Conflict Management

Conflicts - The Dark Side of team work

- •Nothing is as desctructive and counter-productive as conflicts within a group!

- •Conflicts must be recognized and handled as soon as possible

- •To most people, this is *very* uncomfortable

- •But there's no way around it!
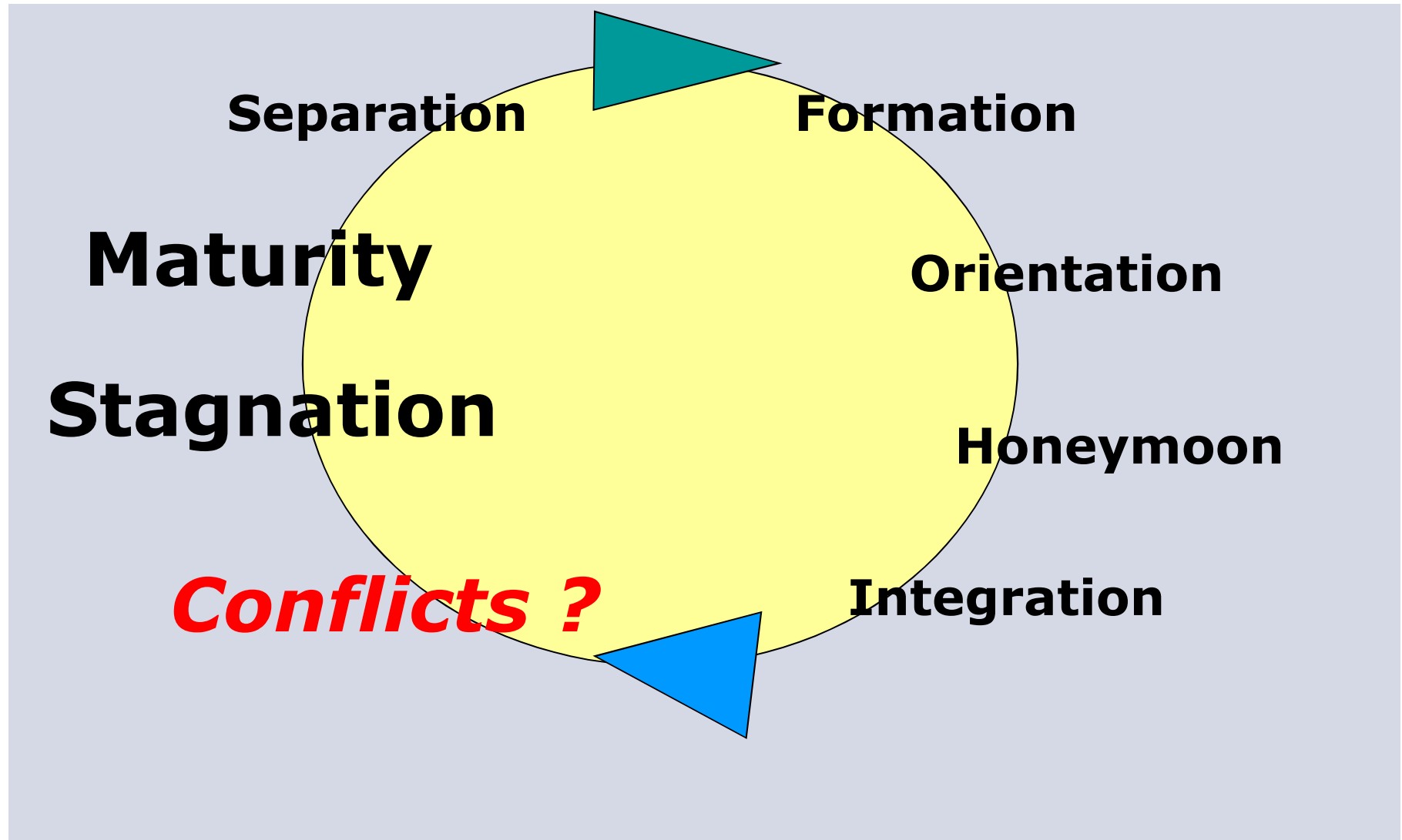   - •Not even dishonesty, pleasing or a passive attitude will help!

Objectives – students should be able to:
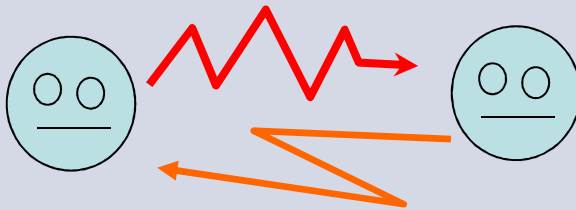
1. Use common vocabulary and models to discuss and understand the challenges of group work.

