

Managing Yourself and *Difficult People* in the Workplace

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You WILL deal with *difficult people*, both during your job search and after you find a job. If it is resolved in a professional manner, conflict can actually lead to personal growth.





Definition: con·flict

- To come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory, at variance, or in opposition; clash
- controversy; quarrel
- discord of action, feeling, or effect; antagonism or opposition, as of interests or principles

conflict. (n.d.). *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from Dictionary.com website: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/conflict>

****It's possible to have general conflict with an organization without necessarily being at conflict with a person.**

Questions for Discussion:

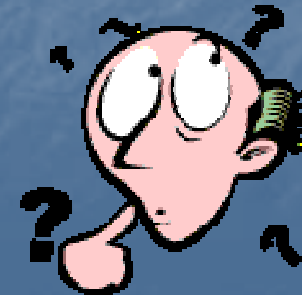
- What can reinforce or prolong conflict?
- Do you seem to struggle with conflict more than others in your work group?
Or is conflict part of the work group in general?

**Taking things personal will usually lead to more challenges in the workplace.



Tips for Resolving Conflict:

- Mutual respect
- Separate the problem from the person
- It is not all about winning or losing; there is a third option of compromise
- Keep an open mind
- Find common ground
- Talk it out rather than act it out
- Set boundaries between personal life and work
- Listen carefully



Active Listening



- Body language
- Restate other person's position
- Ask questions for better understanding
- Focus on other person's words, rather than worrying about what you will say next
- Give feedback
- Stay away from distractions
- Empathy (Stand in the other person's shoes)

Distorted thinking can
lead to relationship or
communication
problems.



Distorted Thinking



Overgeneralization – We have a tendency to transform one negative event into ongoing defeat. Words like “never,” “every,” and “always” may be used.

Minimization or Magnification – If we minimize something, we discount it or reduce its level of importance. If we magnify something, we exaggerate or blow something out of proportion.

Distorted Thinking (Continued)

Mind Reading – With no evidence for our conclusions, we strongly believe that we know how someone else is thinking or feeling. This usually involves taking a comment or action personally.

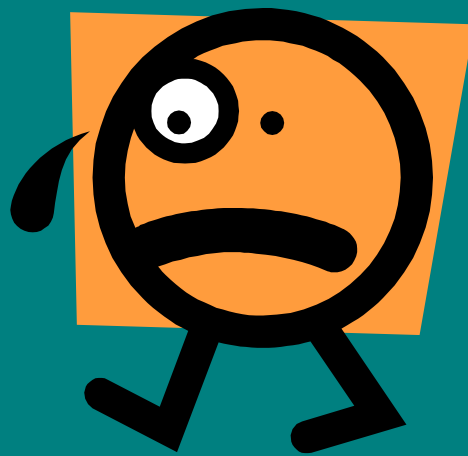


Fortune Telling – We predict something and then convince ourselves that it is true. This often relates to telling ourselves that something is going to turn out badly.

Distorted Thinking (Continued)

Emotional Reasoning – Our thought is based strictly on our emotions/feelings.

Mental Filter – We look past the positives and focus on the negatives.



Distorted Thinking (Continued)

Labeling – We let our actions and mistakes (as well as what other people tell us) decide who we are as people. We can also put labels on others.

Blame – We either try to hold others responsible for our own troubles, or we put the blame on ourselves for situations we may not have been responsible for.



Discussion Question:

Can you identify an example from the past when you've used one of these methods of distorted thinking?

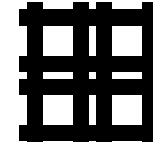


Johari Window

Understanding Yourself & Others

Quadrant 1: OPEN	Quadrant 2: BLIND
Quadrant 3: HIDDEN	Quadrant 4: UNKNOWN

Johari Window (Continued)



- Quadrant 1: OPEN – Things you know about yourself and others also know about you
 - Quadrant 2: BLIND – Things you don't know about yourself but others do know about you
 - Quadrant 3: HIDDEN – Things you know about yourself but others do not know
 - Quadrant 4: UNKNOWN – Things you don't know about yourself and others don't know
-



Discussion Question

- How have you addressed conflict in the past?
- If you had a second chance to deal with this situation, what would you do differently?





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