

A Framework For Teaching Conflict Resolution in the Schools*

Morton Deutsch

Teachers College, Columbia University

Let me start my remarks by indicating that my presentation is inspired by a wise saying of my teacher, Professor Kurt Lewin, a famous social psychologist. He stated that "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." My talk is, in part, intended to provide you with a theoretical framework for thinking about the teaching of conflict resolution. I hope you will find it of practical use.

However, let me first indicate my orientation to conflict: Conflict is like sex--it is an important and pervasive aspect of life; it should be enjoyed and occur with a reasonable degree of frequency. Like with sex, conflict sometimes evokes anxiety. Anxiety about conflict can lead to: the repression or avoidance of conflict; premature conflict resolution before there has been an adequate exploration of the issues in the conflict; or an excessive tendency to seek out conflict in order to prove in a "macho" way that one is not afraid of conflict.

Until recently, social scientists had given conflict a bad reputation by linking it with psychopathology, social disorder, and war. The psychological utopias of many psychological theories would appear to have been a conflict-free existence. Yet it is now apparent that most people seek out conflict in competitive sports and games, by going to the theater or reading a novel, by attending to the news, in the teasing interplay of

*Paper presented at the 1987 Negotiations in Organizations Conference in Mt. Sterling, Ohio, April 24-26, 1987.

intimate encounters, and in their intellectual work. Fortunately, no one has to face the prospect of a conflict-free existence. Conflict can neither be eliminated nor even suppressed for long.

The social and scientific issue is not how to eliminate or prevent conflict but rather how to have lively controversy rather than deadly quarrel.

Conflict has many positive functions. It prevents stagnation, it stimulates interest and curiosity, it is the medium through which problems can be aired and solutions arrived at, it is the root of personal and social change. Conflict is often part of the process of testing and assessing oneself and, as such, may be highly enjoyable as one experiences the pleasure of the full and active use of one's capacities. In addition, conflict demarcates groups from one another and helps establish group and personal identities.

I stress the positive functions of conflict, and I have by no means provided an exhaustive listing, because many discussions of conflict cast it in the role of villain--as though conflict, per se is the cause of our individual and social problems. In stressing the positive functions of conflict, I do not wish to deny that conflict can take a destructive course. It can lead to deadly quarrels rather than lively controversy; it can produce self-perpetuating, vicious cycles which maintain hostile and defensive involvements in the antagonistic relationship between the conflicting parties long after the original issues in dispute have lost their significance; it can reduce the resources available for individual and social problem-solving and impair the processes of problem-solving.

The Determinants of the Course of Conflict

Conflict can have constructive or destructive consequences. The basic question with which I have been concerned through many years of research and theorizing is: What determines whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course?

After much work and thought, I slowly realized that the answer to this question involves the combination of two simple ideas. The first idea entails the recognition that a constructive process of conflict resolution is similar to an effective, cooperative problem-solving process while a destructive process of conflict resolution has many of the characteristics of a competitive process of social interaction. The second basic idea, which was the culmination of years of research, I have labelled Deutsch's crude law of social relations. It is that the characteristic processes and effects elicited by a given type of social relationship (cooperative or competitive) tend also to elicit that type of social relationship. Thus, the strategy of power and the tactics of coercion, threat, and deception result from, and also result in, a competitive relationship. Similarly, the strategy of mutual problem-solving and the tactics of persuasion, openness, and mutual enhancement elicit, and also are elicited by, a cooperative orientation.

In summary, the typical effects of successful cooperation breed further cooperation, while the typical effects of competition breed further competition. In addition, a cooperative problem-solving orientation to a conflict leads to a constructive process of conflict resolution while a competitive, win-lose orientation to conflict leads to a destructive process. If one wants to create the conditions for a destructive process of conflict

resolution, one would introduce into the conflict the typical characteristics and effects of a competitive process: poor communication; coercive tactics; suspicion; the perception of basic differences in values; an orientation to increasing the power differences; challenge to the legitimacy of the parties; personal insecurity; the deprecation of others, and so forth. On the other hand, if one wants to create the conditions for a constructive process of conflict resolution, one would introduce into the conflict the typical effects of a cooperative process: good communication; the perception of similarity in beliefs and values; full acceptance of one another's legitimacy; problem-centered negotiations; mutual trust and confidence; information-sharing; and so forth.

