

Blaine House Conference
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Conflict Resolution



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Principal Sources of Conflict

The basic source of conflict is difference.

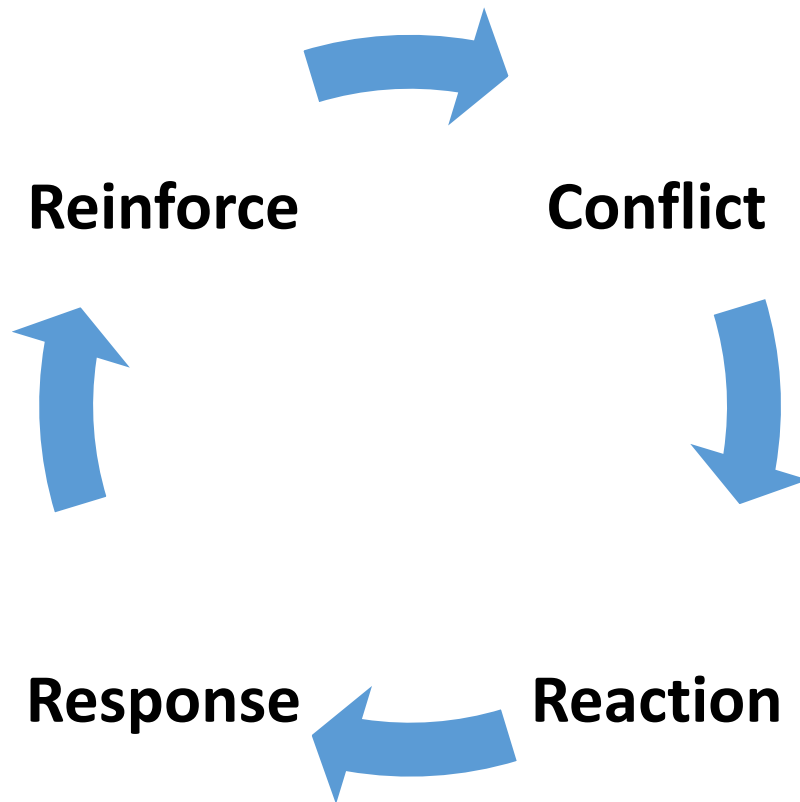
Differences in:

- Perceptions
- Assumptions
- Knowledge
- Experience
- Expectations
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Values
- Power
- Resources
- Influence
- Competence

Some specific sources of conflict:

- ✍ Disagreement over facts
- ✍ Conflict over methods
- ✍ Competing or incompatible goals
- ✍ Competition for resources (attention, time, resources)
- ✍ Conflicting values
- ✍ Clashes over human needs
- ✍ Personal/emotional/psychological issues
- ✍ Miscommunication
- ✍ Structural problems (physical or organizational)
- ✍ Misunderstandings over role expectations
 - Attacks on 'you' are often attacks on your role or the system
 - Expectations about job description "It's not my job."
 - Poor performance
 - Feelings of inadequacy (rejection, loss of face, exclusion)
 - Disengagement

Cycle of Conflict



Conflict: triggering event: "I want to see Death and Mayhem 3."

Reaction: feelings evoked: "I hate sex and violence in movies."

Response: response to triggering event: "You never want to do what I want to do."

