Conflicts: Notes on 3 Types of Conflicts

Three types of conflicts are: 1. Intrapersonal Conflicts, 2. Interpersonal Conflicts and 3. Unconscious Conflicts.

The word conflict has been derived from a Latin word ‘Conflicts’ which means ‘strike two things at the same time’.

Conflict is an opposition or a tug-of-war between contradictory impulses. According to Colman ‘A conflict is the anticipated frustration entailed in the choice of either alternative’. Conflicts occur in the individual when more than one, equally powerful desires or motives present at the same time and pressurize for immediate satisfaction.

If any one of the motive is weak, it will be suppressed and the stronger motive gains satisfaction. Conflicts give rise to a lot of tension in the individual, he becomes completely disturbed. Tension continues until a decision is taken and conflict is resolved.

In total conflict may be a friction between two desires, motives, needs or values, finally the stronger one will take upper hand. Sometimes, when he cannot resolve the conflicts, the individual will be put into severe consequences, which he cannot withstand and try to escape from the field itself through unhealthy means.

1. Types of Conflicts:

a. Intrapersonal conflicts:

These are the conflicts caused within the individual. These conflicts arise as a result of two or more motives or goals to be achieved at a time. Hence, these are called goal conflicts. Lewin has described three types of goal conflicts.

However, in addition to these there is one more conflict in which the individual faces more than one attracting or repelling forces making the individual to experience more stress.

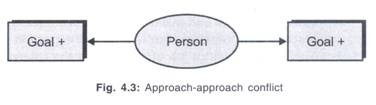
This is called multiple approach avoidance conflict. These are as follows:

1. Approach-approach conflict:

In this type of conflict individual will have two desires with positive valence which are equally powerful. For example, a person has two attractive job offers and he has to choose any one of them- tension arises.

Such conflicts are not so harmful, because after selecting one, the other one automatically subsides or loses its importance to him. But in some situation choice will be very difficult. For example, a girl has to choose either loving parents or a boy friend for inter-caste marriage. Such cases are like ‘you cannot have the cake and eat it too’.

The individual will be psychologically torn and may lose equilibrium. This type of conflict is diagrammatically represented in Figure



Approach-approach Conflict

2. Avoidance-avoidance conflict:

This conflict involves two goals with negative valence. At times the individual is forced to choose one among two negative goals. In such conflicts, both are unwanted goals, but he cannot keep quiet without opting also. For example, a woman must work at a job which she dislikes very much or else she has to remain unemployed.

Here the individual is caught between two repelling threats, fears or situations. When she cannot choose either of them she may try to escape from the field itself. But the consequences of the escape may also be harmful. For example, a person who cannot convince the mother or the wife may resort to Alcohol consumption which is otherwise dangerous or some people may even commit suicide. Such type of conflict is diagrammatically represented in Figure 4.4.



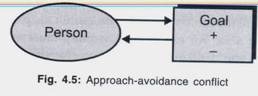
In the event of such conflicts when there is no way to escape- some people may find a way to reduce their tension by developing ‘amnesia’ or defence mechanisms like regression or fantasy.

3. Approach-avoidance conflict:

This is also a most complex conflict and very difficult to resolve. Because in this type of conflict a person is both attracted and repelled by the same goal object. Here the goal object will have both positive and negative valences.

The positive valence attracts the person, but as he approaches, the negative valence repels him back. Attraction of the goal and inability to approach it leads to frustration and tension.

For example, a person is approaching to accept a job offer, because the salary is attractive- but at the same time he is repelled back as the job is very risky. A man wants to marry to lead a family life, but does not want the responsibilities of family life. This type of conflict is diagrammatically represented in Figure 4.5.



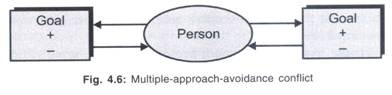
Approach-avoidance Conflict

4. Multiple-approach-avoidance conflict:

Some of the situations in life we come across will involve both positive and negative valences of multiple nature. Suppose a woman is engaged to be married. The marriage to her has positive valences like-providing security to life and marrying a person whom she loves very much.