However, bargaining and conflict resolution do not always take a constructive course. When a conflict takes a destructive course, third-parties can play a role in regulating, aborting, or undoing a malignant process of conflict resolution. The question is what framework can guide a third person who seeks to intervene therapeutically if negotiations are deadlocked or unproductive because of misunderstandings, faulty communications, the development of hostile attitudes, or the inability to discover a mutually satisfying solution. I suggest that such a framework is implicit in the ideas that I have described earlier. The third-party seeks to produce a cooperative problem-solving orientation to the conflict by creating the conditions which characterize an effective cooperative problem-solving process: these conditions are the typical effects of a successful cooperative process. Helping the conflicting parties to develop a cooperative, problem-solving orientation to their conflict may be sufficient when the conflicting parties have reasonably well-developed group problem-solving and decision-

making skills. Often they do not, and hence, they need tutelage in these skills if they are to deal with their problem successfully. And, often, conflicting parties do not have sufficient substantive knowledge concerning the issues in conflict to manage them constructively. Here, too, they may need tutelage by a third party if their conflict is to be resolved sensibly.

Third-parties (mediators, conciliators, process consultants, therapists, counselors, etc.) who are called upon to provide assistance in a conflict in which the parties involved need help to resolve their conflict constructively require four kinds of skills. The first set of skills are those related to the third-party's establishing an effective working relationship with each of the conflicting parties so that they will trust the third-party, communicate freely with her, and be responsive to her suggestions regarding an orderly process for negotiations (see Kressel, 1972, 1985; Kressel and Pruitt, 1985; Folberg and Taylor, 1984; Lewicki and Litterer, 1985; Rubin, 1980, 1981). The second are those related to establishing a cooperative problem-solving attitude among the conflicting parties toward their conflict. Much of the preceding discussion in this paper focuses on this area; this is elaborated more fully in Deutsch (1973). Third are the skills involved in developing a creative group process and group decision-making. Such a process clarifies the nature of the problems that the conflicting parties are confronting, helps to expand the range of alternatives that are perceived to be available, facilitates realistic assessment of their feasibility as well as desirability, and facilitates the implementation of agreed-upon solutions (see Blake and Mouton, 1984; Hare, 1982; Janis and Mann, 1977; Johnson and Johnson, 1987, Zander, 1982). And, fourth, it is often helpful for the third-party to have considerable substantive knowledge about the issues around which the

conflict centers. Substantive knowledge could enable the mediator to see possible solutions that might not occur to the conflicting parties and it would permit her to help them assess proposed solutions more realistically.

Implications for Schools

From the research theorizing that I have summarized above and from the work of many other social scientists who have studied conflict, there has begun to emerge a coherent set of ideas and a systematic technology for training people in how to foster the constructive rather than the destructive potential in conflicts. During the past several years, a sprinkling of programs, workshops, curricula, and modules related to conflict resolution have sprung up in different schools in different parts of the country. From reading through a survey of such work in schools, prepared by Dr. Reardon (1985), my impression is that most of this work is not yet sufficiently informed by the considerable amount of research and theorizing done by social scientists in this area. Nonetheless, there are several excellent programs. I list three: The School Initiatives Program of the Community Board Center for Policy and Training that is training children in conflict resolution and mediation in several San Francisco schools; the Mediation Program at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst which Janet Rifkin has helped to develop; and the mediation program being conducted at five New York City high schools by the Victims Service Agency.

In the rest of this paper I would like to sketch out what I consider to be the key ingredients of a comprehensive program of conflict resolution in schools.* Then I would like to outline briefly what I consider to be the

*Although my focus in this paper is on primary and secondary schools, the ideas presented below are also applicable at the college and postgraduate levels.

central features in a curriculum concerned with fostering constructive conflict resolution. In doing so, I shall borrow ideas freely from others who have written about conflict resolution and from people who are working in the schools with such programs.