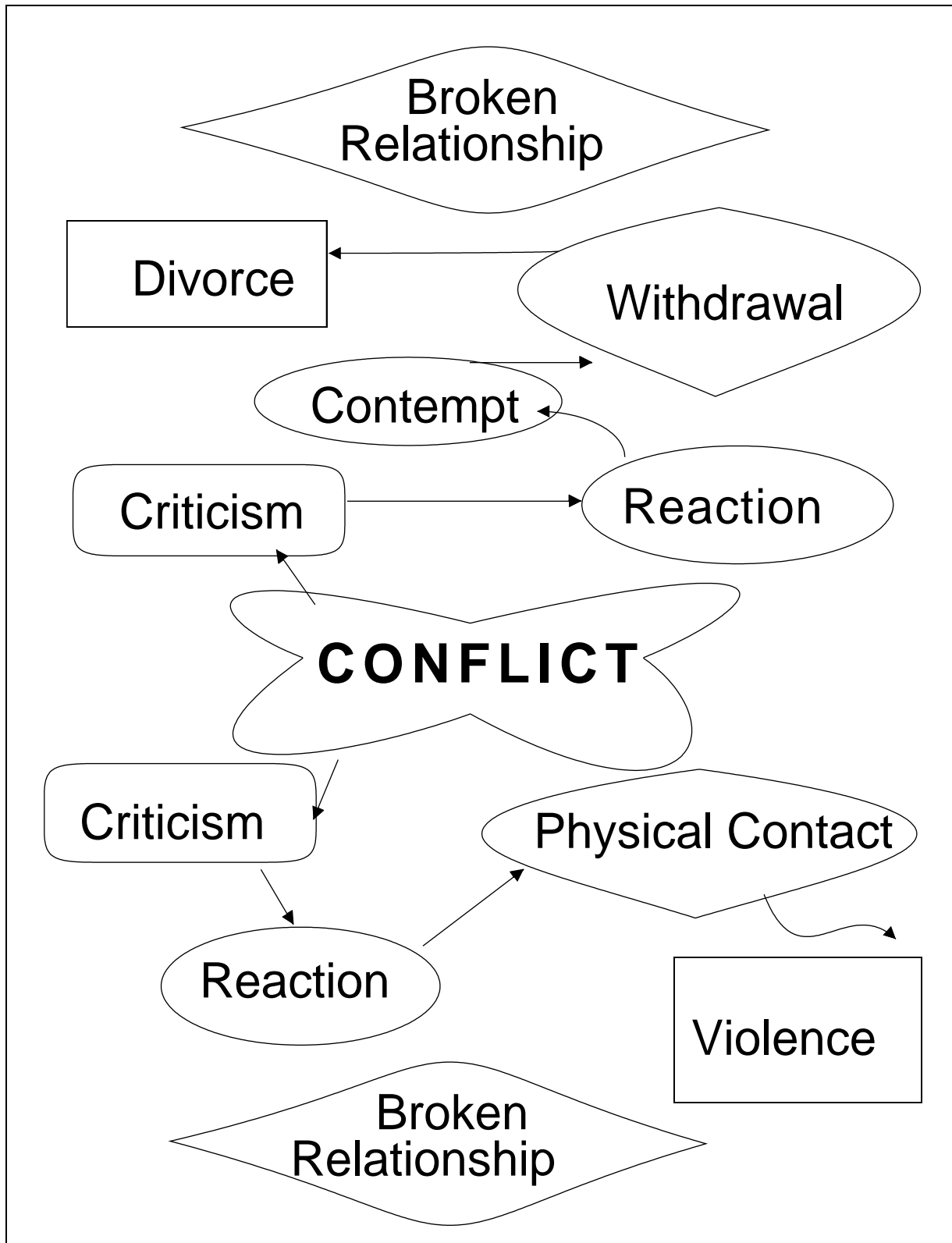
Reinforcement: feelings are reinforced: "You are impossible."

Focus remains on the person.

