



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Communication and Conflict Resolution

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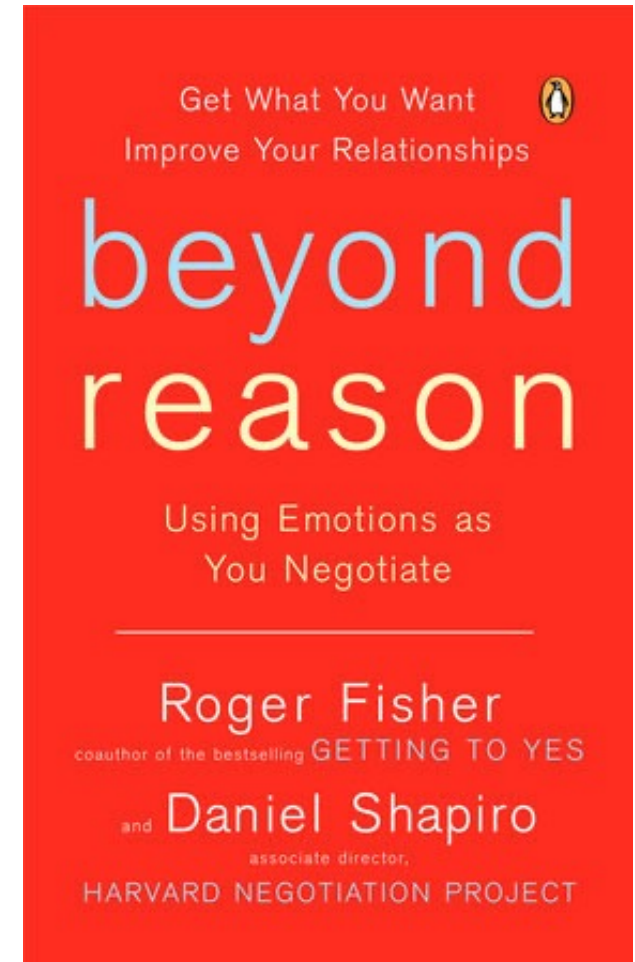
My Conflict Management Philosophy

Transformational – for self and others!

Critical reflection

Psychological safety

Emotional intelligence



Why do I practice and teach Conflict Management and Communications?

Discovery – master's degree + PhD

Pursuit:

- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Training from business and law
- Gained designations from
ADR Institute of Canada
Canada Family Mediation

Among academic leaders, conflict management is either the first or the second most important skill

Today's Program

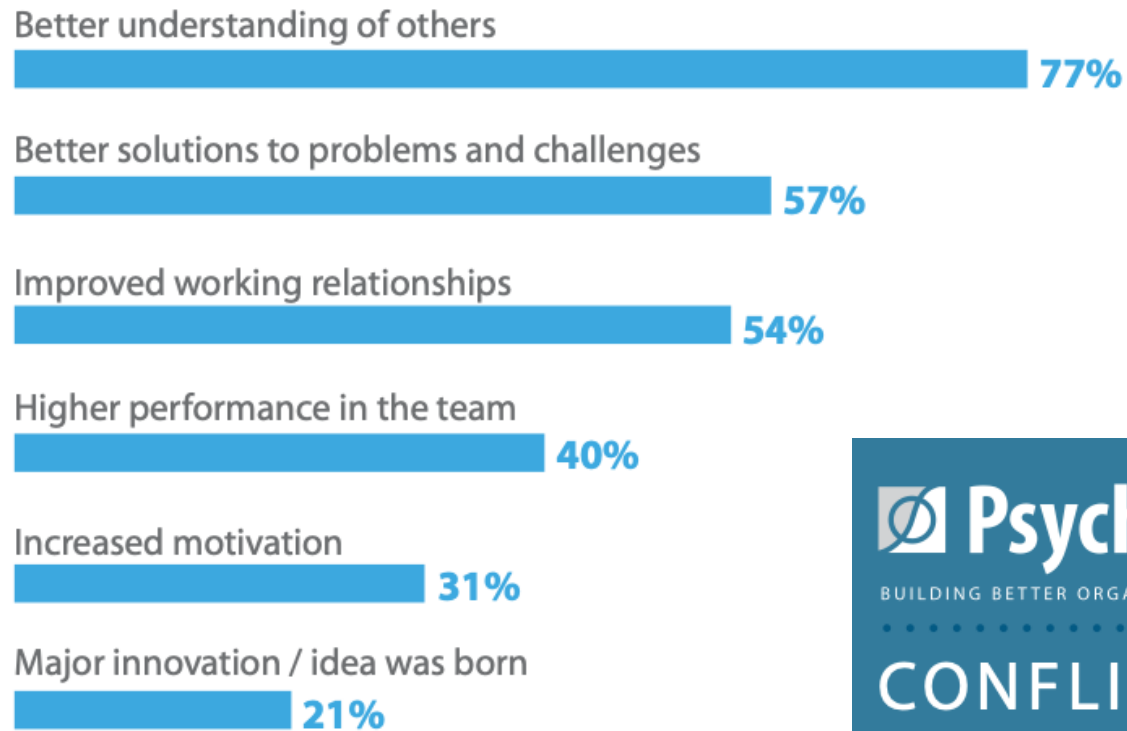
- Introduction
- Managing Self
- Managing Others
- Strategies
- Communication
- Conclusion



