Conflict

Office Lighthouse Discussion Materials

Conflict
Chapter 1 - Social Styles

Everywhere you look, conflict abounds: in the workplace, in the personal lives of individuals, and in our churches. Everyone has been annoyed by someone: consequently, everyone has annoyed other people at some point. One of the major causes of conflict lies in the *social style* differences that exist between individuals, and the behaviors that are represented by those *social styles*.

The concept that the human race consists of four basic *social styles* is not a new one. Hippocrates, around 400 B.C, developed the idea that there were four basic temperaments among people: Sanguine (the Expressive), Choleric (the Driver), Melancholy (the Analytical), and Phlegmatic (the Amiable). (How to Deal With Annoying People by Phillips and Alyn)

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

1) Which of the above *social styles* do you see yourself in? Why?

2) "You just run over people" is a description of a Driver. How do you react to and or respond to Drivers?

3) "Just one big mouth" might describe an Expressive. How do you react to and or deal with the Expressive?

4) "You're just lazy" might describe the amiable social style. Any people like this in your life? How do you feel about your relationship?

5) "You think you know everything" could describe the Analytical. Anyone you know fit this description? Why are they difficult to deal with?

6) "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (The Bible) How might this idea help you deal with the conflict you experience from *social styles* differences?

Conflict
Chapter 2 - Leadership

"Learning is the essential fuel for the leader, the source of high-octane energy that keeps up the momentum by continually sparking new understanding, new ideas, and new challenges. It is absolutely indispensable under today's conditions of rapid change and complexity. Very simply, those who do not learn do not long survive as leaders." (Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus)

The following is a list of the ten leadership roles that must be assumed by a quality leader:
- Delegator – Mediator – Facilitator – Nurturer - Manager   -
Coach – Clarifier - Dreamer/Visionary- Problem-solver   -
Initiator (How to Deal With Annoying People" by Phillips and Alyn)

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

1) <u>Analyticals</u> are motivated to save face. They don't like to be pushed. How can you use this to select the above role(s) to play in leading the analytical social style person?

2) <u>The Driver</u> social style is motivated by time. They like to complete tasks quickly and choose the most successful path. Any thoughts about how to use this information?

3) <u>The Amiable</u> social style is more concerned with people than projects. They want leaders who work closely with them. This best describes the amiable social style. Does your social style conflict or fit in with the Amiable? How so?

4) <u>The Expressive</u> social style tends to motivate people with their constant enthusiasm. They need freedom to be creative. Any thoughts about this personality? How do you feel when you are around them?

5) The above four social styles all have positive and negative traits. Avoiding people because of their "bad traits" is an option. What other options do you see or use?

6) "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Jesus, the Bible) How might this statement affect your approach to the leadership of the different styles?

Conflict
Chapter 3 - Marriage

"Marriages often get to this point when people stop trying to understand one another. Years of annoying habits and traits wear on those who fail to learn, understand, and adapt to a spouse. While people are often attracted to someone who possesses the traits they lack, they spend years of a marriage attempting to mold the other person into their own likeness.

Having a successful marriage requires compromise. It requires two people who are willing to learn the social styles of each other and what makes each other tick. It takes two people willing to adapt their own behaviors to meet the needs of their spouses. It takes a self-sacrificing kind of love." (How to Deal With Annoying People, by Phillips and Alyn)

Comment of the above.

Discussion Questions:

1) Marriage is the ultimate training ground for social style (Analytical, Driver, Amiable, and Expressive) tolerance. Would you agree or disagree? Why?

2) Somewhere between the oldest child's first tooth and youngest daughter's graduation, the spouses lost each other. Can you relate to this statement? How so?

3) He climbed into a tomb called "the office", wrapped his mind in a shroud of paper figures, and buried himself in customers. Been there, done that. Why?

4) One day, reaching out to touch each other, they found a barrier they could not penetrate, and recoiling from the coldness of stone, each retreated from the stranger on the other side. Can you somehow relate to this in a culture where 60% of marriages are failing?