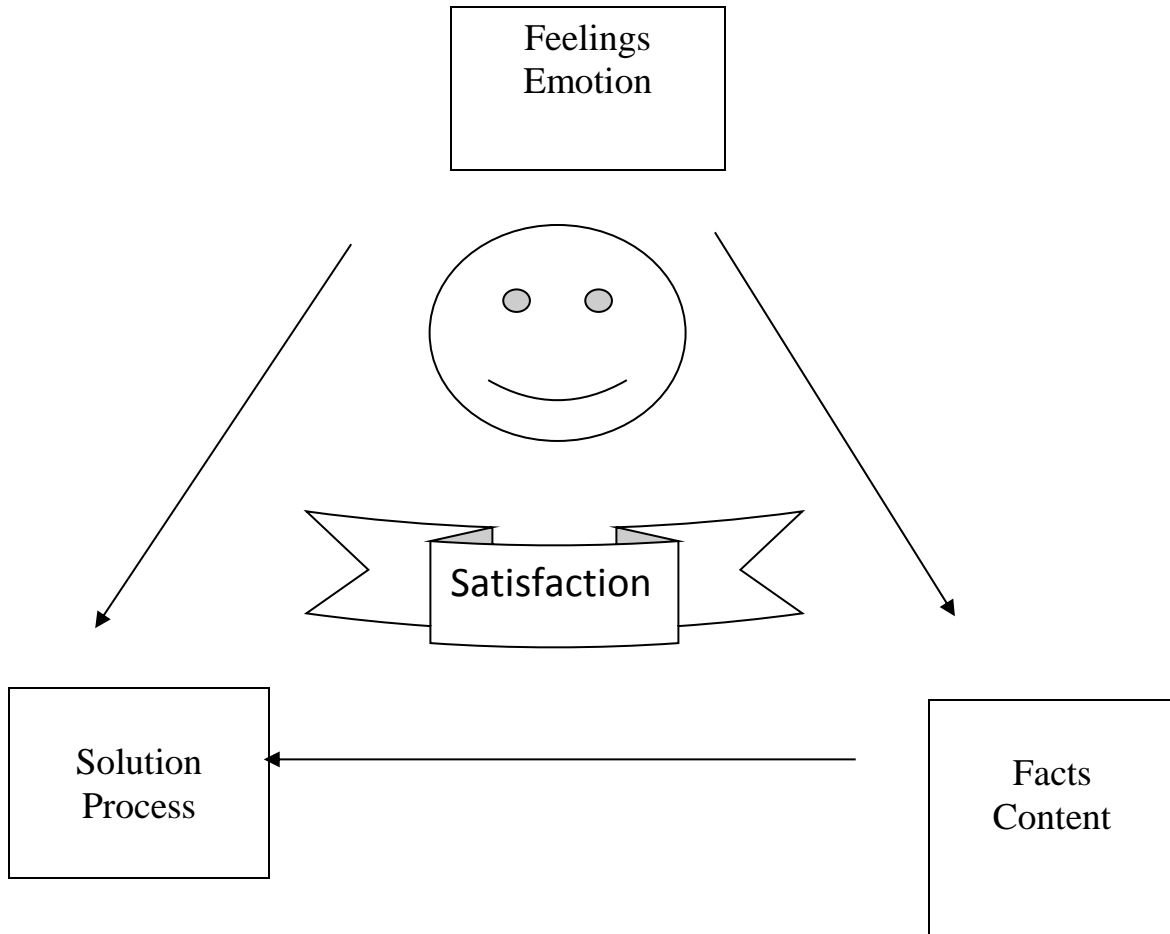
The cycle continues.

And escalates.....

Conflict Vortex



Triangle of Satisfaction



THE SEQUENCE TO GROUP PRODUCTIVITY

Feelings

Facts

Solutions

Feelings. When a group is in the "feelings" stage, however they got there, it is pointless to ask them to move on, until they have had an opportunity to express, explore, and resolve the feelings of the individuals and the group as a whole.

Facts. Once a group has had time to process feelings, they are much more willing to move on to the "facts" phase of their work. If a group has not been given the time to work through emotional issues surrounding the group, they often undermine the fact finding with argumentative and explosive exchanges.

Solutions. After feelings have been resolved and facts presented, discussion and problem solving can lead to solutions. Respecting the life cycle of groups makes productive decision making much easier.