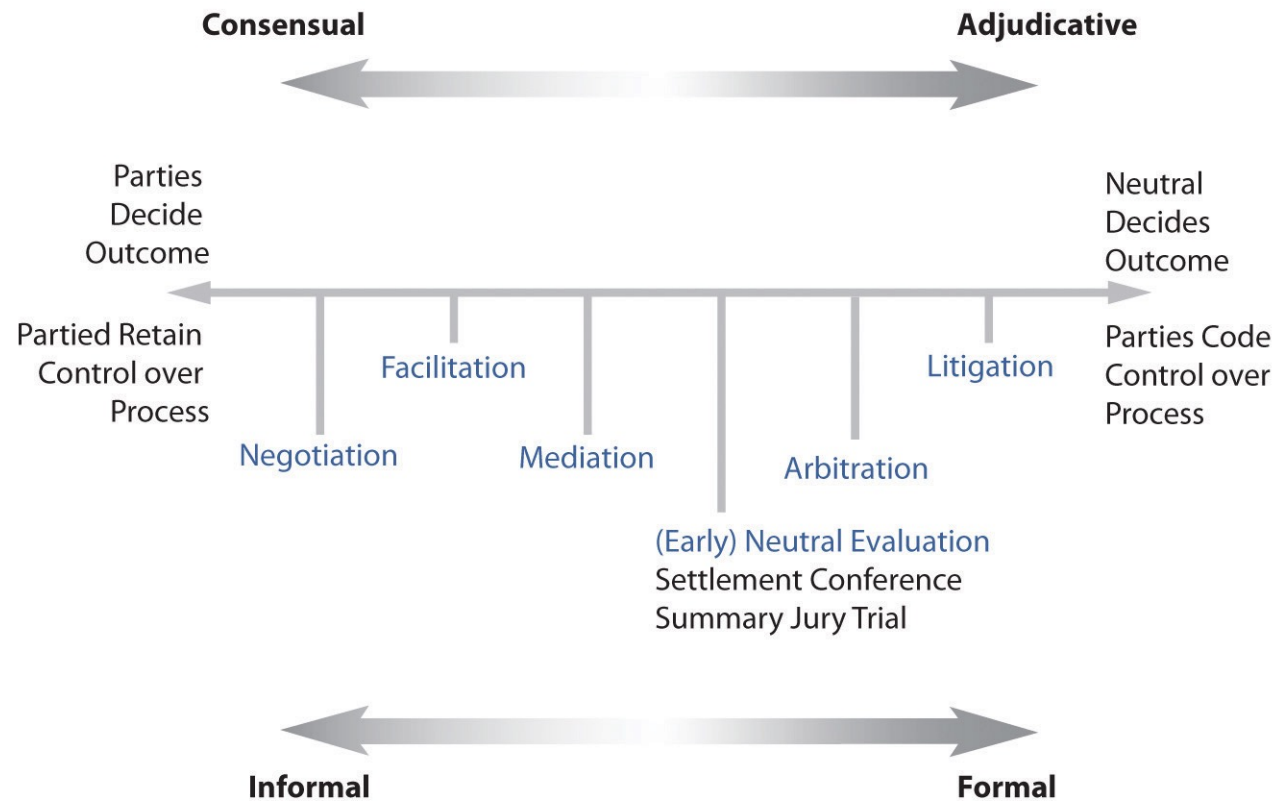
Conflict can be positive force

Appropriate conflict management leads to *efficiencies* and *innovation*. Lack of conflict leads to limited growth, poor decision-making, loss of competitive advantage, and, in severe cases, fractures in the company.

