups*, Donal Harrington and Julie Kavanagh)

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