EFFECTIVELY PROCESSING FEELINGS

➞ Stay neutral

- Respect people's right to have their feelings
- Encourage and acknowledge expression of feelings

➞ Understand Rather than Evaluate Feelings

- Probe with the non-evaluative task-oriented interpersonal behaviors
- Be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal cues

➞ Process Feelings Using Silence, Then Flip Charts

- Silence
- Bring in the whole group
- Round-robin
- Buzz groups

➞ Refocus the Discussion on the Original Topic and its Desired Outcomes

Effective Listening

Listening takes effort. Give the speaker your full attention. Be patient. The average person speaks about 125 words per minute, but can listen to 400 words per minute. Put aside your own view and opinions for the time being. Choose words carefully. Show that you hear and understand, not necessarily that you agree.

1. Use your body to say “I’m listening”.

60% of communication in nonverbal.

--Make frequent eye contact.

--Keep your body oriented toward the speaker.

--Nod your head.

--Say ‘yeah’, ‘uh-huh’, ‘I see’, etc.

2. Acknowledge the speaker’s statements.

“I can appreciate how you feel.”

“I understand your comments.”

“You make a valid point.”

“I know others may agree with you.”

“That’s an interesting viewpoint.”

3. Gather feedback.

Ask questions to clarify, to find out more.

Ask open-ended questions, using a non-threatening tone of voice.

This is sometimes called the ‘reflective technique.’

“Do I understand you that...”

“Just to clarify my thinking....”

“Who/ What/ When/ Where/ Why/ How?”

“Are you saying that...?”

4. Paraphrase and ‘Backtrack’.

- Restate what the speaker said using your own words.
- Describe sympathetically; do not evaluate or judge.
- Focus on the speaker.
- Include both facts and feelings.
- Repeat key phrases exactly as the speaker said them.
- This confirms that the speaker has been heard.

“So, you believe strongly that....”

“The way you see it is....”

“You were very unhappy when...”

“You felt quite angry with...”

5. Summarize the basic viewpoint of the speaker as you have heard them. Ask the speaker if your summary is correct and complete.

6. Explore options.

Demonstrate/ present/ generate ideas.

“Let’s think of some ideas of ways to solve the problem.”

“This may be a good time to think of alternatives we can consider.”

“Let’s try to think of some wild and crazy new ideas.”

7. Test for agreement.

Close/ Tie down/ Use assumptive questions.

“That makes a difference, doesn’t it?”

“Is this a possibility?”

“If you are comfortable with what we’ve agreed on so far, let’s move on, o.k.?”

“We’ve come a long way, haven’t we?”

“It sounds like we have agreement, doesn’t it?”

Re-Framing: Developing Assertive Language

Communicating thoughts, feelings, and opinions assertively requires choosing words that are direct, honest, appropriate, and respectful.

Guidelines for assertive words:

- *Use “I - statements” rather than “You - statements.”*
- *Use factual descriptions instead of judgments or exaggerations.*
- *Take ownership when expressing thoughts, feelings, and opinions.*
- *Use clear, direct requests or directions (commands) when you want others to do something, rather than hinting, being indirect, or presuming.*