Outcomes of well managed conflict



Developing the skill - helps you!



Sources of Conflict

Structural: unclear responsibilities, accountabilities, deliverables, deadlines, team norms.

Relationship: differences among team members leading to a lack of understanding.

*Who is
responsible?*





Structural causes of conflict

Unfair, unclear or inefficient policies, procedures, organizational cultures, or ingrained practices that repeatedly give rise to disputes.

Unintended consequences of organizational policies and procedures.

High employee or client turn-over often have structural sources.

Relationship causes of conflict



MANAGING SELF

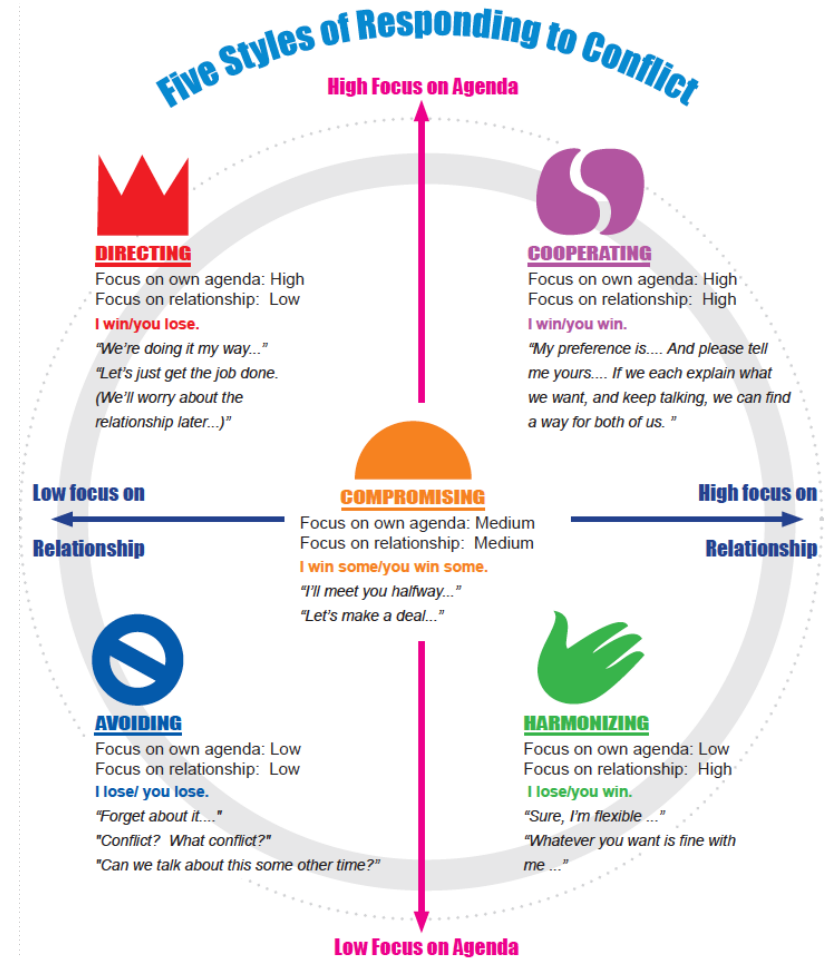
What is your automatic response to conflict?

Do you take charge?

Ignore the problem?

Run away?

Look to others for input?



How does your body react to conflict?

Think Fast:

1. something wants to eat you
2. you do not want to be eaten
3. run!

If something is unfamiliar or unclear: assume it is bad!!