2. Understand and apply constructive behaviour and methods to prevent and resolve collaboration problems.
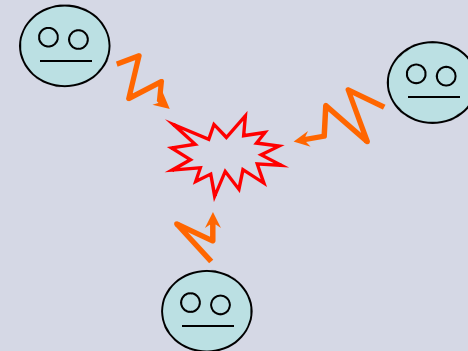

Be smart in managing conflict so that this:

Leads to this:

Instead of this:

The situation:

Separation · Formation · Maturity · Orientation · Stagnation · Honeymoon · Conflicts ? · Integration
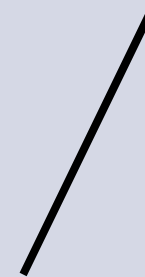
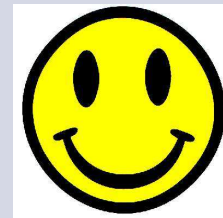Types of conflicts:

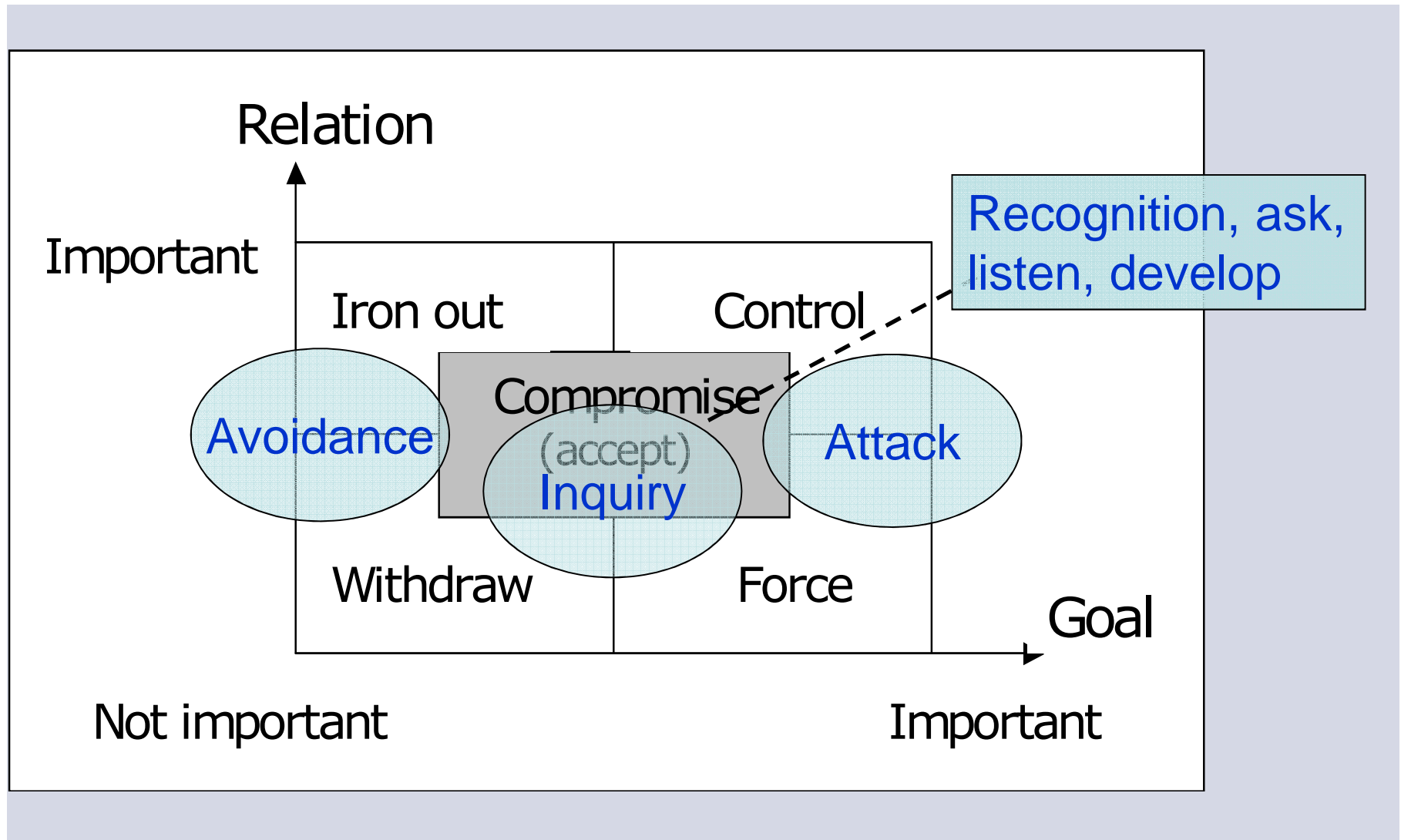**Relationship oriented**

("affective conflict")

