



The Gift of Conflict

Transforming Conflict into Positive Outcomes



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Conflict with others is an external projection of inner conflicts.

-Joel Edelman

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All conflict comes from within oneself

- Martin Buber

Mari J. Frank, Esq. is a state bar of California approved MCLE provider, and Ms. Frank certifies that this educational activity has been approved for 1.25 hours of General MCLE credit by the state bar of California.

What is Conflict?

Danger or Opportunity



It is **DANGER** when:

- It's ignored
- Suppressed/hidden
- Escalates out of control
- Destroys relationships
- Creates rage
- Leads to hostility
- Induces fear
- Fosters group anger
- Spawns violence



It creates **OPPORTUNITY** when:

- It stimulates learning
- Opens us to deeper meaning
- Generates positive changes
- Brings hidden issues to light
- Produces creative solutions
- Fosters greater understanding
- Develops synergy
- Generates problem-solving
- Enhances relationships





What is the Origin of Interpersonal Conflict?

- Once born, we adapt to our environment by adopting ways to think, feel, and behave that help us survive.
- We bring our childhood programming and personal story into any relationship.
- Thoughts and behaviors that remind us of past experiences trigger similar emotional responses.
- Conflict emerges when egos feel threatened and needs are not met.





Where does your conflict style come from?

How did your parents handle conflict?

How did you respond as a child when there was conflict in the family?

What role did you assume?





What's your auto response to conflict?



- **When do you use any of the conflict avoiding behaviors?**
 - Placating, appeasing
 - Evading
 - Denying feelings
- **When do you use any of the conflict engaging behaviors?**
 - Blaming, complaining
 - Intimidating
 - Defending



In pairs describe a recent conflict in your life



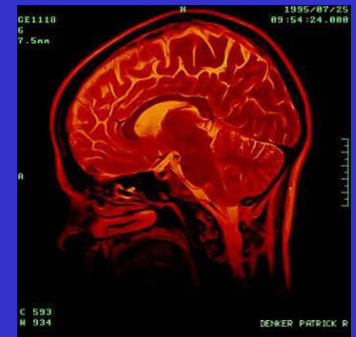
- **Who was involved?**
- **What was the issue?**
- **How did it make you feel?**
- **How did you resolve or handle the conflict?**



How can you identify your pattern of handling conflict?



- What needs are met or unmet?
- What feelings are generated?
- Where in your body do you feel the conflict?
- What do you think or believe about yourself?
- What do you need when you face similar conflictual situations?





10 Steps to Transform Conflict into Opportunity



HARD LOVING



- Halt - don't react: open ears/heart (not mouth), breathe**
- Anger control - notice physical reaction to confrontation**
- Reverse reaction - consciously switch auto response**
- Disengage - release defensiveness (no to fight/flight/freeze)**

- Listen effectively - focus, hear receptively, no interruptions**
- Openly mirror - restate neutrally what you heard**
- Voice open-ended questions**
- Imagine solutions - offer suggestions for “solutioneering”**
- Non-aggression - calmly respond no matter what**
- Go away - remove yourself with dignity**

Let's Practice Responding to Button Pushing



1. You're favoring the other side's position.

I hear that you are concerned about my neutrality. Help me understand why you feel that way?

2. I don't like the way you are handling this mediation.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about the way that I am coordinating the mediation. What would you like to see happen?

3. You aren't helping me to get what I want out of this case.

I can see that you are worried about getting your needs met. How can I best help you and the other side so you both get your interests met.

Let's practice responding to button pushing



- 1. If they won't agree to this last offer, I am walking out the door!*
- 2. The other side is lying and you believe them!!*
- 3. We came to mediation to save money and get a deal, but we have had three sessions and we still haven't settled this issue.*

What is the Gift of Conflict for you?

The gift of conflict is the opportunity for inner and outer transformation for positive outcomes for our clients and ourselves.



“Conflict can be seen as a gift of energy, in which neither side loses and a new dance is created.”

--Thomas Crum

