“Why all the conflict?”

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All human beings deal with “CONFLICT” on a daily basis.

• In personal and family relationships;
• In schools;
• In workplaces;
• With total complete strangers;
• In essence the possibility of encountering conflict, is inherent in everything that we do.
An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals. (Wilmot and Hocker, 2010)
• According to CPP Inc., a provider of research, training, and organizational development tools, the cost of workplace conflict in 2008 was about $359 billion dollars for U.S. Businesses. (hrwebcafe, 2008)

• Managers spend approximately 20 to 40 percent of their time dealing with workplace conflicts. (Conflict in the workplace November 7, 2011)

• 90 percent of terminations are related to workplace conflict and over half of the turnover in an organization. (Conflict in the workplace November 7, 2011)

• It is estimated that workplace conflict significantly raises personal stress levels, costing employers over 1.5 billion dollars a year. (Conflict in the workplace November 7, 2011)
Causes of conflict?

- Differences and diversity among employees, potentially leading to misunderstandings based on age, race or culture, prejudices, intolerances, rumors about an individual or group;
- Excessive and uncontrolled competition between employees, comparison of performance ratings and bonuses, perceived inequities, fear of not receiving a promotion or losing a job;
- Internal conflicts within an employee such as bigotry, tendency to hold grudges, false pride, blaming others for one’s own problems;
- Romantic personal relationships and harassment;
- Drug- or alcohol-related behavior.
The results of conflict:

- stress; frustration and anxiety;
- loss of sleep;
- strained relationships;
- grievances and litigation;
- presenteeism and absenteeism;
- employee turnover;
- loss of productivity;
- increased customer complaints;
- sabotage;
- injury and accidents;
- disability claims;
- and even death.

Conflict may take the following forms:

- Publicly faulting the performance of a co-worker;
- Constant bickering between two employees;
- Coolness or an avoidance whenever possible between employees;
- Verbally abusing or making demeaning remarks to a co-worker.
- Bullying
Interpersonal conflicts arise in every workplace. You must be prepared to “STOP” conflicts by:

- Leading intervention efforts between conflicting parties.
  - Discussions
  - Accountability and Expectations
  - Documentation
  - EAP/Support groups
• Do – make sure that all involved are treated with respect, dignity and fairness;
• Do – discuss conflict openly and try to understand the perceptions, ideas and concerns;
• Do – make sure that all parties listen to each other.

• Don’t – allow judging and criticizing;
• Don’t – allow hidden agendas;
• Don’t – allow monopolizing of time.
Challenge Yourself to:

- Address conflict head on;
- Work to improve your communication skills and settling differences effectively and on a timely basis;
- Listen, Listen, Listen;
- Show that you are listening (Restate);
- Avoid Poisons (name calling, exaggerations, comparisons, etc.);
- Deal with strong emotions in a constructive way;
- Know when to shift gears;
- Avoid Passive/Aggressive Behaviors;
- Trust in yourself to resolve the conflict;
- Know when it is appropriate to seek third party intervention.
• Conflict is an inevitable part of every relationship of value;
• It Can be resolved so that both parties feel they have “won” and without the need for someone to “lose”;  
• Conflict signals a need for change/evolution in a relationship;
• It can be a healthy and enriching experience, strengthening relationships rather than weakening them;
• It can be positive and productive, providing opportunities for learning and mutual understanding