Task oriented

("cognitive conflict")

Conflict dimension vs action/reaction:

What do you do?

- **Awareness of a conflict**
- **Think it over (individually / in the group):**
  - What is the conflict about?
  - Which type of conflict?
  - Is it important? (relation – goal)
- **Recognition & acceptance – action?**
  - Shall we allocate resources for this now?
  - How to address it - Which tools?
  - How to prepare for the process?

The progression of conflicts:

Conflict causes

Cognitive level

Affective level

Primal level
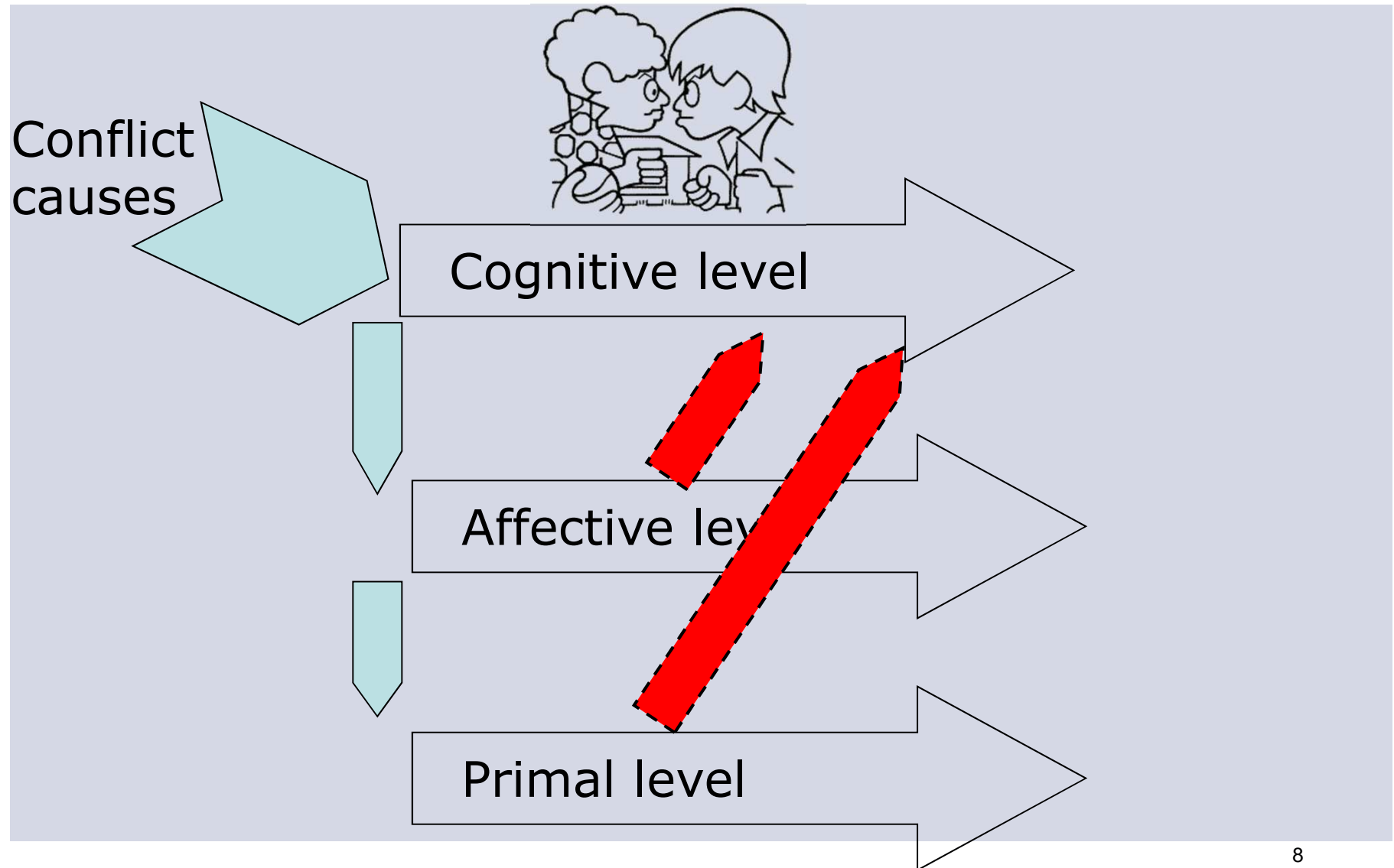
Assertiveness in emotional situations