Suppose, on the other hand, if the marriage is repellent to her because she has to quit her attractive job and salary, recognition which makes her dependent, the situation builds up tension in her.

The resolution of this conflict depends upon the sum total of both valences. If the sum total of attractive valence takes upper hand, she will quit the job and go for marriage; otherwise she may reject marriage and continue the job if the sum total of negative valence is powerful. This type of conflict is shown diagrammatically in Figure 4.6.



Multiple-approach Avoidance Conflict

2. Resolution of Conflicts:

The conflicts may arise from frustrations, competing roles or goals having positive or negative valences. Some conflicts are of great danger to mental health of the individual. Hence, it is necessary to resolve them as quickly as possible.

Otherwise, they may be carried on to the unconscious level, resulting in psychological problems and psychosomatic disorders. The clash between the urges, desires and motives may go on without being fully aware of it. These forces may disturb the individual causing lot of mental turmoil.

Conflicts resolution depends upon the type of conflict. The double approach conflict may be easily resolved by satisfying first one goal which is more important than the other; for instance, a student attending the class first, then going for food even if hungry.

Alternatively, this conflict is resolved by giving up one of the goals. Obviously, approach-approach conflict does not generate much anxiety, because the individual is not going to lose much.

The double avoidance conflict is more complex. Since the individual does not want either of the goals, he experiences more repelling effect as he moves near one goal by rejecting the other. Finally when it is unbearable, the individual tries to leave the conflict situation, but the other factors in periphery of the situation makes it difficult.

For example, a student who cannot face examination or failure may try to rim away from home, but the love and affection of the parents or financial problems may prevent him from doing so. Some people may resort to other means to get relief from tension, such as day dreaming, taking alcohol, chain smoking, suicide, etc. Totally avoidance by some means is the goal of the individual.

In approach-avoidance conflict, since there is only one goal object, it is very difficult to decide. Here, compromise with the situation is the only alternative solution to overcome stress resulting from conflict.

Finally, in multiple approach-avoidance conflict the individual has to take a decision depending upon the sum total of positive or negative valences resulting in selection of goals.

Though these are the coping strategies at individual level, people facing conflicts may help themselves by examining the causes of conflicts clearly, trying to choose the best alternative, early decision making, etc.

They have to make use of their creative thinking, divergent reasoning and proper perception of the situations. Motives may influence our behaviour, but the individual should not be the slave of his motives, instead he should be the master of his motives, so that he can have control over them. Finally taking advice from parents, elders, teachers and counsellors will be of great help to cope with and to resolve conflicts,

2. Interpersonal conflicts:

Interpersonal conflict is caused between individuals. This can be resolved through some strategies such as avoiding, smoothing, forcing, confronting and compromising. Assertive behaviour and I am ok, you are ok interpersonal orientation help to resolve such conflicts easily.

3. Unconscious Conflict:

The mental conflict below the level of conscious awareness is called unconscious conflict. The conflicts in conscious level, when repressed, shifts to unconscious. Here the desires which cannot be satisfied at conscious level are repressed to unconscious level as a mechanism of escaping. Many of our wants raised by Id may not be socially acceptable. Such wants are objected by the Ego and the Super ego. Hence these are repressed to unconscious.

The repressed desires or wishes remain active in the unconscious part of our mind. They slowly gather strength by making alliance with other similar experiences and become stronger. This group of repressed wants which is working for the satisfaction try to come back to the conscious. This process is called complex. As soon as complexes are formed they give rise to conflicts in the unconscious.

They try to come back to conscious, but prevented by censor or preconscious. So they try to enter the conscious level when censor is at rest or sleep. They may appear in the form of dreams, slip of tongue, slip of pen, motivated forgetting, etc. Sometimes they may appear in the form of peculiar behavior and mannerisms.

