



RESPECT Day Two

**Risk taking in conflict
resolution: achieving deep
and lasting change**

Day Two - Risk Taking in Conflict Resolution Agenda



Reconnecting in circle

Reflections on first assignment

Review day one and preview day two

New and 'dangerous' definitions: conflict and conflict resolution

Resolving conflict 'dangerously'

Working Lunch: everyday creativity

Role-play

The second assignment

Reflecting and journaling

Assessing the day



Alternative Definitions of Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution Is Not:

- **Compromising or giving in just to make conflict disappear.**
- **Being silent or neutral and negotiating a surrender of important values, a loss of integrity, a continuation of coercion, or a discounting of deeper underlying issues.**
- **Trading justice for harmony: peace at any price.**
- **Avoidance, minimization or suppression of conflict or expressions of anger and confrontation.**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution Is:

- **Recognition of the inevitability of conflict and its potential to generate positive outcomes.**
- **Negotiating collaboratively* while still advocating for what one values (one's interests).**
- **Negotiating collaboratively while maintaining principled opposition to suggestions that important values be compromised.**
- **Negotiating collaboratively while resisting solutions that fail to address underlying issues.**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution Is:

- **A search for results that produce fundamental change through improved relationships.**
- **About fixing systems, not fixing people.**
- **Helping people to actively and effectively express disputes as well as ending them.**
- **Combining opposites to produce synergy: like the “marriage” of the nut and the bolt.**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

- 1. Conflict arises when there is a failure of connection, collaboration or community, i.e. an inability to understand that we are interconnectedness and interdependent.**
 - As I hear you talk about this very difficult time in your life, I'm wondering if you see the parents involved as your rivals. Could this be contributing to the conflict between you?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

2. **Conflict is a lack of acceptance of ourselves that we have projected onto others, a way of blaming others for what we perceive as failures in our own lives. It reveals a need to hide behind roles or masks that do not reflect our authentic feelings so we can divert attention from our mistakes.**
 - **Do you think that if you cut yourself some slack you wouldn't be as hard on others?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

- 3. Conflict represents a lack of skill or experience at being able to handle a certain kind of behavior.**
 - **What might you do differently to keep from being drawn into this type of conflict?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

4. **Conflict is simply the continued pursuit of our own false expectations, the desire to hold on to our realistic fantasies.**
 - **What do you think would happen if you just let Jim be Jim?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

5. **Conflict represents a lack of listening, a failure to appreciate the subtlety in what someone else is saying.**
 - **It's normal to want to defend yourself. I'm just wondering whether that gets in the way of you hearing what Sally is really saying.**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

- 6. Conflict represents a lack of skill, effectiveness or clarity in saying what we feel, think or want.**
 - I'm hearing that it is very difficult for you to tell Anita what you really need. Would you be able to get your needs met without conflict if you did express those needs to her?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

7. **Conflict is the representation of the points of weakness in a system, i.e. it is possible that policies or common practices could have the unintended consequence of causing conflict.**
 - **What if the policies you put in place to address this issue are the problem?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

8. **Conflict arises because a system or a set of procedures has outlived its usefulness and people demand change.**
 - **Change is scary, isn't it? Could this conflict be about your fear of the unknown? What if you tried just one of the suggestions Ben is making for a short time?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

9. **Conflict is often a fearful interpretation of difference, diversity, and opposition, i.e. a clash of world views, attitudes or beliefs.**
 - **Maybe you could look at the differences between you and Adam's teacher as a source of strength for Adam. Each of you has quite a bit to offer. What would happen if you pooled your resources?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict and Related Nonjudgmental Probes

- 10. Conflict is a result of our inability to learn from your past mistakes, our failure to recognize them as opportunities for growth, learning, and improved understanding.**
- **So your relationship with Sonny's principal has been going down hill for a long time and you've tried over and over to convince her to change her ways. Can you think of anything you did that encourages her to treat you badly? What could you do in the future that might encourage her to act differently?**



Alternative Definitions of Conflict: The Common Thread

What is common to all of these alternative definitions is that they focus on our own role in bringing conflict to a relationship, and they remind us that the systems we create, or at least tacitly support by acquiescing to operate within them, far too often provide the environment for conflict to arise. By implication then, each person in a relationship ought to take personal responsibility for his or her role in a conflict rather than assign blame elsewhere. It does indeed take two to tango: even if one of the two is doing most of the stepping on the other's toes.



Everyday Creativity: Nine Key Concepts

1. **Creativity is the ability to look at the ordinary and see the extraordinary.**
2. **Every act can be a creative one.**
3. **Creativity is a matter of perspective.**
4. **There's always more than one right answer.**
5. **Reframe problems into opportunities.**
6. **Don't be afraid to make mistakes.**
7. **Break the pattern.**
8. **Train your technique.**
9. **You've got to really care.**



Resolving Conflict Dangerously

**“Considering how dangerous everything is,
nothing is frightening.”**

- Gertrude Stein

**“Our lives begin to end the day we become
silent about things that matter.”**

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



Resolving Conflict Dangerously

Every honest communication poses a risk that we will hear something that could challenge or change us.