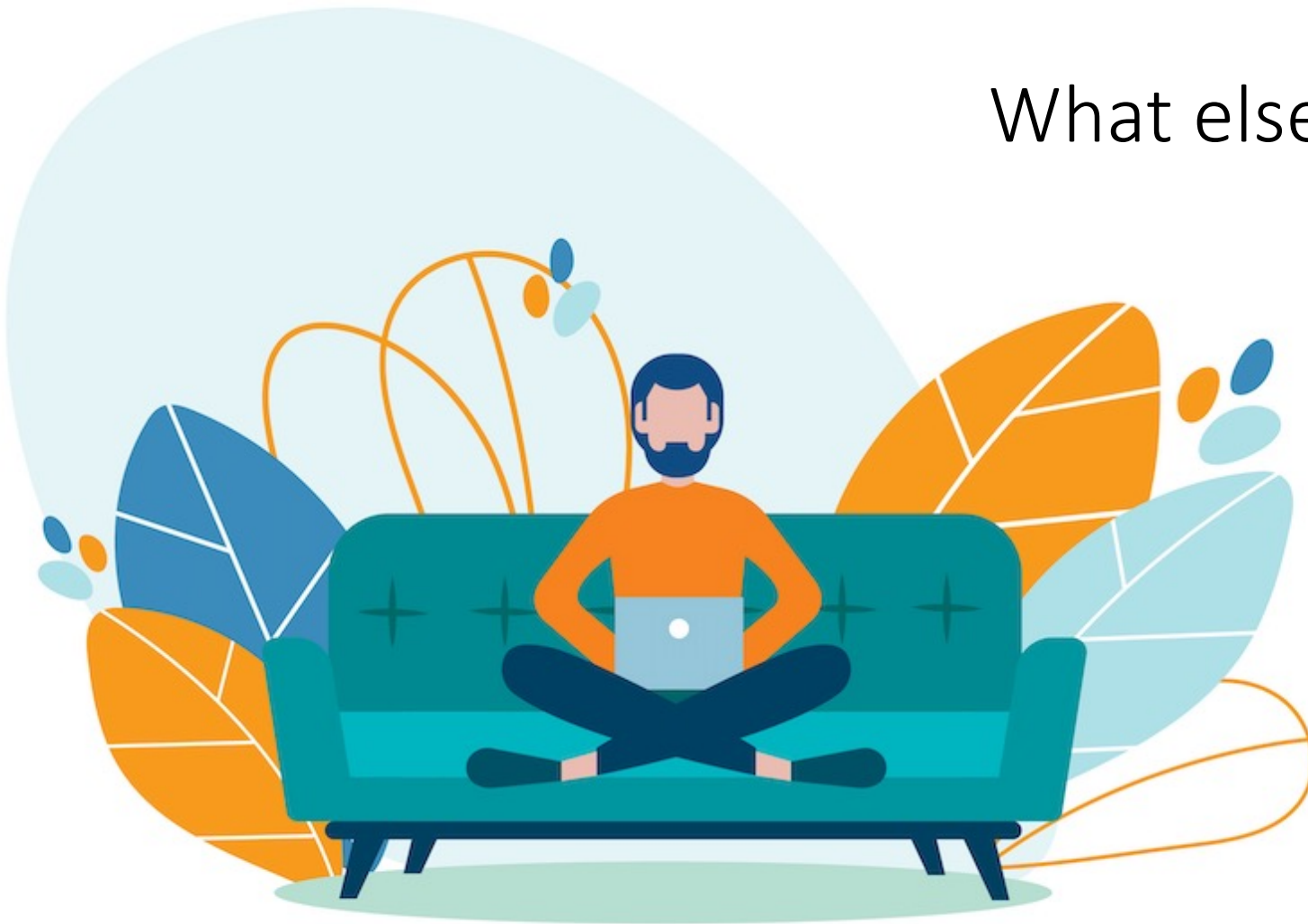


dopamine **endorphin** **oxytocin** **serotonin**

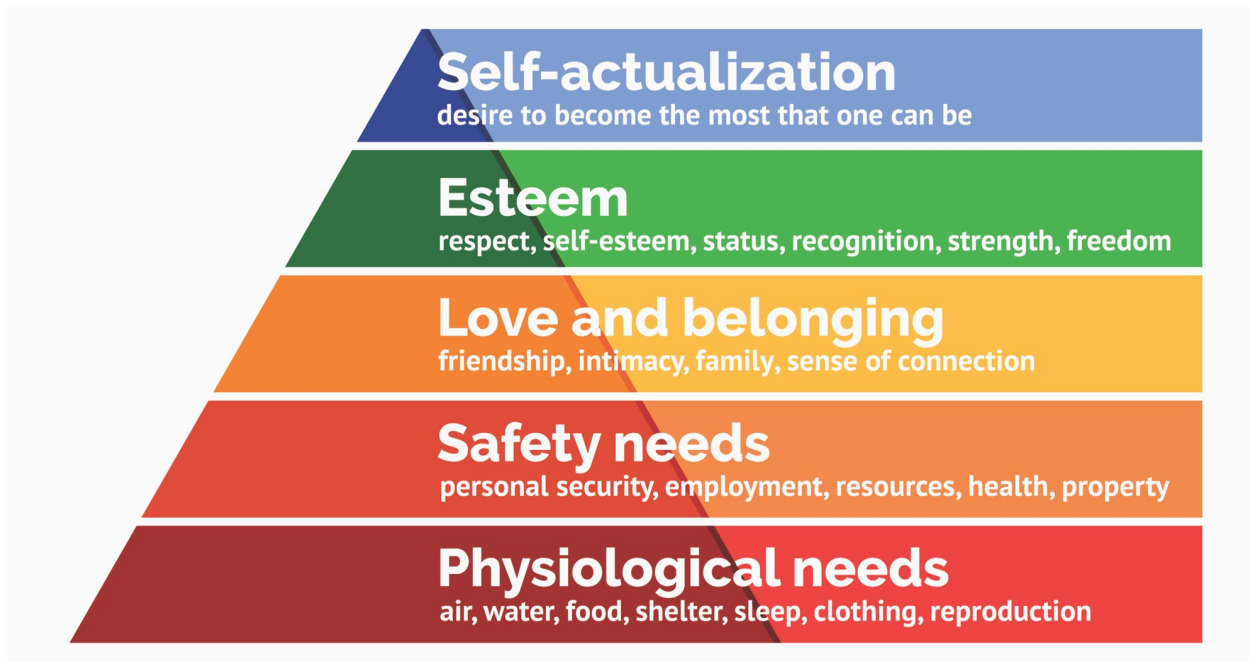