TYPES OF CONFLICT

Types of Conflict – Four Classifications

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When you think of the different types of conflict, you might instantly think of the ones referred to in literature, especially in fiction. They can be applied to real life, of course. However, there are types of conflict which are easily identifiable in our contemporary times.

How to resolve the four main types of conflictBefore going any further, let us first give a brief description of what conflict is. There are actually a lot of ways to define conflict due to how it is used in many areas. Hence, to keep it simple for the layman, conflict pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities, thus resulting in an antagonistic state. Conflict is an inevitable part of life. Each of us possesses our own opinions, ideas and sets of beliefs. We have our own ways of looking at things and we act according to what we think is proper. Hence, we often find ourselves in conflict in different scenarios; may it involve other individuals, groups of people, or a struggle within our own selves. Consequently, conflict influences our actions and decisions in one way or another.

Conflict is classified into the following four types:

Interpersonal conflict refers to a conflict between two individuals. This occurs typically due to how people are different from one another. We have varied personalities which usually results to incompatible choices and opinions. Apparently, it is a natural occurrence which can eventually help in personal growth or developing your relationships with others. In addition, coming up with adjustments is necessary for managing this type of conflict. However, when interpersonal conflict gets too destructive, calling in a mediator would help so as to have it resolved.

Intrapersonal conflict occurs within an individual. The experience takes place in the person’s mind. Hence, it is a type of conflict that is psychological involving the individual’s thoughts, values, principles and emotions. Interpersonal conflict may come in different scales, from the simpler mundane ones like deciding whether or not to go organic for lunch to ones that can affect major decisions such as choosing a career path. Furthermore, this type of conflict can be quite difficult to handle if you find it hard to decipher your inner struggles. It leads to restlessness and uneasiness, or can even cause depression. In such occasions, it would be best to seek a way to let go of the anxiety through communicating with other people. Eventually, when you find yourself out of the situation, you can become more empowered as a person. Thus, the experience evoked a positive change which will help you in your own personal growth.

Intragroup conflict is a type of conflict that happens among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among these individuals lead to an intragroup conflict. It is arises from interpersonal disagreements (e.g. team members have different personalities which may lead to tension) or differences in views and ideas (e.g. in a presentation, members of the team might find the notions presented by the one presiding to be erroneous due to their differences in opinion). Within a team, conflict can be helpful in coming up with decisions which will eventually allow them to reach their objectives as a team. However, if the degree of conflict disrupts harmony among the members, then some serious guidance from a different party will be needed for it to be settled.

Intergroup conflict takes place when a misunderstanding arises among different teams within an organization. For instance, the sales department of an organization can come in conflict with the customer support department. This is due to the varied sets of goals and interests of these different groups. In addition, competition also contributes for intergroup conflict to arise. There are other factors which fuel this type of conflict. Some of these factors may include a rivalry in resources or the boundaries set by a group to others which establishes their own identity as a team.

Conflict may seem to be a problem to some, but this isn’t how conflict should be perceived. On the other hand, it is an opportunity for growth and can be an effective means of opening up among groups or individuals. However, when conflict begins to draws back productivity and gives way to more conflicts, then conflict management would be needed to come up with a resolution.

How to Resolve Conflict – Developing Positive Outcomes

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Being in conflict can be a real pain in the neck; to deal with someone else who has different views from yourself can be daunting if dealt with narrow-mindedly. It can happen anywhere where we find ourselves interacting with other people – may it be the workplace, in school, at home and in other places. It can even be an internal conflict starting within oneself. Hence, it is a natural occurrence that is inevitable; it is a part of our experience demonstrating that we all have our respective ideas. By handling conflicts responsibly, we get to learn more ourselves and the people concerned. It is an opportunity to get to understand a different individual’s perspective which could eventually lead to more strengthened relationships. It might be cumbersome to ones who are stubborn in their points of view; but there are ways on how to resolve conflict efficiently. At the end of the day, it can help you understand the problem and get to think of creative ways to find a solution.