Some of the core ingredients of a comprehensive program of conflict resolution in schools are represented in the new Center for Cooperation and Conflict in the Schools that we have recently established at Teachers College. A key ingredient of our Center is "Cooperative learning," and here we borrow freely from the work of David and Roger Johnson (1974, 1986, 1987). It is central to any comprehensive school program concerned with conflict. It is aimed at fostering cooperative relations and attitudes among students and at developing the skills necessary to engage in effective collaborative work. A collaborative rather than an adversarial atmosphere in the schools among students--but also within and between the various groups (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, parents) that compose a school--would enormously facilitate constructive conflict resolution. A second ingredient of our Center is specifically concerned with "conflict resolution" training. It is oriented toward developing the specific knowledge and skills required to be a constructive participant in conflicts in which one is directly involved and to be a helpful intervenor as a third-party or conflict manager in conflicts involving others. Such knowledge and skills are likely to lessen the occurrence of destructive conflicts in schools and also in the neighborhoods and families of the school children. It seems apparent that it might be valuable for teachers, administrators, and parents as well as students to acquire such knowledge and skills. A third component of our Center, "The Constructive Use of Controversy in Teaching Subject-matters," which we also borrow directly from the Johnsons (1979, 1984, 1985), is meant

to provide students with a continuing experience of the stimulating and creative aspects of lively controversy and to help them distinguish between criticizing ideas and criticizing the person holding the ideas. A fourth component of our Center focuses on "Dispute resolution centers in the school"; Girard, Rifkin, and Townley (1985) provide a good model. Such centers are meant to provide a congenial but neutral setting where conflicting parties (whether they be individuals or groups) can meet with the help of conciliators, mediators, or arbitrators (who are trained, volunteer, individuals or panels of students, teachers, administrators, and/or parents) to deal with conflicts they cannot resolve by themselves. Such centers would have an "outreach" function which would seek to encourage parties who were engaging in non-productive or destructive conflict to use the services available at the Dispute Resolution Center.

In selecting to emphasize these ingredients as the core of any comprehensive program of conflict resolution in the schools, I have been guided by the view that students need to have continuing experiences of constructive conflict resolution as they learn different subject-matters as well as an immersion in a school environment which, by the way it functions, provides daily experiences of (as well as a model of) cooperative relations and of constructive resolution of conflicts. This pervasive and extended experience, combined with tuition in the concepts and principles of conflict resolution, should enable the student to develop generalizable attitudes and skills which would be strong enough to resist the countervailing influences that are so prevalent in their non-school environments.

Now, let me briefly outline what I consider to be some of the central features in a curriculum concerned with fostering constructive conflict

resolution knowledge and skills. This is a highly condensed outline.

1. Know what type of conflict you are involved in. There are 3 major types: the zero-sum conflict (a pure win-lose conflict), the mixed-motive (both can win, both can lose, one can win and the other can lose), and the pure cooperative (both can win or both can lose). It is important to know what kind of conflict you are in because the different types require different types of strategies and tactics (see Walton and McKersie, 1965; Lewicki and Litterer, 1985; Pruitt and Rubin, 1985). The common tendency is for inexperienced parties to define their conflict as "win-lose" even though it is a mixed-motive conflict. Very few conflicts are intrinsically win-lose conflicts but if you misperceive it to be such, you are apt to engage in a competitive, destructive process of conflict resolution. This is so except where there are very strong agreed-upon norms or rules regulating the nature of the competitive interaction (as in competitive games).

How can one distinguish among the three types of conflict? Four sorts of data provide clues: the nature of the objective interdependence between the parties involved, the nature of their interests, the nature of their emotional responses to the other's success or failure, and the readiness of each to help or hinder the other. An objective scarcity of commonly desired values (e.g., power, top positions, status, a prize) often promotes win-lose conflicts; a lack of clear information or knowledge may lead to conflicts over how to achieve a common, cooperative objective. Win-lose conflicts often develop when both sides have interests which define resources as nonshareable, which require exclusive possession, or which lead to rigid fixation on a particular resource. Pleasure at the other's success is a sign of a cooperative conflict, while joy at the other's failure is a marker

of a win-lose conflict. Readiness to help the other to achieve his or her objective betokens a cooperative conflict; readiness to hinder the other, a win-lose conflict. As its name indicates, a mixed-motive conflict is apt to have mixed clues, partly competitive and partly cooperative.

The strategies and tactics of the different types of conflict differ. In a zero-sum conflict one seeks to amass, mobilize, and utilize the various resources of power (Lasswell and Kaplan, 1950) in such a way that one can bring to bear in the conflict more effective, relevant power than one's adversary; or if this is not possible in the initial area of conflict, one seeks to transform the arena of conflict into one in which one's effective power is greater than one's adversary. Thus, if a bully challenges you to a fight because you won't "lend" him money and he is stronger than you (and you can not amass the power to deter, intimidate, or beat him), you might arrange to change the conflict from a physical confrontation (which you would lose) to a legal confrontation (which you would win) by involving the police or other legal authority. Other strategies and tactics in win-lose conflicts involve outwitting, misleading, seducing, blackmailing, and the various forms of the black arts which have been discussed by Machiavelli (1950, 1965), Potter (1965), Schelling (1960), and Alinsky (1971), among others. The strategy and tactics involved in mixed-motive conflicts are discussed below. My emphasis is on the strategy of cooperative problem-solving to find a solution to the conflict which is mutually satisfactory and upon the development and application of mutually-agreed upon fair principles to handle those situations in which the aspirations of both sides cannot be equally realized. The strategy and tactics of the resolution of

cooperative conflicts involve primarily cooperative fact finding and research as well as rational persuasion.