What can affect your
perception?

What else?

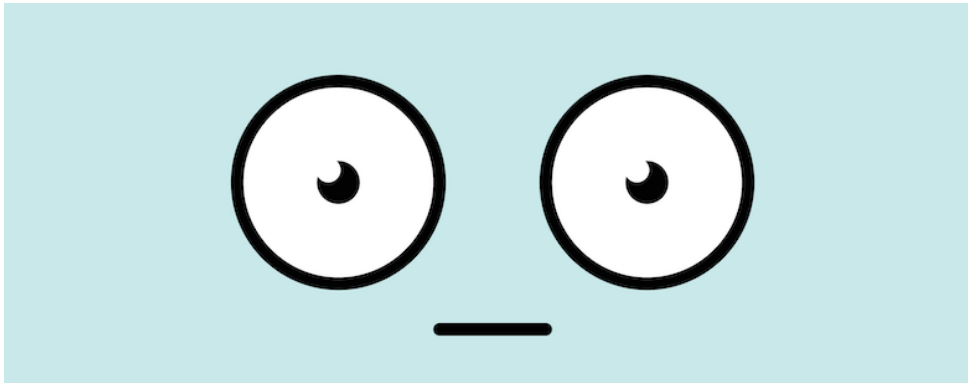


What else is going on for you?