There are several kinds of conflict management styles discussed in this separate article. Examining these styles may come in handy if you find yourself in conflict with someone else. Deciding which would be the most appropriate strategy to use can mean the difference between resolving the conflict or making matters even worse. Aside from the styles mentioned, several skills and a proper mindset can help you in responsibly handling the situation. Let’s take conflict in the workplace as an example for the purpose of this discussion, since conflicts are quite common in this scenario. For instance, if you find two of your co-workers in a conflict situation that won’t seem to come to an end soon, what do you think should be done for a resolution to come into light? One approach would be by stepping in and act as a mediator. Mediation involves a neutral third-party coming into the scene; assisting the arguing parties to put an end to their conflict. The mediator will help the conflicting parties in thinking of ways to assure that both of their interests will be met when arriving at a resolution. The styles used in this approach will be dependent on what the situation demands. [1] In addition, another vital factor for conflict resolution is communication. It is important if you want to clear out present issues by fostering an environment of openness among people. The ability to listen while also sharing your views would help in resolving conflict.

In resolving conflict, coming up with a resolution that would make all the parties involved happy is important. However, learning how to resolve conflict isn’t easy as it is a responsibility in itself. More practice or exposure to such situations can help you develop better conflict handling skills.

“Mediation”. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado. Retrieved August 17, 2013.

Conflict Management Styles – How to Deal with Conflict

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Considering the fact that we as individuals have different points of view, there will always be instances when misunderstandings will occur among us. With the arising of these intractable conflicts comes the need for conflict management. Even in seemingly ordinary situations, conflict may be rooted by other non-apparent reasons. Understanding the other sides of the issue would allow those involved to come up with an ideal resolution to the problem. In dealing with conflict, there are conflict management styles to be followed. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, which is an assessment used globally in conflict handling, specifies five strategies used to address conflict. They are as follows:

Accommodating

Accommodation involves having to deal with the problem with an element of self-sacrifice; an individual sets aside his own concerns to maintain peace in the situation. Thus, the person yields to what the other wants, displaying a form of selflessness. It might come as an immediate solution to the issue; however it also brings about a false manner of dealing with the problem. This can be disruptive if there is a need to come up with a more sound and creative way out of the problem. This behavior will be most efficient if the individual is in the wrong as it can come as a form of conciliation.

Avoiding

In this approach, there is withdrawal from the conflict. The problem is being dealt with through a passive attitude. Avoiding is mostly used when the perceived negative end outweighs the positive outcome. In employing this, individuals end up ignoring the problem, thinking that the conflict will resolve itself. It might be applicable in certain situations but not in all. Avoidance would mean that you neglect the responsibility that comes with it. The other individuals involved might think that you are neglecting the problem. Thus, it is better to confront the problem before it gets worse.

Collaborating

Collaborating aims to find a solution to the conflict through cooperating with other parties involved. Hence, communication is an important part of this strategy. In this mechanism, effort is exerted in digging into the issue to identify the needs of the individuals concerned without removing their respective interests from the picture. Collaborating individuals aim to come up with a successful resolution creatively, without compromising their own satisfactions.

Competing

Competition involves authoritative and assertive behaviors. In this style, the aggressive individual aims to instil pressure on the other parties to achieve a goal. It includes the use of whatever means to attain what the individual thinks is right. It may be appropriate in some situations but it shouldn’t come to a point wherein the aggressor becomes too unreasonable. Dealing with the conflict with an open mind is vital for a resolution to be met.

Compromising

Compromising is about coming up with a resolution that would be acceptable to the parties involved. Thus, one party is willing to sacrifice their own sets of goals as long as the others will do the same. Hence, it can be viewed as a mutual give-and-take scenario where the parties submit the same amount of investment for the problem to be solved. A disadvantage of this strategy is the fact that since these parties find an easy way around the problem, the possibility of coming up with more creative ways for a solution would be neglected.

