

4/27/04

Review  
From  
previous  
class

Assertiveness vs. non-assertion  
and aggression

- Non-assertion = other's needs come first
- aggression = my needs come first

Indirectness = hinting; face-saving

Passive-aggressiveness = attacking others  
in sly or disguised way.

Also, pretend there is not a problem  
but then withhold rewards as a  
punishment.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness should be tried rather  
than the above to resolve or  
manage conflict

5-Parts  
of Assertiveness  
"BIFCI"

- ① State the Behaviors
- ② Interpret the Behaviors
- ③ State your Feelings about the Behaviors
- ④ State the Consequences of the Behaviors
- ⑤ State your Intentions and make a request

Use the 5 parts of Assertiveness because they are effective in speaking up for yourself without being aggressive or attacking the other person. Also enhances the self-respect of the person using the skill.

Conflict Skills

Conflict resolution in close relationships is not always possible because not all conflicts are resolvable. But it is possible to "manage" conflicts.

Managing Conflict

Baxter & Montgomery (Univ of Iowa) did research. Connection vs. freedom in a relationship are on-going tensions that will never be resolved -- "I love you; when are you leaving?" The best thing to hope for is on-going management that must be negotiated.

Connection vs Freedom

Openness vs Privacy

Conflict is well-managed. The topic or issue is out in the open & people are talking about it, but it is not escalating out of control.

Regardless of the content issue, the underlying issues are ones of power & face-saving. Who is in control? How am I being perceived?

Choose assertiveness rather than aggressiveness because people will feel less compelled to fight for power; they're not being bossed around. They will also be less compelled to save face because you're not attacking them. If you share power, the other person is less likely to try to "get" power, so you can work on the content issue.

We tend to give more meaning to negative information, and this makes a conflict worse. Some people engage in mind reading as if the person they are in conflict with has hostile intentions.

mid-range

5 Skills  
of Conflict  
Management

①  
Choose  
Assertiveness  
not  
Aggression

②  
Choose  
Perception-  
checking  
not  
Hostile  
mind Reading

We're not capable of mind reading so don't do it! Also, we don't like it when others try to read our minds. Perception checking makes the conflict more manageable because we don't assume that we have the power/ability to read minds.

3 Steps  
of Perception  
checking

- ① State the behavior
- ② offer 2 different interpretations
- ③ Ask for clarification

③  
Try  
"Bracketing"  
rather than  
"Kitchen Sinking"

Conflicts become unmanageable when we bring up things from the past ("kitchen sinking"). Know what it is you're arguing about. Stay focused on the issue. Don't get off track.

"Bracketing" takes the other stuff aside -- puts it in brackets -- to avoid confusion. Talk about the bracketed stuff later.

④ Summarize both parties' interests rather than self-summarizing

It's not hard to summarize yourself. It's more challenging to summarize both parties. People want to be heard. If you keep summarizing yourself, the conflict may escalate because the other person's need for power and face-saving are not being met.

- Ask other person to summarize in terms of a request
- Try a different pattern of communication.

⑤ Look out for mutual benefit.

If I look to "win" at the other person's expense, the other person will also look to "win." This is an escalating pattern. The conflict will be less likely to escalate and more likely to be manageable if I think the other person is also looking out for me. Try to pick a solution where both get what we want. Win-lose situations often turn to lose-lose situations because the person that loses may try to "get back" by using aggressive tactics. Attempt a win-win situation by looking out for mutual benefit.

Win-win situations are best!