Example: life transitions = no sleep = sensitive

MANAGING OTHERS

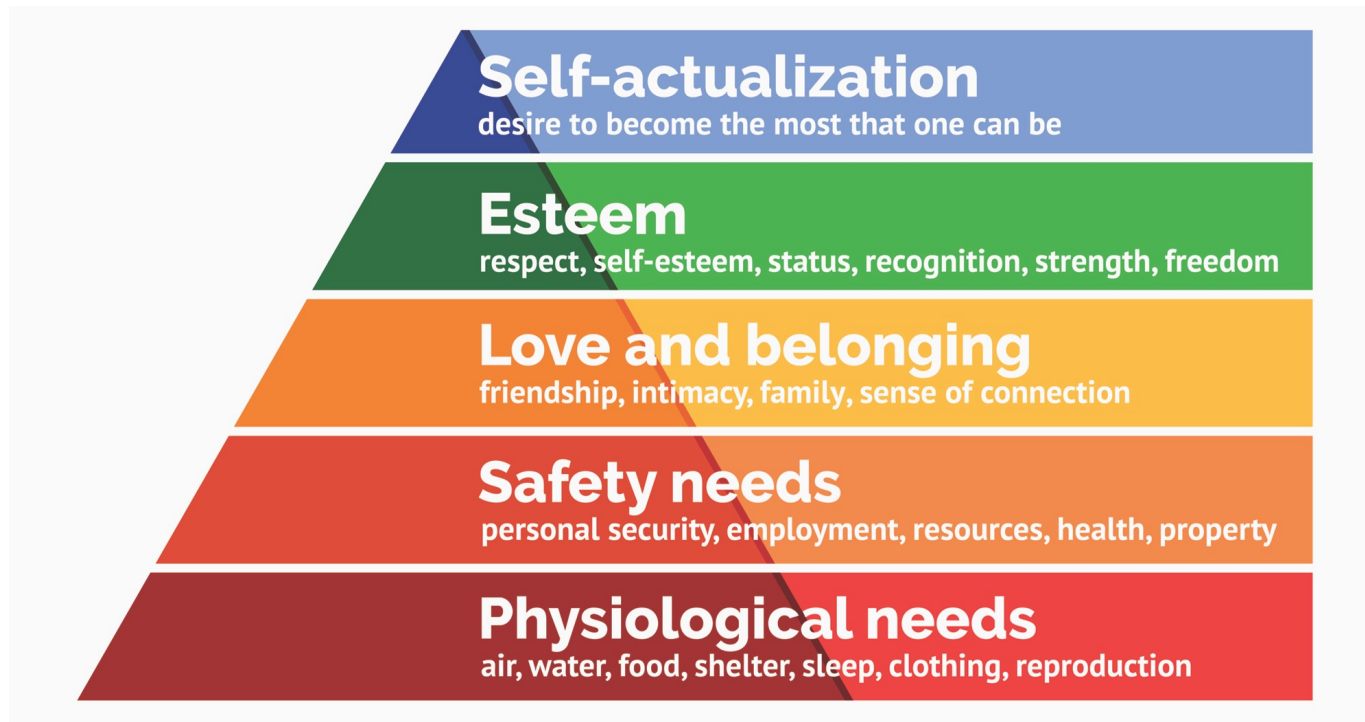


What can affect their perception?

- Impact of trauma
- Neuromodulators
- Socio-cultural background
- Prior experiences
- Unconscious biases
- Social learning

Example: the IT guy

What else is going on for them?



Example: *program design – a promise*

Influence of power

Example: "you can run circles around us"

Building *positive relationships* is crucial to building and maintaining power.

Major types of power:

- Referent
- Expert
- Coercive
- Reward
- Legitimate



STRATEGIES

Who is your audience? What is at stake?

Long-term relationships:
The workplace
At home

Short-term or no relationship:
Driving
Supermarket



Example: "you can't fool me!"