- **All significant change will be perceived as dangerous, because we do not and cannot fully understand where it will lead.**
- **Yet there is also danger in trying to hold on to the status quo. Sticking with the safety of old ways *"because we've always done it that way"* is just as dangerous as an invitation to authentic dialogue.**



Resolving Conflict Dangerously

To resolve any conflict requires authentic communication: openness, honesty and vulnerability to others.

- **Meaningful conflict resolution requires a willingness to bring a high or dangerous level of honesty and empathy to the conflict resolution process.**
- **Acquiescence is not the object. Producing change that improves the relationship is: this is risky, thus *dangerous*.**



Resolving Conflict Dangerously

We need to trust that what will happen if we discuss a conflict is better than what will happen if we don't.

- **Thus we do open Pandora's box without knowing what will fly out.**
- **We must be confident that no one will be harmed or victimized by opening Pandora's box.**
- **Trusting the others involved and trusting our own ability to handle the truth is what allows us to engage in *dangerous* conflict resolution.**



Resolving Conflict Dangerously

The only way to escape unnecessary conflict is by honestly confronting the reasons we got into it and that kept us in it.

When we realize what we have gained and lost by engaging in a conflict, and what will happen if we remain trapped in it, we quickly discover where the greater danger lies.



Resolving Conflict Dangerously

Resolving conflict dangerously, then, means inviting and engaging in conversation about our differences that is authentic, unpredictable and risky: a conversation that enhances the possibility of fundamental change.



Asking “Dangerous” Questions

- **WHAT is a dangerous question?** A dangerous question is one that involves some risk for the one who asks it because:
 1. The answer is unpredictable,
 2. The answer could challenge us and/or be hard to take.

- **WHAT does a dangerous question look like?**
 1. Puts the focus on the asker
 2. Then focuses on the others’ experience
 3. Makes the asker vulnerable
 4. Encourages a non-defensive response, e.g. by using “I” statements
 5. Is often followed up by higher risk questions questions
 6. Encourages joint responsibility and action for change
 7. Allows the asker to model a willingness to change



Asking “Dangerous” Questions

- **WHY?** We ask dangerous questions to get to the heart of what is not working in a relationship and to facilitate change for the better.
- **This is risky, thus dangerous.**
- **HOW?** Dangerous questions need to be asked gently and with empathy.
- **Ask them as if you were the one being asked to answer them.**
- **They are “dangerous” -- involve some risk -- and are not intended to be self-destructive.**



Asking “Dangerous” Questions

- **WHO?** Parties directly involved in a conflict, facilitative participants in a team meeting, or third party facilitators or mediators are “eligible.”
- **It is most challenging for those directly engaged in a conflict to ask dangerous questions.**
- **SETTING THE STAGE** Before asking dangerous questions it is best to create a safe environment that accepts all answers, including “I don’t know” or “I don’t want to say,” without judgment.
- **A good idea is to ask permission to pose some questions that might be difficult to answer.**
- **Getting permission means you can start the process and continue moving to deeper levels of honesty until you encounter resistance.**



Asking a Sequence of Deeply Honest Questions

There is a progression from:

- 1. Obtaining permission to enter dangerous territory / have a difficult conversation.**
- 2. Asking mildly dangerous questions that:**
 - a. Put the focus on yourself
 - b. Put the focus on what the other experienced
 - c. Being vulnerable and asking for advice
- 3. Asking higher risk questions that:**
 - a. Make you even more vulnerable
 - b. Put the focus on joint responsibility for change
 - c. Model a willingness to change

Three Keys to Asking Dangerous Questions



1. Be intentional, thoughtful and careful.

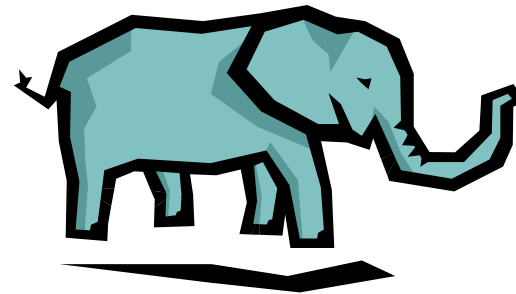
Do not risk harm to yourself or others, and do not risk victimizing others.

Dangerous ~~=~~ Self-destructive

Three Keys to Asking Dangerous Questions



2. Ask your questions to expose what is hidden: what what must be talked about if people are to move forward.



Three Keys to Asking Dangerous Questions



3. Be mindful that the conversation that follows dangerous questions will be difficult. It's a **calculated risk.**





And Another Thing...

When a third party, one neither the giver nor the receiver of heated comments, asks a dangerous question the keys are the same and the developmental sequence (pg. 32) is a bit different. The asker doesn't necessarily put the focus on herself, or make himself vulnerable.