**COM 115 Study Guide Assignment 3: Interpersonal Conflict**

The purpose of this study guide is to help you correctly answer the short answer questions and master the material.

**Remember:**

1) Answer each prompt with complete sentences.

2) Use specific examples from the Erin Brocovivh scene rather than personal experience(s).

**Question 1:** What type of conflict is taking place in this scene? Use the definition of the scene with specific examples to explain your reasoning.

***Possible key concepts for discussion:***

Ego Conflict

Pseudo Conflict

Simple Conflict

In this scene Simple Conflict is taking place since this is a conflict between two different perspectives and goals. Where the family wants to be compensated for their loses due to the company’s negligence and the company is intending to continue on with their business while having has little financial losses as possible.

**Question 2:** What power bases are evidenced in the scene by each of the characters? Define the power base(s) in your answer with specific examples.

***Possible key concepts for discussion:***

Reward Power

Referent Power

Coercive Power

Legitimate Power

Expert Power

I believe the power basis of this conflict can be considered to be Coercive power and Expert power. Hereby Coercive power is showed by how the company’s lawyer expresses “Do you know who you’re dealing with? This is a 28 billion dollar company!” where it references the position of the company in the field of finances and business in a tone that can be considered a sort of threat. Expert power is expressed by the family’s lawyer who showcases strong debating skills in comparison to the younger lawyer’s skills, he has expert power over both the younger lawyer and the family who has trusted him with their case.

**Question 3:** In your opinion, what is the best conflict management style to use in this situation? Explain your thoughts and include specific examples.

***Possible key concepts for discussion:***

Compromise

Collaboration

Competition

Accommodation

Avoidance

I think compromise is the best way to solve most -not all, of course- conflicts; however, in this type of conflict I shall select Competition. The reason why choosing competition is because the company sent their lawyer, not to negotiate in order to reach a compromise, but to impose a solid offer on what they would willingly give as compensation to the family. If that is really going to be the position of the company and they will not give in to a compromise that truly takes into consideration not just their own benefit but also the damage they owe to repay to the family then the family will be given no other choice than to give in to the competition to solve this matter because in order to compromise both sides should be willing to give in.

**Question 4:** Using the conflict management style you identified in the question above, what outcome do you anticipate? Explain your answer.

**Possible key concepts for discussion:**

Use the conflict management style from your answer in question 3.

I anticipate that the family’s lawyer might win this case because from the excerpt that I watched on the embedded video the family’s lawyer not only portrays more experience in his approach to the situation as a whole but also shows more evidence in their favor to prove the damage that the company owes to the family while the younger lawyer came in just to state a sum and has nothing to back up his claims.

**Question 5:**  Which stages of conflict are demonstrated in the scene? Define the stages in your answer and include specific examples.

I would say Active Conflict. The reason for that is because the younger lawyer came in with the intention to draw the resolution to the case with the company’s offer but the family’s lawyer was not at all compliant towards the former’s attempt at compliance gaining.

***Possible key concepts for discussion:***

As a process, the stages of conflict (as discussed in our text) are 1)Source, 2) Frustration Awareness, 3) Active Conflict, 4) Resolution, and 5) Aftermath.