Strategies

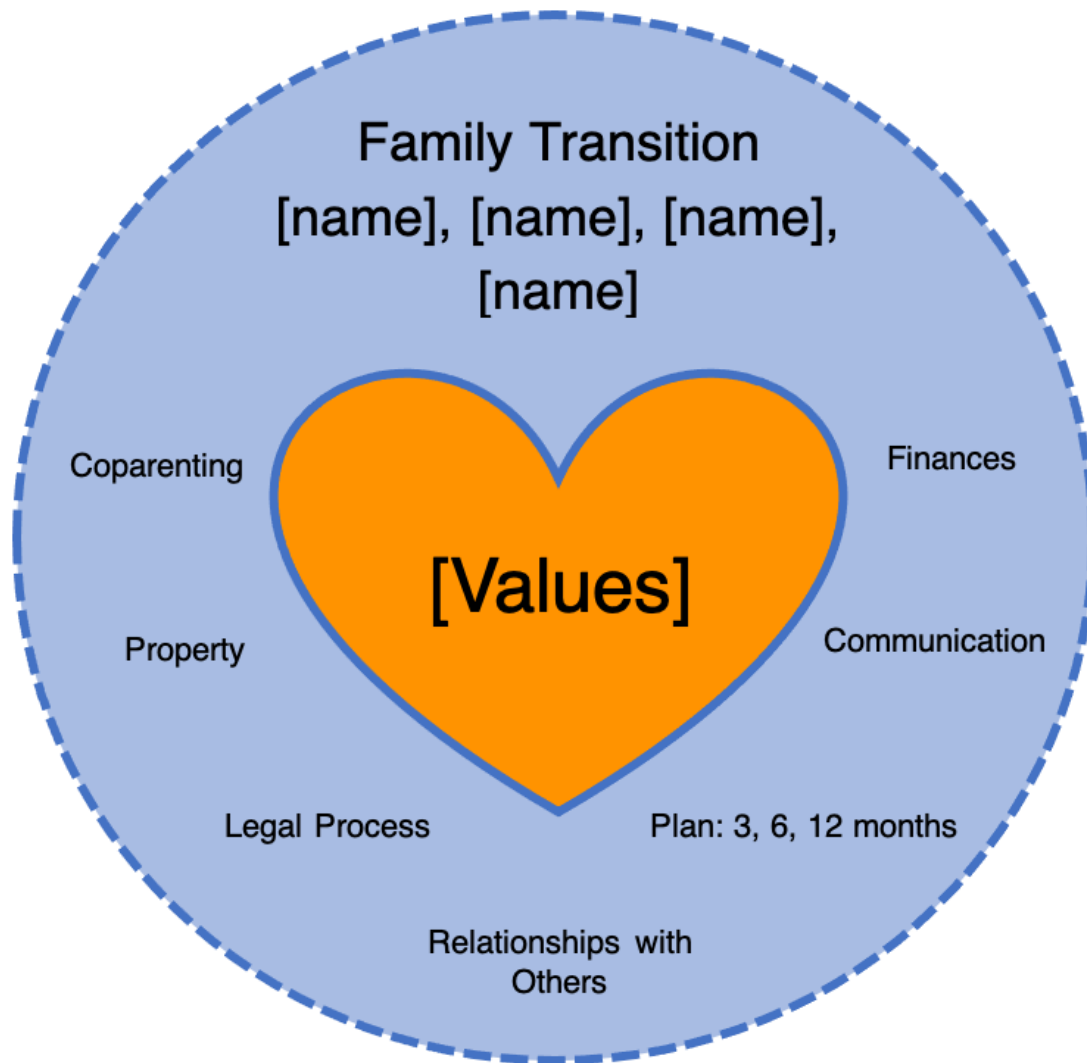
1. Face the problem, not the people
2. Don't assume their intentions
3. Mutually understanding of perceptions
4. Share your side
5. Two-way communication
6. Express and legitimize emotions
7. * * * Forward focussed
8. Dedicate the time
9. Act as a partner
10. Remember face-saving

Focus on interests

Acceptance
Competency
Recognition
Trust
Connection
Support
Commitment
Respect

*What interests
do you have in
common?*

Time
Validation
Fun
Fairness
Privacy
Control



Let's talk

Managing or resolving conflict begins with a private conversation between the parties.

Be *curious*, ensure other party feels safe, and prioritize the relationship.



