**Agenda**

Managing Conflict Community of Practice

5/3/19

*“Don’t assume you are the innocent victim in a troubled relationship. Open yourself to the idea that you might be contributing to the problem. We need to look at ourselves as others see us.” “Once we are aware, we are responsible.”* – Donna Hicks, Ph.D.

*Outcomes:*

* *Understand their own approach to conflict*
* *Identify one’s own strengths and weaknesses in terms of dealing with conflict*
* *Develop skills to manage conflict successfully using collaborative approaches*
* *Strengthen one’s ability to empathize when dealing with conflict*

1. **7-10 Temptations to Violate Dignity:** 
   1. Being the Victim   
      We are always ready to ward off incoming information that feels threatening to us: our self-preservation instincts kick in. . . .  Under attack, [hostility] our emotional circuitry (the amygdala) goes on a rampage, and the part of the brain that has the power to override our emotions becomes incapacitated. One of the functions of our emotional brain, especially the amygdala, is to react to potential threats to our well-being. As we have seen, it knows nothing about empathy, problem solving, or taking the perspective of the threatening other. All those other brain functions halt. . . . It is helpful to have a third party present when this kind of victimhood dynamic overcomes people in conflict. Just as you as an observer can more easily see how both of your friends contributed to the breakdown of their relationship than either one of them can individually, a person who is outside a larger struggle can see ways in which both parties contribute to the problem.
   2. Resisting Feedback   
      Don’t resist feedback from others. We often don’t know what we don’t know. We all have blind spots; we all unconsciously behave in undignified ways. We need to overcome our self-protective instincts and accept constructive criticism. Feedback gives us an opportunity to grow.
   3. Blaming and Shaming Others to Deflect Your Own Guilt   
      . . . the distinction between one’s worthiness, which is inviolable, and one’s behavior, which is open to judgment. Disentangling these two concepts is not easy, because our emotional brain (the Me) cannot make the distinction. To our limbic system, feedback feels like a threat to our dignity. . . . We fear letting go of our current way of defining ourselves, and that fear keeps us from making changes, even changes that we desire. . . .  No wonder we cling to what is known, even if it is not serving us well.  
      “optimal conflict” . . .the “persistent experience of some frustration, dilemma, life puzzle, quandary” that causes us “to feel the limits of our current way of knowing,” but “we are neither overwhelmed by the conflict nor able to escape or diffuse it.”[4](https://calibre-internal.invalid/ops/xhtml/ch23_notes.html#ch18not4)  . . . is what we need to recognize the blind spots that are creating problems in our relationships.  
        
      If we are constantly in conflict with others, it is time to engage in self-reflection, to see ways in which we are arresting our own development.

Three developmental stages of dignity:

* Dependence
  + Worthiness is determined by how others treat us
  + Seeks praise, status, approval, and comparison to others
* Independence
  + Internalized sense of inherent self-worth
  + Distinguish between behavior (subject to judgement) and self worth (not subject to judgement)
  + Being judged does not make us less worthy
* Interdependence
  + We need others to help us expand our understanding
  + Our experience of our worth can be deepened with input from others, help identify blind spots – Continued growth, the ability to become what we are capable of being, is inextricably tied to others. **“We need others to help us understand who we are and how we affect others.”** – holy crap, I’ve been missing this for so long
  + The most elevated experience of dignity s in connection with others –   
    I becomes We
  + As Kegan says, development is the product of the management of the ongoing tensions between our human needs for autonomy and for inclusion, for individuation and for integration, for the need to see ourselves and the need to be seen. My note: those tensions never go away. It’s always a balance and a battle.
  + what makes us most vulnerable is not being connected to others. Safety lies in connection. We need each other to become what we are capable of being.
  1. Blaming and shaming others
* When we deny the shared aspects of our human identity,  Our consciousness tends to “split”—we discard the bad and unwanted aspects, focusing instead on all that is good about the self and the others. Or we discard all that is good, directing our conscious thoughts to all that is bad.
* Projection: a person’s own unacceptable attributes and feelings are repressed and are projected upon someone else
* When we are tempted to blame others [as all of use are], we need to hold ourselves back from acting on that impulse.
* having to struggle against temptation doesn’t make [anyone] bad people . . . temptations are part and parcel of [our] humanity.  
  1. Engaging in False Intimacy and Demeaning Gossip
* Being critical and judgmental about others when they are not present is harmful and undignified. If you want to create intimacy with another, speak the truth about yourself, about what is happening in your inner world, and invite the other person to do the same.
* Gossip is a convenient way of making those who harm others look bad when confronting them would be difficult. . . . . resentment finds refuge in gossip.
* Why is it so tempting to talk negatively about people when they are not around, especially people who have done us harm and whom we are afraid to confront? . . . gossip gave our early ancestors a survival advantage. . . . a way to efficiently exchange information in a large group and helped maintain group cohesion.[1](https://calibre-internal.invalid/ops/xhtml/ch23_notes.html#ch20not1) Gossip was originally a way to punish those who had taken advantage of the group.
* Our ancestors needed to be kept abreast of relationships—who did what to whom, who was safe, who was not trustworthy, and who failed to pull their weight. Conveying and updating information about people who are not immediately present can be an effective way of staying on top of group issues. Gossip is a way to monitor changes in the social network made when one is not present. There is nothing wrong with this type of gossip.
* When the character of the person being gossiped about is at stake, then it becomes undignified. . . . two people indulging in gossip might facilitate an alliance, but at the expense of another person.

1. **Individual conflict analysis(?)**
2. **“Things that make you go ‘Hmmmm…’”** Lingering Questions

* When people suffer an injury to their sense of worth, the antidote is time with people who know how to treat them in a dignified way. , , , They just need to give their love and attention, to be kind and sensitive. What is love if not the act of honoring dignity? . . . what better way to demonstrate our love than to recognize each other’s value and worth. Does this give us a clue to what dignity feels like? Does it feel like love?
* “The participants must feel that they are precious and important and that something irreplaceable would be lost if they were not there.” – archbishop Desmond Tutu

1. **Assessment of Desired Outcomes:** 
   1. Personal
   2. Teaching and Learning Survey (handout)
2. What are your most valuable take-aways from our work this year?
3. What would you have liked to spend more time with or learned more about?
4. To accommodate for #2, what topics/activities would you suggest revising for the next CoP?