5) For when love dies …….it is not a moment of angry battle; no, when fiery bodies loose their heart it lies panting….exhausted…expiring at the bottom of a wall it could not scale. Can this slow death of the relationship be avoided? How?

6) As you learn the specific social style of your spouse, commit to compromise as you learn what annoys your spouse and what your spouse truly values. (Phillips and Ayln) With regard to social styles (see question one) what do you and your spouse have to compromise?

Conflict
Chapter 4 - Myths 1-5

"When you think of the word *conflict*, what comes to mind? For some people, it is a negative situation that should always be avoided. For others, conflict is not such a bad thing and can result in healthy resolutions. There are many myths about conflict that should be addressed. Review the five myths below and evaluate your own belief system about conflict." ("How to Deal With Annoying People", Phillips and Alyn)

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

1) <u>All conflict is bad.</u> Why do people feel this way? What are the benefits of conflict?

2) <u>Conflict damages relationships.</u> Is this always false or true? How can conflict be handled in a positive way?

3) <u>Conflict should never be escalated.</u> How do people stop the escalation of conflict? How might escalation of conflict be beneficial?

4) <u>All conflict is a personality problem.</u> If we disagree something is wrong with one of us? Why or why not?

5) <u>All conflict should be reduced or avoided</u>. Is this an unrealistic approach to life? Why or why not?

6) "<u>A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool."</u> (The Bible) What are your thoughts about this comment?

Conflict
Chapter 5 - Myths 6-10

"When you think of the word *conflict*, what comes to mind? For some people, it is a negative situation that should always be avoided. For others, conflict is not such a bad thing and can result in healthy resolutions. There are many myths about conflict that should be addressed. Review the five myths below and evaluate your own belief system about conflict. ("How To Deal With Annoying People" Phillips and Alyn)

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

1) <u>Conflict indicates psychological problems.</u> Do you agree or disagree? What has been your experience with people with psychological problems?

2) <u>Harmony is normal and conflict is abnormal</u>. Does this concept even touch reality? When it is unpleasant should one avoid, withdraw or shun conflict?

3) <u>If I ignore the conflict, it will go away.</u> What has been your experience with this concept?

4) <u>Genuine conflict is about facts and not about emotions.</u> Are the facts what are really important in resolving conflict? Why are emotions important?

5) <u>Conflict is a sign that people do not care.</u> Why do you think this concept is a myth regarding conflict?

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." (The Bible) Any one you allow to sharpen you? Why?

Conflict
Chapter 6 - Words

Choosing your words carefully is one of the keys to successful conflict resolution. The words you choose can create defensiveness or acceptance. Your words can cause someone to dismiss your message or accept it.

One of the keys to effective conflict resolution is to use "I" statements rather than "you" statements. "I" statements are assertive and confrontive. "You" statements are aggressive and attacking. "I" statements let the other party know that you have strong ideas and convictions. It gives the person a gauge of how strongly you feel about a certain issue. Your strong beliefs and emotions can be shared without attacking the other person. You are simply letting the other person know how you think and feel about the conflict between you. If you respond by saying, "You idiot," the war will probably be on. (How to deal with annoying People, Phillips and Alyn)

Comment on the above.

Discussion Questions:

1) When someone is describing your undesired behavior to you, how do you feel if they use the words, always, never, and every time? Why?

2) How do you react or respond when another uses angry words to hurt you, such as disappointed? Why is disappointed a hurtful word?

3) Do you think it is appropriate to share with another, in an objective concrete manner, how their behavior has cost you time or money? Why or why not?

4) How and why have you responded or reacted when another clearly states to you the behavior (yours) they believe will be acceptable to them in the future?

5) "When words are many, sin in not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise." (The Bible) How might is this statement be related to conflict resolution?

6) Who in your life do you give the right to confront you? Has anyone given you the right to confront them?