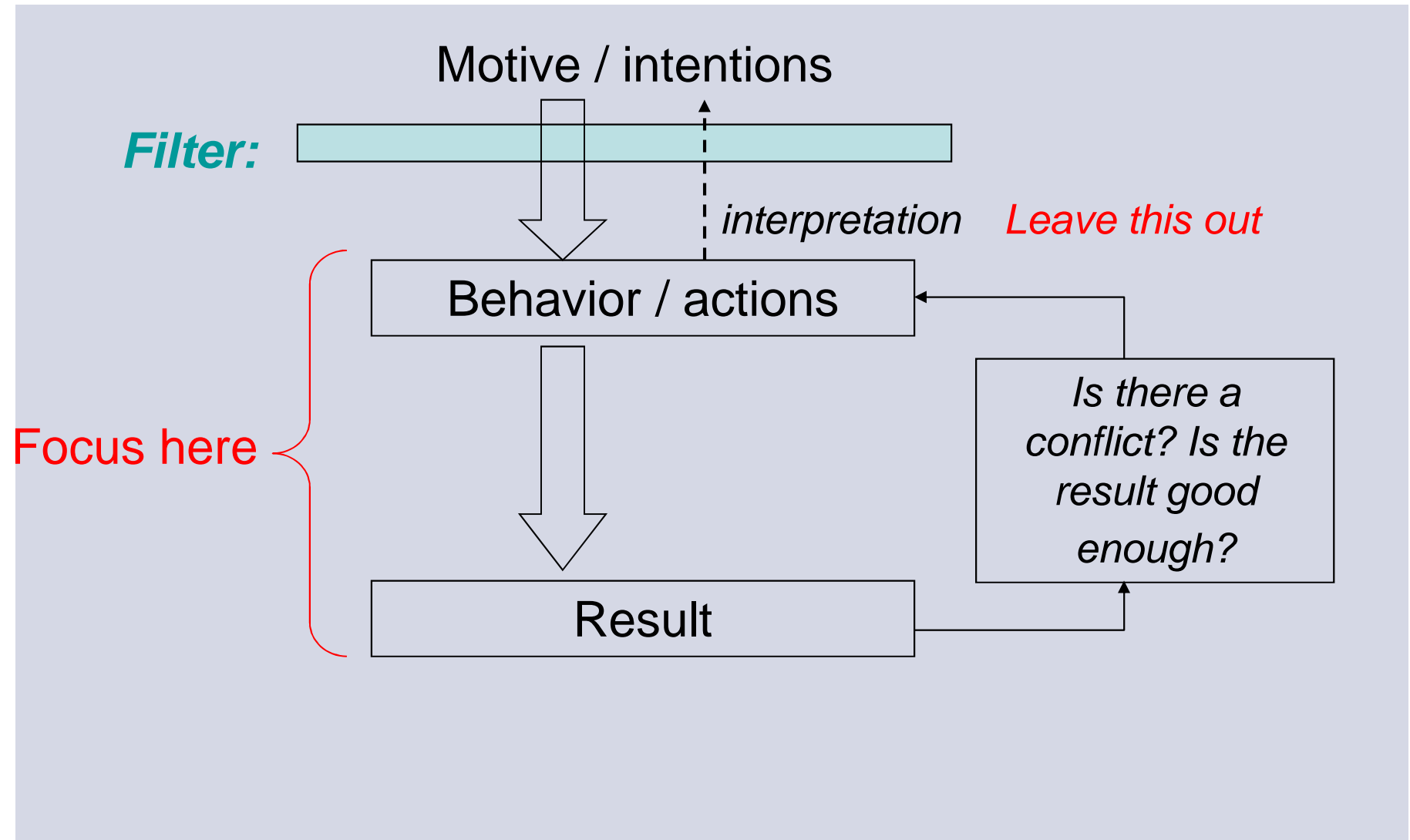
Get the conflict <u>up</u> to the cognitive level by:

- Acceptance of each others differences – recognition of views.
- Analysis of the problem core (stick to the key issue)
- Be honest and take responsibility for your viewpoints.
- Look for solutions rather than causes (not: *who's fault is it?* but: *How can we resolve?* AC revision?, different organisation, planning, commitment…)

Constructive behavior in dealing with conflicts

Motive / intentions

Filter:

interpretation   Leave this out

Behavior / actions

Focus here

Is there a conflict? Is the result good enough?

