

Conflict Management – 23/02/2016 – Handout

Communicative phrases to USE:

1. **“I totally understand.”**

People have such an innate desire to connect, that to hear an empathic sentence such as the one of *“I understand”* really warms the hearts of the ones involved in a process of dialogue. To acknowledge the other one’s point of view is the first step for a successful communication. Everybody wants to feel that they’re not alone, but rather truly connected. Meeting someone else that makes an effort to understand what you feel, because he or she went through something similar, is very reassuring. The act of being present in the moment of communication, even if that moment is happening through the use of technology, means that you need to pay focused attention to what the other one is saying, and that you express true empathy towards his or her feelings.

2. **“Tell me more about that.”**

This sentence signals to the other person that you’re curious and will devote time to listen to what they have to say. This phrase should be used with the according emotion, which means that when you use it, you need to be really there, prioritizing that dialogue, by being silently focused on what the other one has to say, which implies that you set aside your iPhone or tablet. By paying more attention to your interlocutor, he or she will feel more empowered and acknowledged.

3. **“What do you think?”**

“What do you think?” is a powerful question, regarding communication, as it recognizes your interlocutor’s expertise. In doing so, you open a space that welcomes authentic suggestions. Be aware that your interest on the ideas and thoughts of the other person should be genuine, as otherwise you are just wasting time, and feeding the other one’s frustration.

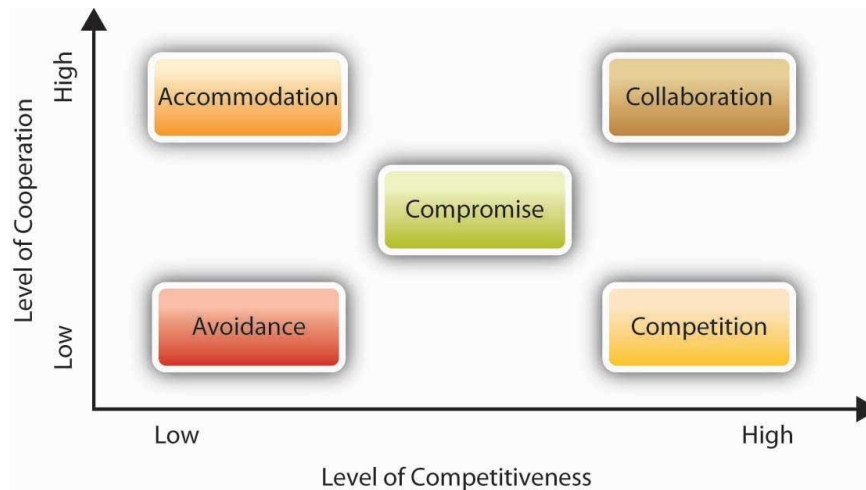
4. **“What I Hear You Saying is...”**

This sentence powerfully gives a hint to the other person of your willingness to actively engage with what he or she is saying. When paraphrasing what another one just formulated, you contribute to the flow of communication, clarify your own understanding, and probably end up getting more detail. This sentence benefits both parties, as your dialogue swiftly shifts into the production of a common meaning.

5. **“You’re Right.”**

People feel good when they are praised positively, particularly if it is expressed with sincerity. To acknowledge that you were wrong also shows you as a humble and vulnerable person, with whom your colleague can identify. And people trust those with whom they can identify. To tell someone that he/she is correct will enable both to access a common ground, and to move on from there.

Strategies for Conflict Management:



1. **Avoidance**

This strategy, or lack thereof, seeks to put off conflict indefinitely. By delaying or ignoring the conflict, the avoider hopes the problem resolves itself without a confrontation. LOSE-LOSE

2. **Accommodation**

This strategy essentially entails giving the opposing side what it wants. The use of accommodation often occurs when one of the parties wishes to keep the peace or perceives the issue as minor. LOSE-WIN

3. **Competition**

Competition operates as a zero-sum game, in which one side wins and other loses. Highly assertive personalities often fall back on competition as a conflict management strategy. WIN-LOSE

4. **Compromise**

This style typically calls for both sides of a conflict to give up elements of their position in order to establish an acceptable, if not agreeable, solution. This strategy prevails most often in conflicts where the parties hold approximately equivalent power. WIN-WIN/LOSE-LOSE

5. **Collaboration**

The individual prefers to work with the other person to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. It involves exploring an issue to identify the underlying interests of the parties in order to arrive at an outcome that meets both sets of goals. Collaborating might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights, or looking for a creative solution to an interpersonal problem. The premise is that teamwork and cooperation help all parties to achieve their goals while also maintaining the relationships.

Collaboration works best when:

- the parties trust each other
- it is important for all sides to buy into the outcome
- the people involved are open-minded to new options
- the parties need to work through animosity and hard feelings.

The downside is that the process requires a lot of time and energy. If time is precious, competition or compromise might be better solutions.