



LESSON 5-5: Healthy Decision Making

RESOLVING CONFLICT

“Peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.” - Ronald Reagan

“The better part of wisdom in life is learning what’s cancer and what’s measles. Here’s the truth: most stuff is measles.”- Gary Black

WELCOME & PRAYER

PREVIOUS LESSON AND FOLLOW UP

- From the previous lesson in 5-4, how did you and your partners’ values, vision, and expectations compare?

KICK OFF QUESTIONS

- Describe a conflict in the workplace. How did each person contribute to the conflict? How did the situation get resolved?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURES

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone.” (Matthew 18:15)

“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)

Discussion Question: When you have conflict in relationships, do you tend to have dialogue with the other person about the issue? Do you tend to avoid having a difficult conversation at all costs?

DECISIONS

Conflict; it is one of life’s unavoidable facts. It does not discriminate. Great partnerships, lousy partnerships, best friends, mortal enemies, spouses, children, friends, and family; all of these relationships will experience conflict at some point in time. Conflict has a way of testing the strength of our relationships. The workplace is no exception when it comes to conflict. Money, politics, selfish ambition, envy, competition, jealousy, ego, and pride serve as fuel for conflict explosion.



Business is based on relationships. We must nurture and (at times) restore those relationships in order for companies to succeed. This applies to team members and clients. Knowing that we will all experience conflict on a regular basis in seemingly all aspects of our lives, we must begin to understand the proper ways to handle it.

CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

1. Recognize and own the conflict.
2. Examine yourself first.
3. Have a discussion with the other person.
4. Love the person more than the conflict.

Recognize and own the conflict. If you have an issue, you need to acknowledge it. Too many people allow issues to stew and grow, only addressing them when they reach a boiling point. Handling conflict this way makes it difficult to maintain relationships over the long term. Conflict avoided creates bitterness and anger. Either party to the conflict, whether in the right or wrong, can take ownership of working towards a resolution.

Examine yourself first. Many times we are the problem. Before we approach another person, we must be able to honestly look at ourselves in the mirror and ask the question, “How have I contributed to the conflict I am currently facing?” Owning your portion of the conflict will squash pride and create a spirit of humility, which are both important ingredients needed to bring resolution.

Have a discussion with the other person. This is the part where most people stumble. We tend to discuss the issue with everyone but the other person involved. We build a case with like-minded people who will see the issue through our own vantage point. Our individual personality types play a part as well, causing some of us to completely avoid having a difficult conversation. Short-cutting this step through emails and text messages is not an effective strategy. If you are not willing to address a conflict in-person, then don’t assume there will ever be a resolution. Three magic words in any conflict are “I am sorry”; and you do not have to be the one at fault to say these words. It takes tremendous humility to say “I am sorry” and to mean it.

Love the person more than the conflict. Some relationships take time to heal. Even if the conflict is not fully resolved, simply understanding another’s position in a better way is a great start to restoring the relationship. Continuing to love someone during a conflict allows the temperature of the issue to decrease.



EXERCISE

Never go into a discussion without addressing the five questions below. Going in prepared allows you to have a more tempered and meaningful conversation that can better lead to resolution.

What is the issue?	
Why is the issue creating a conflict?	
How did you contribute to the issue?	
What is the other person's perspective?	
What is a perfect outcome?	

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are words you would use in a restoration process? What are words that you would not use?
2. What are you willing to do to promote unity with the other person? What are you willing to give up?
3. What does loving someone during a conflict look like to you?
4. Reference the kick-off question at the start of the lesson. Given the steps above, would you have done things differently? Would there have been a different outcome?

TAKE ACTION

- If you are in the middle of a conflict with someone, work back through the exercise above and the 4 steps using your specific situation. If the timing is right, then have the courage to reach out to the other person to work towards a resolution.

CLOSING PRAYER