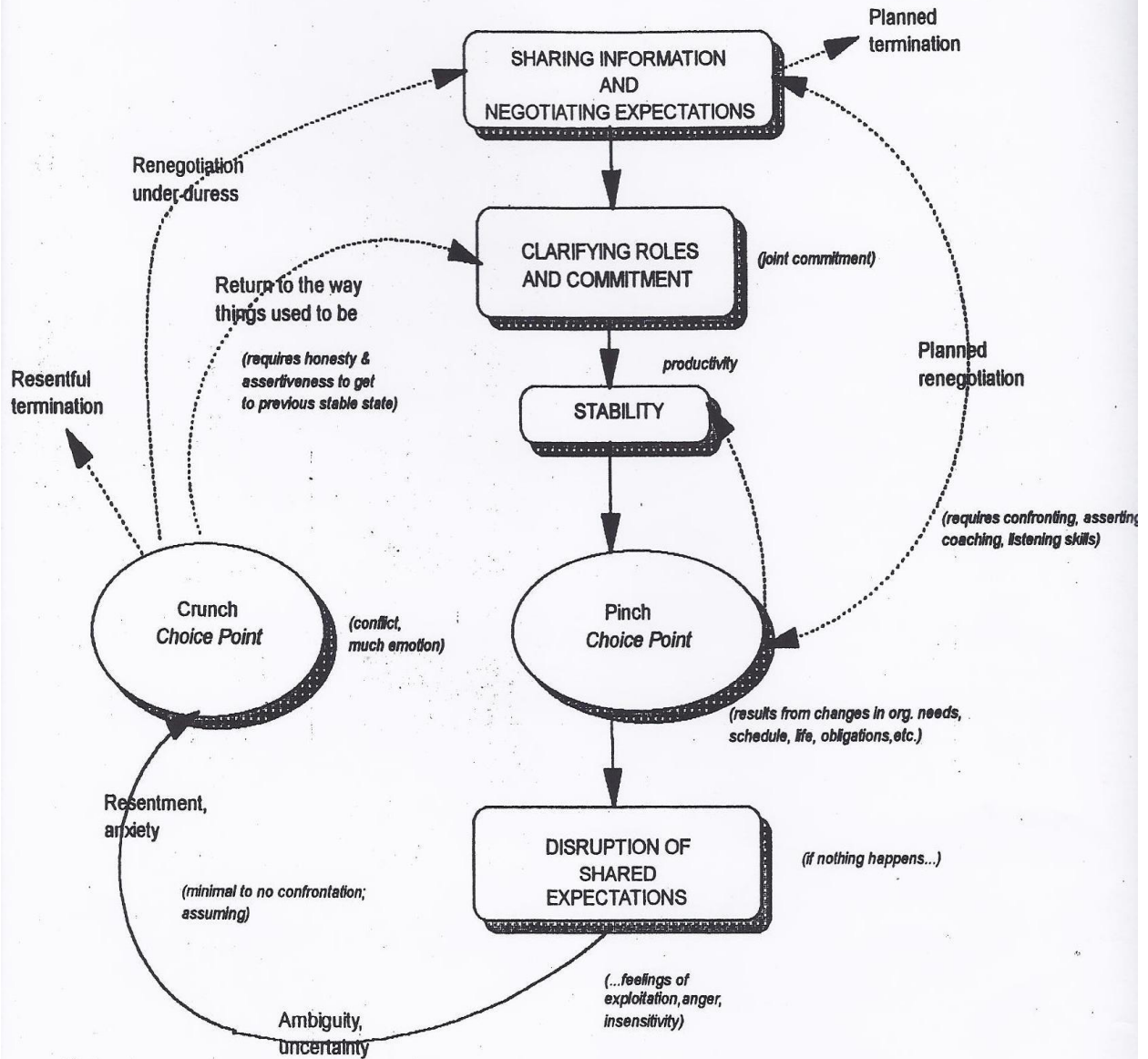
People avoid being direct and honest because they have learned that it is impolite. Sometimes we are so careful that we don't communicate the real message.

DO
<p>Express feelings honestly. <i>“I’m angry.”</i> <i>“I’m disappointed.”</i> <i>“I enjoy being with you.”</i> <i>“You make me feel good.”</i></p> <p>Be realistic, respectful, and honest. <i>“These meetings begin on time.”</i> <i>“We value your attendance.”</i> <i>“Next time allow more time to get here.”</i></p> <p>Express preferences and priorities <i>“I’d like to have pizza for dinner.”</i></p>

DON'T
<p>Depersonalize feelings or deny ownership. <i>“You make me mad.”</i> <i>“You disappoint me.”</i> <i>“You are hard to be around.”</i></p> <p>Exaggerate, minimize, or use sarcasm. <i>“You are never on time.”</i> <i>“That’s nothing.”</i> <i>“What are you, crawling at a snail’s pace?”</i></p> <p>Don’t defer to be sociable or agree unwillingly. <i>“Whatever you want is fine with me.”</i></p>

Model for Managing Psychological Contracts

(adapted from Kolb et al, 1991 and Sherwood and Glidewell, 1972)



A New View of Conflict

From perceiving conflict as always being....

