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Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable

It is estimated that the average manager spends in excess of 40% of their time dealing with conflict in the workplace.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: We will cover . . .

- Definitions of Conflict
- Causes of Conflict
- How Conflict impacts day-to-day decisions
- How corporate culture, business atmosphere, personal experiences influence these decisions.
- Behaviors exhibited during Conflict
- Shifting from *Destructive* Conflict to *Productive* Conflict
1. Introduce yourself to the person next to you.

2. Explain to them—What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about conflict?
   - Arguing?
   - Compromising?
   - Hurt feelings?
   - Gossiping?
   - Other?
   - Or . . . A colleague taking ownership for their mistakes?

3. Do you focus on Victory? Feelings? Consensus? Logic?
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: **Definitions**

- Conflict—*A Difference of Opinions Involving Strong Emotions*.
- Conflict contains both destructive AND productive behaviors.
- From brief, explosive disputes to subtle, long lasting issues.
- Conflict is inevitable.
- Influenced by many factors.
- It is within your control.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: Causes

- Personality differences.
- Workplace behaviors regarded by some co-workers as irritating.
- Unmet needs in the workplace.
- Perceived inequities of resources (human, financial, technological, time).
- Unclarified roles in the workplace.
- Competing job duties or poor implementation of a job description—for example, placing a nonsupervisory employee in an unofficial position of "supervising" another employee.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:  
It’s Inevitable: **Causes**

- A systemic circumstance such as a workforce slowdown, a merger or acquisition, or a reduction in force.
- Mis-management of organizational change and/or transition.
- Poor communication, including misunderstood remarks and comments taken out of context.
- Differences over work methods or goals or differences in perspectives attributable to age, sex or upbringing.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: Causes/Consequences

- 1998—25% of employees report being treated rudely at work.
- 2011—55%
- 2016—62% . . . Why the change?
- 85 percent of employees deal with conflict on some level
- 29 percent of employees deal with it almost constantly
- 34 percent of conflict occurs among front-line employees
- 12 percent of employees say they frequently witness conflict among the senior team
- 49 percent of conflict is a result of personality clashes and “warring egos”
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: *Causes/Consequences*

- 34 percent of conflict is caused by stress in the workplace
- 33 percent of conflict is caused by heavy workloads
- 27 percent of employees have witnessed conflicts leading to personal attacks
- 25 percent of employees have seen conflict result in sickness or absence
- 9 percent have seen workplace conflict cause a project to fail
The Conference Board reports that 53 percent of Americans are currently unhappy at work. Consider that for a moment. Half of the workforce is unhappy.

Global Studies reveal that 79 percent of people who quit their jobs cite ‘lack of appreciation’ as their reason for leaving. People don’t leave companies. They leave bosses.

A Harvard Business Review survey reveals 58 percent or people say they trust strangers more than their own boss.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: Impact on day-to-day decisions

- 89% of bosses believe employees quit because they want more money.
- (It’s actually 12%).
- A recent study by CareerBuilder.com shows that 58 percent of managers said they didn’t receive any management training.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It’s Inevitable: Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

• Dr. Stephen R. Covey, The 8th Habit:
  --37% of employees have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why.
  --15% felt they worked in a “high trust” environment.
  --10% felt that their organization holds people accountable for results.
  --13% have high trust, highly cooperative working relationships with other departments.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable **Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences**

- If a soccer team (11 players) had these same scores . . .
  -- Only 4 out of 11 would know which goal is theirs.
  -- Only 2 out of 11 would care.
  -- Only 2 out of 11 would know what position they play and know exactly what they are supposed to do.
  -- 9 out of 11 would be competing, in some way, against their own team members rather than the opponent.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

• Patrick Lencioni: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team
  -- The Absence of Trust
  -- Fear of Conflict
  -- Lack of Commitment
  -- Avoidance of Accountability
  -- Inattention to Results
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- Marcus Buckingham, “First, Break all the Rules—What the World’s Greatest Manager’s Do Differently”
- 26% Engaged—loyal and productive.
- 55% Disengaged—just putting in time.
- 19% Actively disengaged—spreading discontent.
  --I know what is expected of me at work.
  --I have the resources to do what is expected of me at work.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

• We can see that being able to engage in productive conflict is important to team/organizational success. They why do teams/organizations have so much trouble with conflict?

• On a scale of 1-10 (10 being high) how would you rate your own comfort level with conflict?

• What factors in your culture and experience might have affected the way you feel about conflict?
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It’s Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

• Personal Histories Exercise:
  --Where did you grow up?
  --How many siblings do you have? Where do you fall in the order?
  --What was the most difficult, important, or unique challenge of your childhood—of being a kid?
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: *Destructive* Behaviors Exhibited During Conflict

- Arguing
- Belittling
- Caving in
- Defensiveness
- Dismissing others’ opinion
- Becoming overly dramatic
- Exaggerating the problem
- Finger pointing/blaming/scapegoating

- Gossiping
- Becoming hypercritical
- Over powering
- Passive-aggressive
- Revenge/evening the score
- Sabotage
- Sarcasm
- Stonewalling
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It’s Inevitable: Behaviors Exhibited During Conflict

- Think of a conflict situation that you dealt with in the past 24 hours.
  --How did you handle it?
  --Which of these behaviors did you use?
  --What was the result?
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: 
It’s Inevitable:  **Shifting from Destructive Conflict to Productive Conflict**

- Acknowledge your emotions and how they might influence your judgement.
- During conflict, our emotions, often times, cloud our perspective and hinder our ability to make healthy decisions.
- Many of our emotions fall into two broad categories:
  - **Anger:** frustration, resentment, outrage, aggression.
  - **Anxiety:** fear, panic, worry, upheaval, disorientation.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It’s Inevitable: *Shifting from Destructive Conflict to Productive Conflict*

**Destructive Tendencies**
- Insensitivity, impatient, create “win-lose” situations, refuse to bend, over power others.

**Productive Tendencies**
- Straightforward with opinions, acknowledge tough issues, willingness to have objective debates.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:  
It’s Inevitable: *Shifting from Destructive Conflict to Productive Conflict*

**Destructive Tendencies**
- Become overly emotional, talk over others, impulsive, gloss over tension, make personal attacks.

**Productive Tendencies**
- Communicate empathy, encourage open dialogue, provide reassurance, verbalize emotions.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It’s Inevitable: *Shifting from Destructive Conflict to Productive Conflict*

**Destructive Tendencies**
- Withdraw, give in to please others, ignore problems, let issues simmer beneath the surface, avoid tension.

**Productive Tendencies**
- Show flexibility, look out for other people’s feelings, communicate tactfully, listen to others, find compromises.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It’s Inevitable:  */Shifting from Destructive Conflict to Productive Conflict/*

**Destructive Tendencies**
- Defensiveness, use passive-aggressive tactics, become overly critical, isolate yourself, over analyze the situation.

**Productive Tendencies**
- Find the root cause of the problem, sort out all of the issues, give people space, focus on the facts.
Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It’s Inevitable: Ethics

• The branch of philosophy that deals with morality. **Ethics** is concerned with distinguishing between good and evil in the world, between right and wrong human actions, and between virtuous and nonvirtuous characteristics of people.

  --A set of principles of right conduct.

  --A theory or a system of moral values.
Thank you!

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