Understanding Conflict

LEADING THROUGH TOUGH SITUATIONS

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UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

1 conflict  noun  /kän-ˌflık/  

: a struggle for power, property, etc.

: strong disagreement between people, groups, etc., that results in often angry argument

: a difference that prevents agreement: disagreement between ideas, feelings, etc.
WE HAVE TO TELL ALL STORIES
CONFLICT. CONTROVERSY.
What’s the difference?

**Conflict**
(between people)

- A clash of feelings and interests that can be unreasoned and angry

**Controversy**
(over issues)

- Many people in opposition over a difference of opinion, position or understanding of a situation
“Conflict is a form of competitive behavior between people or groups under circumstances in which two or more people compete over perceived or actual incompatible goals or resources.”

Public leaders will encounter conflict

People handle conflict by avoiding it (flight), challenging it (fight), or by bringing others together to manage it (engagement).
Understanding Conflict
The Costs

Understanding Conflict
THE COSTS
...of conflict

Direct Costs

Productivity Costs

Continuity Costs

Emotional Costs
THE COSTS

Direct costs of conflict...

“Many spend money they can’t afford…”

- Stewart Levine
THE COSTS

Productivity costs of conflict...

“When people are focused on rehashing the past, they cannot create and produce value in the present.”

-Stewart Levine
THE COSTS

Continuity costs of conflict…

“Continuity costs include such things as the loss of relationship and community.”

-Stewart Levine
THE COSTS

Emotional costs of conflict...

“The emotions of anger, fear, and blame can grip you and force a reaction that saps your current productive capacity.”

-Stewart Levine
THE COSTS

The cost of conflict...
THE COSTS

The cost of conflict...

1. They are very real
   (whether we see them or not)

2. Naming them can sometimes help a group to “wake up” and get serious about resolving the issue/conflict

3. It sometimes takes someone from “outside the group” to help us think rationally about the situation.
YOUR STORY
Costs of Conflict
The Sources

Understanding Conflict
THE SOURCES

The root of the conflict...
THE SOURCES
Structural conflicts…
THE SOURCES

Interest conflicts...

- Competitiveness
- Content
- Procedural (processes)
- Psychological (trust, respect, inclusion, fairness)
THE SOURCES

Values
THE SOURCES

Relationship conflicts...
THE SOURCES

Identity conflicts...
YOUR STORY

Sources of conflict

DATA

Values

- [Image of a person with arrows pointing in multiple directions]
- [Image of a person shaking hands]
- [Image of a fingerprint]

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THE SOURCES

...of conflict

1. They are not always clear to us without some deeper thinking about the situation

2. There may be more than one source of the conflict

3. Once you are able to identify the source, then you can begin to make progress!
Based on the Thomas-Kilmann CONFLICT MODE Instrument
YOUR PREFERENCES

Understanding the conflict modes...

Two basic aspects of all conflict-handling modes

Based on the Thomas-Kilmann CONFLICT MODE Instrument
YOUR PREFERENCES

The five conflict-handling modes...

- Competing
  - Win
- Collaborating
  - Win-win
- Compromising
  - Middle Ground
- Avoiding
  - Delay
- Accommodating
  - Yield

Based on the Thomas-Kilmann CONFLICT MODE Instrument
Understanding Conflict

Your Preferences

Leading Others

Leading is Learning

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Learn more about your preferences for dealing with conflict.
Learn to recognize the sources of conflict
Learn to pay attention to your conflict fitness.
Learn tools and strategies for addressing conflict
TOOL: FIVE STEP MODEL

5-Step Model for Reaching Agreements

1. Recognize your common goal(s)
2. State your need (or actual problem), not your position.
3. Ask the other what he/she needs, or what you can give them in return.
4. Enter into problem-solving.
5. Decide who has responsibility for follow-through on the action plan.

Learn (know) YOUR limitations
KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

Seek help when you need...
- An atmosphere of neutrality or non-bias
- All involved individuals to participate fully
- Someone willing to ask difficult questions and confront assumptions
- An outside/fresh perspective on an ongoing conflict
UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

The Costs

The Sources

Your Preferences

Leading Others

LEADING IS LEARNING
CONFLICT EXISTS...

The best tools and strategies include processes which encourage everyone to be involved in resolving the conflict.

Conflict is good when managed well