2. Respect yourself and your interests, respect the other and his or her interests. Personal insecurity and the sense of vulnerability often lead people to define conflicts as "life and death," win-lose struggles even when they are relatively minor, mixed-motive conflicts, and this definition may lead to "conflict avoidance," "premature conflict resolution," or "obsessive involvement in the conflict." Helping students to develop a respect for themselves and their interests enables them to see their conflicts in reasonable proportion and facilitates their constructive confrontation. Helping students to learn to respect the other and the other's interests inhibits the use of competitive tactics of power, coercion, deprecation, and deception which commonly escalate the issues in conflict and often lead to violence. For classroom activities that can be useful in affirmation of ourselves and others see Prutzman, Burger, Bodenhamer, and Stern (1978) and Reardon (1985).

Valuing oneself and others, as well as respect for the differences between oneself and others, are rooted in the fundamental moral commitment to the principle of universal human dignity. This core value and its derivatives should not only be emphasized in the curricula of many subject matters (e.g., literature, geography, history, social studies) from K through 12, in addition to the conflict-resolution curricula, but also should be learned by students from their observations of how teachers and school administrators treat students and other people in and around the schools.

3. Distinguish clearly between "interests" and "positions". Positions may be opposed but interests may not be (Fisher and Ury, 1981). The classic example from Follett (1940) is that of a brother and sister, each of whom wanted the only orange available. The sister wanted the peel of the orange to make marmalade; the brother wanted to eat the inner part. Their positions ("I want the orange") were opposed, their interests were not. Often when conflicting parties reveal their underlying interests, it is possible to find a solution which suits them both.

"Positions" and "interests" stand in the relation of means to ends but often, in the heat of conflict, positions may take on the appearance of an "end". An end or interest is an intrinsic value, a good in itself, which requires no justification but it provides the justification of a means or position. Interests can, of course, stand in a hierarchical relationship to one another in which one interest is a means to another end which is, in turn, a means to another end and so on. One gets beyond positions to interests, and beyond surface interests to deeper interests, by pursuing answers to the question why. Lazarsfeld (1935), in a brilliant paper, has clarified many of the issues in the art of asking why. The essential point for conflict resolution is that by asking why artfully, of oneself as well as of the other, one can often discover that the conflicting positions and conflicting superficial interests disappear as one unearths deeper congruent interests or as one realizes that the conflicting positions and superficial interests are based on implicit assumptions that may have limited relevance or validity.

4. Explore your interests and other's interests to identify the common and compatible interests that you both share. Identifying shared interests

makes it easier to deal constructively with the interest that you perceive as being opposed. A full exploration of one another's interests increases empathy and facilitates subsequent problem-solving. For an excellent discussion of how to develop empathy and a sense of shared interests, see Shulman and Mekler (1985).

It is evident that when considerable distrust and hostility have developed between the conflicting parties, it may be useful to have third parties help in this process of exploration. The third parties may serve one or more functions. They may serve as facilitators, conciliators (or therapists) who help the parties to control and reduce their distrust and hostility sufficiently to permit them to engage in this process themselves; they may serve as mediators who directly assist the parties in this process or even undertake the exploration for the conflicting parties doing what the parties are unable or unwilling to do. There has been considerable discussion of such third-party intervention in Folberg and Taylor (1984), Kelman (1972), Kressel (1985), and Rubin (1981).