1. A disruption of order, a negative experience, an error, mistake in a relationship.
2. A battle between incompatible self interests or desires.
3. An isolated event we allow to define the entire relationship.
4. A struggle only between right and wrong, good and evil.

To perceiving conflict as often being....

1. An outgrowth of diversity that might hold possibilities for mutual growth and for improving the relationship.
2. One part of a relationship, a part that involves needs, values, perceptions, power, goals, feelings, and so on, not just interests and desires.
3. Occurrences that punctuate a long-term relationship and that can help clarify it.
4. A confrontation between differences in certain aspects of a relationship, but not to the exclusion of other aspects that are still there to build on.

The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution
by Dudley Weeks, Ph.D., Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc. Los Angeles 1992

A New Model for Conflict Resolution

The Conflict-Partnership Pathway to Effective Conflict Resolution

Conflict Partner A	THE RELATIONSHIP	Conflict Partner B
Needs		Needs
Values	Conflicts	Values
Perceptions	Commonalities	Perceptions
Goals	Differences	Goals
Feelings	Shared Needs	Feelings
Interests		Interests

1. Create an effective atmosphere.
2. Clarify perceptions.
3. Focus on individual and shared needs.
4. Build shared positive power.
5. Look to the future, then learn from the past.
6. Generate options.
7. Develop "do-ables" -- stepping stones to action.
8. Make mutual benefit agreements.

Conflict Partner A

Conflict Partner B

Improved relationship patterns in which differences and conflicts are dealt with in ways that nurture mutual development.

Notes on Dispute System Design

All disputes have three basic elements:

- Interests
- Rights
- Power

Six principles of dispute systems design:

1. Put the focus on interests.
2. Build in 'loop-backs' to negotiations.
3. Provide low cost rights and power back-ups.
4. Build in consultation before and feedback after.
5. Arrange procedures in a low to high cost sequence.
6. Provide the necessary motivation, skills, and resources.

Interest-Based Framing

Issues

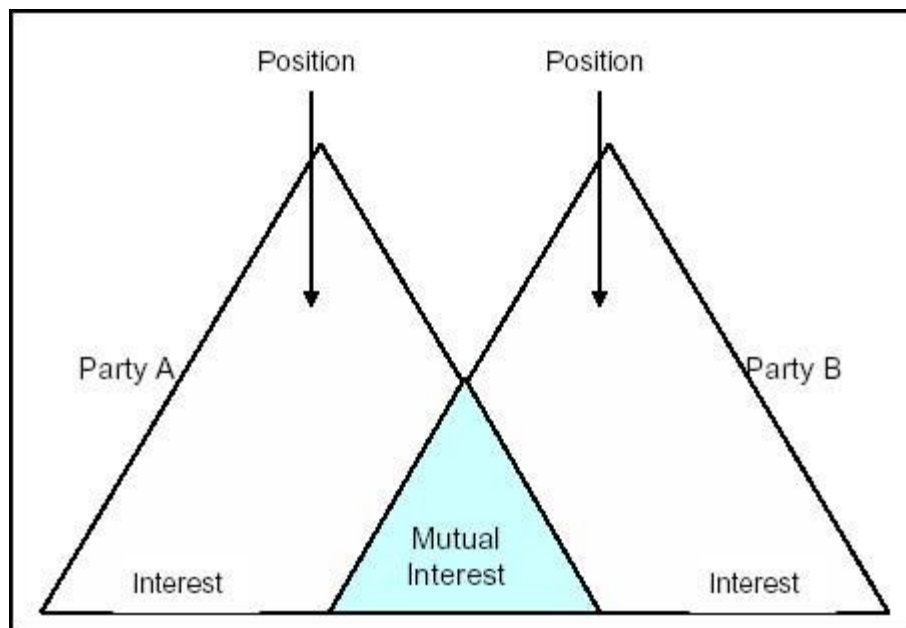
(what you really want)

Positions

(what you say you want)

Issues are the overriding idea of what your interests are. They can be framed in neutral language and put the issue in the middle of the table, whereas positions are the statements you make that stake out certain territory where you stand.

