***Introduction to Creative Conflict Resolution***

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***The Moment***

Between the stimulus of what is happening and the action that we take to address it there is a moment in which we make a choice.

Our power to create our lives rests within that moment.

That moment can be a millisecond or it can be many years.

***Repairing Relationships***

Remember or imagine a time when you had an issue arise in an important relationship and you both cared enough about the relationship to name the problem, hear each other’s perspective, and agree to work together to create what you both need.

How does that event affect your relationship with the other?

***What is Conflict?***

When the other is not as we want the other to be, or…

When we are not as the other wants us to be.

Or

When a circumstance causes us to get a “bad” feeling…

…and we don’t already know what to do about it.

***What does it mean to “resolve” a conflict?***

Making others change: Since the conflict arises when the other doesn’t do what I want, don’t I have to make them do what I want in order to resolve the conflict?

Fixing others’ feelings: Since I feel bad when there is conflict, doesn’t resolution mean that I have to make sure everyone feels good?

***Components of Conflicts***

**Resources**: How will we handle the issue of scarce or finite resources? [time, $, attention…]

**Identity**: Who are we to each other? What is the nature or our relationship?

**Process**: What do we do to address an issue like this one? What is our process?

***Aspects of Conflict Resolution***

**Strategy:** Plan of specific actions to respond to a conflict

**Event:** Circumstances we believe will be more advantageous

**Quality:** The need we hope to fill by changing the circumstances

***What makes some conflicts so intense?***

Degree to which the parties are attached to the issue or outcome

Degree to which the parties see the issue from the same perspective

*Resolution rests upon being able to see that the perspective of the other is valid for the other.*

***Why we don’t address conflict***

* “I won’t say anything because I don’t want to start a fight.” - A conflict is the circumstance in which needs are not being met. It doesn’t go away if we don’t address it.
* “I’ve tried everything. There is nothing else I can do.” - There are a theoretically infinite number of ways we can address a conflict.
* “The only way for me to win is for the other to lose.” - When we try to settle a conflict by making the other lose we are starting a fight.

***Learn to “fight without fighting”***

The first best thing we can do when we are in a persistent pattern of conflict in a significant relationship is to not do those things that create the opposite of what we need.

* Don’t do nothing
* Don’t start a fight

Nevertheless, we have to learn to name the issue such that the other can see the problem.

***Language of Complaint***

**Concern – need:** Awareness that there is a quality missing in the relationship

**Criticism – choices:** Acknowledging an aspect of the other’s behavior which is a problem

**Contempt –being:** Expressing a devaluing judgment about the other’s worth

**Control – non-being:** Taking charge in an expression of who the other is not

***Select a conflict to work on***

* Focus on a Persistent Pattern of Conflict in a Significant Relationship
* Because it happens often you will have lots of opportunities to practice.
* Because it happens in a relationship which is important to you, resolving it will make a big difference for you and for the relationship.

***Significant Relationship***

**Spend time:** Who do you spend the most time with?

**Emotionally important:** Who do you have strong feelings about +/-

**Powerful:** Whose choices have a big impact on you?

***Pattern of Conflict***

* Rolling your eyes
* Feeling frustrated
* Getting into a power struggle
* Feeling hopeless
* Noticing how the other is resisting what you are trying to do or to tell them

***What to do in the Moment between Stimulus and Response***

**What Happened**

*Observation*: What did I actually experience?

*Confirmation*: What do others see?

*Meaning*: What does it mean to me?

**What I normally do**

*Observation*: How do I typically respond?

*Evaluation*: How well does that create what I need?

*Alternative*: Is it important that I find a more effective and helpful thing to do?

**What I actually need**

*Self-knowledge:* How fully can I know how I am affected when this happens?

*Assessment*: What qualities are missing for me when this happens?

*Discernment*: What is the difference between what I need and what I want?

**What I can do**

*Plan*: What do I have in mind as a way I could act that would create what I need?

*Roadblocks*: What could get in the way of following my plan?

*Action*: Do it!

***Coming to an agreement***

**Relationship**: Who are we to each other and what are our respective roles [rights and responsibilities]?

**Circumstances:** What actually happens? Can we agree on the issues?

**Effect on each of us:** How are we each affected by the circumstances?

**Shared Needs**: What is it we both need when this circumstance arises?

**Commitments:**  What are we each willing to do to create what we both need?

***Effect on each of us***

**Effect on me**: Can I clearly and fully know all of how I am impacted by this circumstance?

**Voicing the effect**: Do I have a way of describing the effect such that the other will be able to understand my experience?

**Safety**: If I say how this circumstance affects me, will I be safe?

**Managing anxiety:** Will I be able to care for my own anxiety as I listen to the other’s experience?

**Mirroring:** Will I be able to reflect back to the other the other’s experience with such clarity that the other will feel fully heard?

Center for Creative Conflict Resolution

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