5. Define the conflicting interests between oneself and the other as a mutual problem to be solved cooperatively. Define the conflict in the smallest terms possible, as a "here-now-this" conflict rather than as a conflict between personalities or general principles--e.g., as a conflict about a specific behavior rather than about who is a better person. Diagnose the problem clearly and then creatively seek new options for dealing with the conflict that lead to mutual gain. If no option for mutual gain can be discovered, seek to agree upon a fair rule or procedure for deciding how the conflict will be resolved. The point is that many conflicts can be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the conflicting parties if

their approach to the problem is made more open and flexible so that they are able to break through their stereotyped thought-constraints and creatively consider new possibilities. However, not all conflicts can be solved to mutual satisfaction even with the most creative thinking. Here, agreement upon a fair procedure that determines who gets his or her way, or seeking help from neutral, third-parties when such an agreement cannot be reached, may be the most constructive resolution possible under the circumstances. See Lewicki and Litterer (1985) for an excellent discussion of the strategy and tactics of integrative bargaining.

Creative conflict resolution requires constructive controversy between the conflicting parties. A cooperative context facilitates constructive controversy (Tjosvold and Johnson, 1983). In my introduction to this chapter and elsewhere (Deutsch, 1973), I have indicated the factors which contribute to the development of cooperation. Tjosvold and Johnson have described twelve norms and rules which, if followed, facilitate constructive controversy. But what happens if cooperation breaks down, and impasse is reached, and constructive controversy is no longer taking place? Elsewhere (Deutsch, in press), I have addressed this question under the title, "On negotiating the non-negotiable." In brief, negotiating the non-negotiable between parties involved in an embittered conflict usually requires help from third parties. The required assistance is of two kinds: (1) help in getting the parties to communicate effectively and help in getting them involved in a constructive problem-solving process. Such help is initially directed toward addressing the basic anxieties of the conflicting parties in a non-threatening, supportive context. By so doing, one enables them to listen, understand, and empathize with one another sufficiently well that

they are ready to seek solutions to their conflicts that would accommodate the interests of the opposing sides, (2) assisting the parties to identify or create potential agreements that would be responsive to the interests of each of the parties involved. To the extent that the parties see the possibility of a mutually satisfying agreement, they will be more able to listen to one another in an understanding, empathic manner, and of course, the converse is true too.

6. In communicating with the other, listen attentively and speak so as to be understood: this requires the active attempt to take the perspective of the other and to check continually one's success in doing so. One should listen to the other's meaning and emotion in such a way that the other feels understood as well as is understood. Similarly, you want to communicate to the other one's thoughts and feelings in such a way that you have good evidence that he or she understands the way you think and feel. The feeling of being understood, as well as effective communication, enormously facilitates constructive resolution. See Johnson and Johnson (1987) and Lewicki and Litterer (1985) for further elaboration.

Johnson and Johnson (1987), Lewicki and Litterer (1985), Prutzman et al. (1976), and many others provide excellent discussions and practical exercises relevant to the development of skills in communicating and listening effectively. As a communicator, one wants to be skilled in obtaining and holding the other's attention, in phrasing one's communication so that it is readily comprehended and remembered, and in acquiring the credibility that facilitates acceptance of one's message. Skills in taking the perspective of others and in obtaining feedback about the effectiveness of one's communications are important. Listening actively and effectively entails not only taking the

perspective of the other so that one understands the communicator's ideas and feelings but also communicating the desire to understand the other and indicating through paraphrasing one's understanding or through questions what one does not understand. Role reversal seems to be helpful in developing an understanding of the perspective of the other and in providing checks on how effective the communication process has been.

7. Be alert to the natural tendencies to bias, misperceptions, misjudgments, and stereotyped thinking that commonly occur in oneself as well as the other during heated conflict. These errors in perception and thought interfere with communication, make empathy difficult, and impair problem-solving. Psychologists can provide a check list of the common forms of misperception and misjudgment occurring during intense conflict. These include black-white thinking, demonizing the other, shortening of one's time-perspective, narrowing of one's range of perceived options, and the fundamental attribution error. The fundamental attribution error is illustrated in the tendency to attribute the aggressive actions of the other to the other's personality while attributing one's own aggressive actions to external circumstances (such as the other's hostile actions). The ability to recognize and admit one's misperceptions and misjudgments clears the air and facilitates similar acknowledgement by the other. (See Jervis, 1976; Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky, 1982; Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Neale and Northcroft, this volume; and Thompson and Hastie, this volume.)