Look for supports

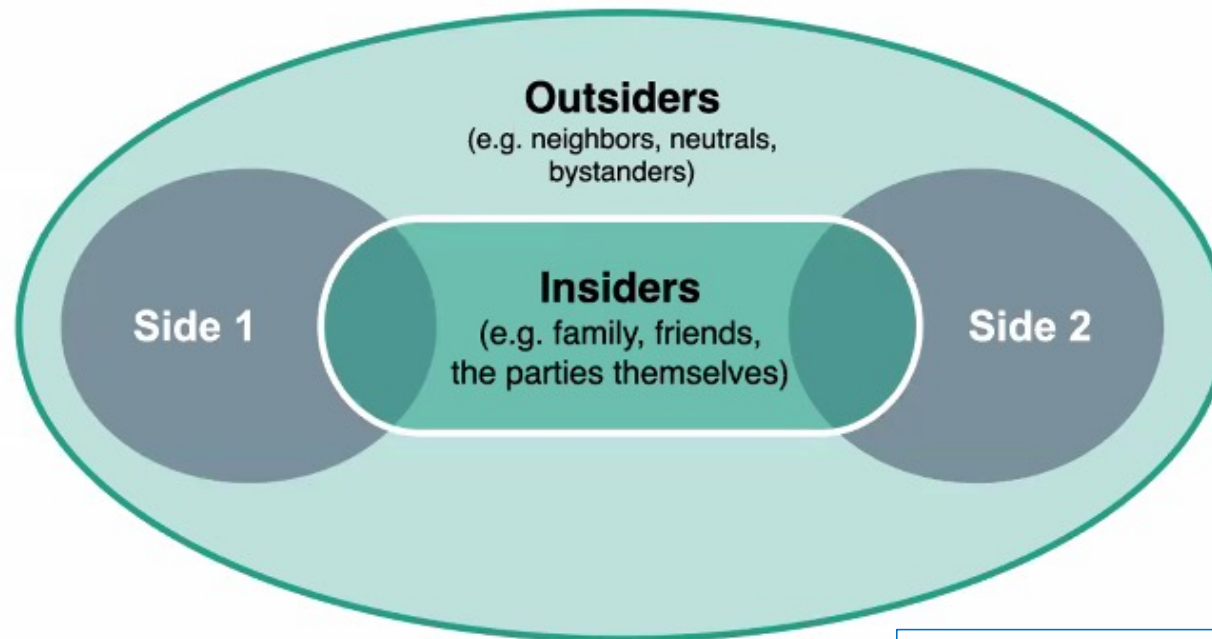
A mediator assists the parties to have a productive conversation about the dispute.

Satisfaction is higher than with other forms of dispute resolution.

Commitments are more likely to be followed through.



Who is the **Third Side?**



Example: “that’s why they need us”

COMMUNICATION

Who is your audience?

What is the best medium?

What is at stake?

Example: Comms vacuum – people make stories up!

Difficult conversations

1. Don't postpone them
2. Self-check: am I being defensive? Do I feel safe?
3. What's going on for them?
4. Is the setting appropriate?
5. Listen to understand - be curious!
6. Ask questions
7. Analyse the feedback looking for helpful information

Example: Performance review – walk & talk



Effective feedback

1. Is it coming from a reliable source?
2. Is the process transparent and fair?
3. Is the communication process appropriate?



*Feedback is a **GIFT** that helps **you** improve likely in all settings!*

Why is it so hard?

Fundamental attribution errors: attributing problems others' disposition rather than the setting or circumstances.

Demanding conditions: workloads and deadlines - having limited capacity to engage in an exhaustive analysis of all the potential causes and solutions.

False consensus effect: our view of reality and the facts. We are reasonable and competent people, why would others see the situation differently?

Example: "that's because he is old"

What can I say?

Yelling: be willing to end the meeting and say, in a neutral, composed voice:

“I need to have a conversation with you. I need you to lower your voice.”

“I need you to take a deep breath. This is not constructive.”

Defensiveness: use immediacy:

“I see this as your responsibility — let’s talk about why you don’t see it this way.”

Recurring reactive behavior: address the tendency:

“I notice every time we sit down to discuss [issue], you get [upset, angry, defensive]. I have your best interests at heart. What can I do to help you hear me better? And here’s what I need from you during these interactions.”

CONCLUSION

Responses to conflict will vary by individual. It is ultimately *your* responsibility to understand and manage conflict appropriately.

- What is *your* personality style?
- What is *your* conflict style?
- What areas for professional development did you identify?
- How will you adjust your style to accommodate the needs of others?



It's worth it!