Result

Communication and conflicts

"Nag-grumpy"

Nag

Grumpy
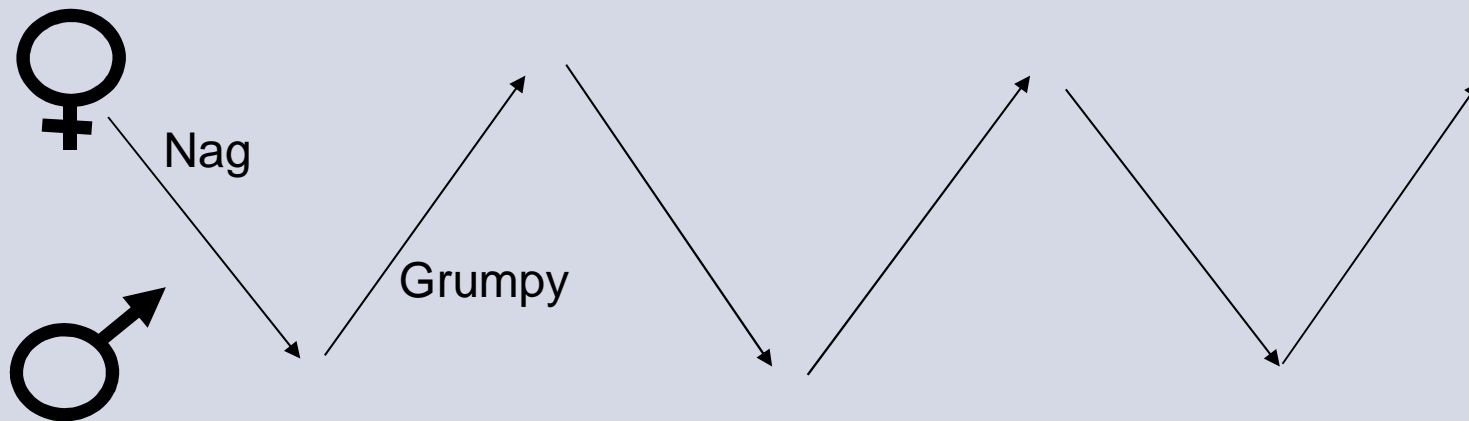
- Talk it through?
- Plan around it?
- Organise away from it?
- Bind it with rules and agreements?
- Negotiate it away?
- Working through?

Conflict resolution -

for groups resuming their collaboration (1)

- ## The group accepts
  - that there is a problem
  - to try to solve the problem
  - a method/procedure to be followed
  - a mediator/chairperson

- ## The method:
  - The group sits in a circle
  - 3 opening rounds of clarification (see next slide)
  - Discussion and choice of solution(s)

Conflict resolution -

for groups resuming their collaboration (2)

The 3 opening rounds:

1. **How do I see the situation/conflict?**
   - no discussion, analyses, blaming, accusations
   - mediator moderates and summarises
2. **How did I contribute to creating the problem?**
   - no discussion, only listening
   - mediator summarises and organises
3. **How can I contribute to solving the problem?**
   - no discussion, brainstorm
   - mediator clarifies possibilities

Takes honesty, objectivity and selfinsight

Conflict resolution
for groups resuming their collaboration (3)

Discussion and choice of solution(s)

- Mediator clarifies the options
- Group discusses practical solutions (not a question of guilt or placing responsibility)
- A solution is agreed upon
- Concrete decisions are made (action responsible; time-schedule; follow-up)
- Mediator ensures that everyone accepts the decisions

Be smart in managing conflict so that this:

Leads to this:

Instead of this:

A functioning group

Each group member must:

- 1: **understand the entire problem** to be solved, and not only his/her own share

- 2: **understand how he/she can contribute** towards solving the existing problem or new problems arising

- 3: must **pay attention to other group members' contribution** - if any

- 4: **understand other group members' problems** to be able to assist them in supplying their maximum contribution

- 5: **be willing to engage** in and contribute to the group-process and group objectives

BUT: *If it ain't broken don't fix it….*

Group exercise (20 min)

1. Individually: Grade (1- 10, 10 is best) the collaboration "atmosphere" in the group.

2. In the group: Take a round of motivating your personal grading:
   1. What you like about the work in the group
   2. What you think could be improved in the teamwork

3. In the group: Take another round suggesting what you think *you* could do to lift the grade one level.