8. Develop skills for dealing with difficult conflicts so that one is not helpless nor hopeless when confronting those who are more powerful, those who don't want to engage in constructive conflict resolution, or those who use dirty tricks. Fisher and Ury (1981) have discussed these

matters very helpfully in the final three chapters of their well-known book, Getting to Yes. I shall not summarize their discussion but rather emphasize several basic principles. First, it is important to recognize that one becomes less vulnerable to intimidation by a more powerful other, or to someone who refuses to cooperate except on his or her terms, or to someone who plays dirty tricks (deceives, welshes on an agreement, personally attacks you, etc.) if you realize that you usually have a choice: you don't have to stay in the relationship with the other. You are more likely to be aware of your freedom to choose between leaving or staying, if you feel that there are alternatives to continuing the relationship which you can make acceptable to yourself. The alternative may not be great but it may be better than staying in the relationship. The freedom to choose prevents the other, if he or she benefits from the relationship, from making the relationship unacceptable to you.

Second, it is useful to be open and explicit to the other about what he or she is doing that is upsetting you and to indicate the effects that these actions are having on you. If the other asserts that you have misunderstood or denies doing what you have stated, and if you are not persuaded, be forthright in maintaining that this remains a problem for you: discuss with the other what could be done to remove the problem (your misunderstanding of the other, your need for reassurance, or the other's noxious behavior).

Third, it is wise to avoid reciprocating the other's noxious behavior and to avoid attacking the other personally for his behavior (i.e., criticize the behavior and not the person); doing so, often leads to an escalating vicious spiral. It is helpful to look behind the other's noxious behavior with such questions as: "I wonder what you think my reaction is to what you

have said?" "I am really curious. What do you think this will gain for you?" It is also sometimes useful to suggest to the other more appropriate or better means for pursuing his interests than the ones that he or she is currently employing.

A phrase that I have found useful in characterizing the stance one should take in difficult (as well as easy) conflicts is to be "firm, fair, and friendly." Firm in resisting intimidation, exploitation, and dirty tricks; fair in holding to one's moral principles and not reciprocating the other's immoral behavior despite his or her provocations; and friendly in the sense that one is willing to initiate and reciprocate cooperation.

9. Know oneself and how one typically responds in different sorts of conflict situations. As I have suggested earlier in this paper, conflict frequently evokes anxiety. In clinical work, I have found that the anxiety is often based upon unconscious fantasies of being overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the other's aggression or of being so angry and aggressive oneself that one will destroy the other. Different people deal with their anxieties about conflict in different ways. I have found it useful to emphasize five different dimensions of dealing with conflict which can be used to characterize a person's predispositions to respond to conflict. Being aware of one's predispositions may allow one to modify them when they are inappropriate in a given conflict. The five dimensions follow below:

(a) Conflict avoidance--excessive involvement in conflict. Conflict avoidance is expressed in denial, repression, suppression, avoidance, and continuing postponement of facing the conflict. Sometimes it is evidenced in premature conflict resolution, fleeing into an agreement before there is adequate exploration of the conflicting interests and of the various options

for resolving the conflict. Usually, the conflict which is avoided does not go away, the tension associated with it is expressed in fatigue, irritability, muscular tension, and a sense of malaise. Excessive involvement in conflict is sometimes expressed in a "macho" attitude, a chip on one's shoulder, a tendency to seek out conflict to demonstrate that one is not afraid of conflict. It is also commonly expressed in a preoccupation with conflict, obsessive thoughts about fights, disputes, quarrels, etc. with much rehearsing of moves and countermoves between oneself and one's adversaries. Presumably, a healthy predisposition involves the readiness to confront conflict when it arises without needing to seek it out or to be preoccupied with it.

(b) Hard-soft. Some people are prone to take a tough, aggressive, dominating, unyielding response to conflict fearing that otherwise they will be taken advantage of and be considered soft. Others are afraid that they will be considered to be mean, hostile, or presumptuous, and as a consequence, they are excessively gentle and unassertive. They often expect the other to "read their minds" and know what they want even though they are not open in expressing their interests. A more appropriate stance is a firm support of one's own interests combined with a ready responsiveness to the interests of the other.

(c) Rigid-loose. Some people immediately seek to organize and to control the situation by setting the agenda, defining the rules, etc. They feel anxious if things threaten to get out of control and feel threatened by the unexpected. As a consequence, they are apt to push for rigid arrangements and rules and get upset by even minor deviations. At the other extreme, there are some people who are aversive to anything that seems formal, limiting, controlling, or constricting. They appear to like a loose, improvisational,

informal arrangement in which rules and procedures are implicit rather than overt. An approach which allows for both orderliness and flexibility in dealing with the conflict seems more constructive than one that is either compulsive in its organizing or in its rejection of orderliness.