Given the different conflict management styles, you might be thinking of the one style that would suit you the most. It is important to note that the strategy involved in coming up with a resolution is relative to the kind of the problem.

What is Conflict – Understanding Conflict

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There are different ways to come with a definition of conflict. When speaking of conflict, what would immediately come into mind would most likely be how differences and disagreements make such an occurrence to spring up. Having that, let us have that question again, for the purpose of a more comprehensive discussion. Hence, what is conflict? It can be described as a disagreement among groups or individuals characterized by antagonism and hostility. This is usually fueled by the opposition of one party to another, in an attempt to reach an objective different from that of the other party. The elements involved in the conflict have varied sets of principles and values, thus allowing such a conflict to arise.

Taking a look into what causes conflict can help us understand this phenomenon even more. Hence, let us take into consideration the common sources of conflict. In this manner, we can address other aspects of the question (“what is conflict?”) posed.What are the factors that make conflict arise? For the purpose of this discussion, let us put into attention the three main sources of conflict as proposed by American psychologist Daniel Katz. According to him, conflict arises primarily due to these three:

Economic conflict is brought about by a limited amount of resources. The groups or individuals involved then comes into conflict to attain the most of these resources, thus bringing forth hostile behaviors among those involved.

Value conflict is concerned with the varied preferences and ideologies that people have as their principles. Conflicts driven by this factor are demonstrated in wars wherein separate parties have sets of beliefs that they assert (in an aggressive manner at that).

Power conflict occurs when the parties involved intends to maximize what influence it has in the social setting. Such a situation can happen among individuals, groups or even nations. In other types of conflict, power is also evident as it involves an asserting of influence to another.

Conflict comes naturally; the clashing of thoughts and ideas is a part of the human experience. It is true that it can be destructive if left uncontrolled. However, it shouldn’t be seen as something that can only cause negative things to transpire. It is a way to come up with more meaningful realizations that can certainly be helpful to the individuals involved. These positive outcomes can be reached through an effective implementation of conflict resolution. Conflict can be seen as an opportunity for learning and understanding our differences. We can all live harmoniously despite conflicts as long as we know how to responsibly manage these struggles.

Conflict Resolution – Effectively Handling Conflict

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Conflict is often inevitable in many situations. They may concern petty ones to the more serious ones which can lead to hostility among individuals. The fact of the matter is, conflict is something that we live with. You cannot expect two people or groups to agree all the time. In one way or another, we are faced with many types of conflict in our day to day lives. However, conflict should not be seen as purely negative. It can become an opportunity for better things and open up opportunities, if dealt with properly. It isn’t as easy as it seems though. Hence, this is where conflict resolution comes in.

The initial question would concern what conflict resolution is. What is it anyway? It actually is an end which has been brought about by conflict management. It is seen as a peaceful solution to individuals and groups that are in conflict. There are a lot of means and strategies involved in dealing with conflict, and all of these aim to come up with a resolution to it. Resolving a conflict may take time and this will ultimately depend on its scale. Hence, a person who intends to acts as a mediator to parties in conflict need to have skills and know the strategies necessary to resolve conflict. There are even available trainings for those who intend to acquire these skills.

Oftentimes, when we find ourselves in conflict with other people, we seem to get into a regressive and aggressive state. In such a case, we tend to become irrational and just unreasonable so that we could get out of the conflict based on what we deem is right. This kind of behavior is quite understandable but it shouldn’t be something to be tolerated. Hence, it is important for the parties involve to pay attention to how a conflict can come to an end in a healthy manner. In line with this, there are ten strategies for conflict resolution shared to us by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment which you could check through this link. The strategies stated on the link would be efficient guidelines to anyone who needs to be guided on how conflict should be dealt with.

Conflict is a concept familiar to most of us. Hence, we are aware of the consequences that it can cause if it is mishandled. Thus, knowing how to go around a conflict by efficiently implementing conflict management is important for it to be resolved. Keep in mind that with the resolution of conflict comes an opportunity for growth, may it be personally or professionally.