Interests are the underlying reasons why people or groups hold the positions they do.



Getting to Yes

From the book, *Getting to Yes*, by Roger Fisher and William Ury first published in 1981.

Problem: Positional Bargaining: Which Game Will You Play?		Solution: Change the Game: Negotiate on the Merits
Soft	Hard	Principled
Participants are friends.	Participants are adversaries.	Participants are problem-solvers.
The goal is agreement.	The goal is victory.	The goal is a wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably.
Make concessions to cultivate the relationship.	Demand concessions as a condition of the relationship.	Separate the people from the problem.
Be soft on the people and the problem.	Be hard on the problem and the people.	Be soft on the people, hard on the problem.
Trust others.	Distrust others.	Proceed independent of trust.
Change your position easily. Make offers. Disclose your bottom line.	Dig in to your position. Make threats. Mislead as to your bottom line.	Focus on interests, not positions. Explore interests. Avoid having a bottom line.
Accept one-sided losses to reach agreement.	Demand one-sided gains as the price of agreement.	Invent options for mutual gain.
Search for the single answer: the one THEY will accept.	Search for the single answer: The one YOU will accept.	Develop multiple options to choose from; decide later.
Insist on agreement.	Insist on your position.	Insist on using objective criteria.
Try to avoid a contest of wills.	Try to win a contest of wills.	Try to reach a result based on standards independent of will.
Yield to pressure.	Apply pressure.	Reason and be open to reason; yield to principle, not pressure.

Getting and Staying Centered

Techniques for 'pulling yourself together'.

- Pay attention to your breathing and your body
- Slow down
- Stay centered
- Pay attention to posture
- Change your focus
- Change your position
- Pay attention to short declarative sentences
- Don't ramble and don't grovel

Stay focused

- Know where you stand
 - Get centered physically
- Meet the 'other'
 - use I statements
- Get on the same side of the problem
 - Let's see what we can do together
- Transform the conflict
 - Focus on shared values
- Affirm peace building
 - Encourage dialogue and congratulate efforts

Dealing with Dissenters

Adapted from P.A.S.T. is the Future, Dr. Jerome T. Barrett

1. Don't isolate, threaten or gang up on a dissenter.
2. Treat differences of opinions as strengths. The group needs differences to reach the best solution.
3. The group must support the dissenter to provide alternatives to find options that all can support.
4. Focus on consensus—not everyone's first choice, but a choice all can live with.
5. Consensus can mean a person is 75% comfortable, but will support 100%.
6. Leave your ego at the door. This is about the best decision for the group.
7. The group must name and call out a dissenter who is using power and self-interest to stall decision making.
8. A decent respect for the opinion of others is a useful guide for dissenters. It does mean "that if ten people tell you you're drunk, you had better lie down."

Useful questions to ask dissenters:

1. Is there additional information that is not yet available that would help the decision making?
2. What specifically is the dissenter's disagreement with the group?
3. What are the areas of agreement? Look for easy yes's.
4. Would a listing of pros and cons be useful?
5. Should we take a break?
6. Are there other issues we can agree on?
7. What process does the dissenter suggest for resolving the disagreement?

Books on Conflict Resolution

Marion Peters Angelica, Resolving Conflicts in Nonprofit Organizations. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN, 1999

Jerome T. Barrett, P.A.S.T. Is the Future. Barrett & Sons Publishing, 1992.

Roger Fisher and William Ury, Getting to YES: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In. Penguin Books, 1991.

Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, Getting Together: Building Relationships As We Negotiate. Penguin Books, 1989.

William Ury, Getting Past No: Negotiating With Difficult People. Bantam Books, 1991.

Dudley Weeks, Ph.D., The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution. Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc. Los Angeles 1992.