(d) Intellectual-emotional. At one extreme, emotion is repressed, controlled, or isolated so that no relevant emotion is felt or expressed as one communicates one's thoughts. The appearance is of someone who is calm, rational, and detached. Frequently, beneath the calm surface is the fear that if one feels or expresses one's emotions, they will get out of control and one will do something destructive, foolish, or humiliating. However, the lack of appropriate emotional expressiveness may seriously impair communication: the other may take your lack of emotion as an indicator that you have no real commitment to your interests and that you lack genuine concern for the other's interests. At the other extreme, there are some people who believe that only feelings are real and that words and ideas are not to be taken seriously unless they are thoroughly soaked in emotion. The emotional extravagance and intensity of such people also interfere with communication. It impairs the ability to mutually explore ideas and to develop creative solutions to impasses; it also makes it difficult to differentiate the significant from the insignificant, if even the trivial is accompanied with intense emotion. The ideal mode of communication combines thought and affect: the thought is supported by the affect and the affect is explained by the thought.

(e) Escalating versus minimizing. At one extreme, there are some people who tend to experience any given conflict in the largest possible terms. The issues are cast so that what is at stake involves one's self,

one's family, one's ethnic group, precedence for all-time, or the like. The specifics of the conflict get lost as it escalates along the various dimensions of conflict: the size and number of the immediate issues involved; the number of motives and participants implicated on each side of the issue; the size and number of the principles and precedents that are perceived to be at stake; the cost that the participants are willing to bear in relation to the conflict; the number of norms of moral conduct from which behavior toward the other side is exempted; and the intensity of negative attitudes toward the other side. Escalation of the conflict makes the conflict more difficult to resolve constructively except when the escalation proceeds so rapidly that its absurdity even becomes self-apparent. At the other extreme, there are people who tend to minimize their conflicts. They are similar to the conflict avoiders but, unlike the avoiders, they do recognize the existence of the conflict. However, by minimizing the seriousness of the differences between self and other, by not recognizing how important the matter is to self and to other, one can produce serious misunderstandings. One may also restrict the effort and work that one may need to devote to the conflict in order to resolve it constructively.

10. Finally, throughout conflict, one should remain a moral person--i.e., a person who is caring and just--and should consider the other as a member of one's moral community--i.e., as someone who is entitled to care and justice. Being a moral person is conducive to constructive behavior and to constructive conflict resolution. In the heat of conflict, there is often the tendency to shrink one's moral community and to exclude the other from it: this permits behavior toward the other which one would otherwise consider morally reprehensible. Such behavior escalates conflict and turns it in the direction

of violence and destruction. Firm adherence to one's basic moral values, even in the face of provocation, inhibits the development of malignant, destructive conflict.

The foregoing listing of principles of constructive conflict resolution could provide the basis of curricula for courses and workshops on conflict resolution. I have not attempted here to specify the exercises, simulations, role-playing, and specific formats that can be employed to foster the internalization of the principles and the development of the skills involved in constructive conflict resolution. Much material of this sort has already been developed but not yet systematically researched for their effectiveness. It is evident that how the principles and skills of constructive conflict resolution are taught will vary very much with the nature of the population and age group being taught.

It is my hope that our new Center at Teachers College will systematically acquire and make available information about curricula and materials being employed throughout the world on this topic. In addition, we expect to be creating and doing research on curricula and instructional methods in this important area.

References

- Alinsky, S.D. (1971). Rules for radicals: A practical primer for realistic radicals. New York: Random House.
- Blake, R.R., & Mouton, J.S. (1984). Solving costly organizational conflicts. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Deutsch, M. (1973). The resolution of conflict: Constructive and destructive processes. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1981). Getting to yes: Negotiating agreements without giving in. Boston, MA: Houghton Miffling.
- Folberg, J., & Taylor, A. (1984). Mediation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Follett, M.P. (1940). Constructive conflict. In H.C. Metcalf & L. Urwick (eds.), Dynamic administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follett. New York: Harper.
- Girard, K., Rifkin, J., & Townley, A. (1985). Peaceful persuasion: A guide to creating mediation dispute resolution programs on college campuses. The Mediation Project at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst.
- Hare, A.P. (1982). Creativity in small groups. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Janis, I.L., & Mann, L. (1977). Decision-making. New York: The Free Press.
- Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, F.P. (1987). Joining together, 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, R.T. (1974). Conflict in the classroom: Controversy and learning. Review of Educational Research, 49, 51-61.
- Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, R.T. (1984). Classroom conflict: Controversy vs. debate in learning groups. American Educational Research Journal, 22 (2), 237-256.
- Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, R.T. (1985). Pro, con, and synthesis: Controversy and learning. Manuscript.
- Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., & Holubee, E.J. (1986). Circles of learning: Cooperation in the classroom. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Co.
- Kelman, H.C. (1972). The problem-solving workshop in conflict resolution. In R.L. Merritt (ed.), Communication in international politics. Urbana: University of Illinois.
- Kressel, K. (1972). Labor mediation: An exploratory survey. New York: Association of Labor Mediation Agencies.

- Kressel, K. (1985). The process of divorce: How professionals and couples negotiate settlements. New York: Basic Books.
- Kressel, K., & Pruitt, D.G. (eds.). (1985). The mediation of social conflict. Journal of Social Issues, 41, #2.
- Lasswell, H.D., & Kaplan, A. (1950). Power and society. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Machiavelli, N. (1950). The prince and The discourses. New York: Modern Library.
- _____. (1965). The art of war. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Potter, S. (1965). The theory and practice of gamesmanship: The art of winning games without actually cheating. New York: Bantam Books.
- Pruitt, D.G., & Rubin, J.Z. (1986). Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate and settlement. New York: Random House.
- Prutzman, P., Burger, M.L., Bodenhamer, G., & Stern, L. (1978). The friendly classroom for a small planet: A handbook on creative approaches to living and problem solving for children. Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group Inc.
- Reardon, B. (1985). Education for peace. Doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Rubin, J.Z. (1980). Experimental research on third-party interaction in conflict: Toward some generalizations. Psychological Bulletin, 87, 379-391.
- Rubin, J.Z. (ed.). (1981). Dynamics of third-party intervention: Kissinger in the Middle East. New York: Praeger.
- Schelling, T.C. (1960). The strategy of conflict. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Schulman, M., & Mekler, E. (1985). Bringing up a moral child. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Tjsovold, D., & Johnson, D.W. (1983). Productive conflict management: Perspectives for organizations. New York: Irvington Publishers.
- Walton, R.E., & McKersie, R.B. (1965). A behavioral theory of labor negotiations: An analysis of a social interaction system. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zander, A. (1982). Making groups effective. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

We've outlined four effective conflict resolutions for the classroom. Try one (or all) of these strategies to see what works best. But first, something to note about conflict. Encourage students to be on the lookout for situations where conflict resolution can help. This will also set a baseline for how severe a problem may be. At some point, students should voluntarily share their observations in their journals and discuss the positives and negatives of the involved students' reactions. This activity can be completed multiple times over the school year, ensuring that your students are paying attention to their surroundings. This will also give you a better idea of what's going on in your classroom and how you can help and better implement conflict resolution strategies.

Listening. Schools experience similar communication and conflict difficulties to those that exist in all other areas of human interaction. There is again a situation where the Rescuer Syndrome is manifested and in many ways it is more strongly manifested in schools than almost any other area, other than, perhaps in the family. The reason for this is that for some adults it is difficult to believe that children can be considered responsible for their own actions. Within such a view, all children must be taught how to behave rather in the same way that many consider teaching to be a spoon feeding of knowle... Perhaps they were spoon fed their effective conflict resolution skills from an early age? But I think not.

Conflict Resolution. KidsHealth.org /classroom. Teacher's Guide. Working in small groups, develop a brief anger-management training session for middle school students. Be sure to cover the following:

- Basic information about what anger is
- Steps kids and teens can take to control anger.

Extension: 1. Create a posters or infographics for your training session that lists tips for managing anger. Hang the posters around school, and share the infographic on social media.

© 2016 The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth. Reproduction permitted for individual classroom use. Grades 6 to 8 • Personal Health Series. Conflict Resolution. Working It Out. Objectives To entrench conflict resolution in schools, PEF programs are purposefully tied to school improvement. The content of the PEF curriculum is grouped into five components: community building. Teachers are encouraged to devote 30 to 45 minutes at least once a week for a specific workshop in conflict resolution prepared from the curriculum guide. Teachers also include conflict resolution lessons, strategies, and skills into the regular academic program. Schools agree to implement the RCCP curriculum for at least a year before beginning peer mediation, which will reinforce the problem-solving skills already being developed in classrooms. Other key elements in RCCP are administrator training and parent training.