



# Communication & Conflict

New Leader Online Training September 2017



## Overview of Session

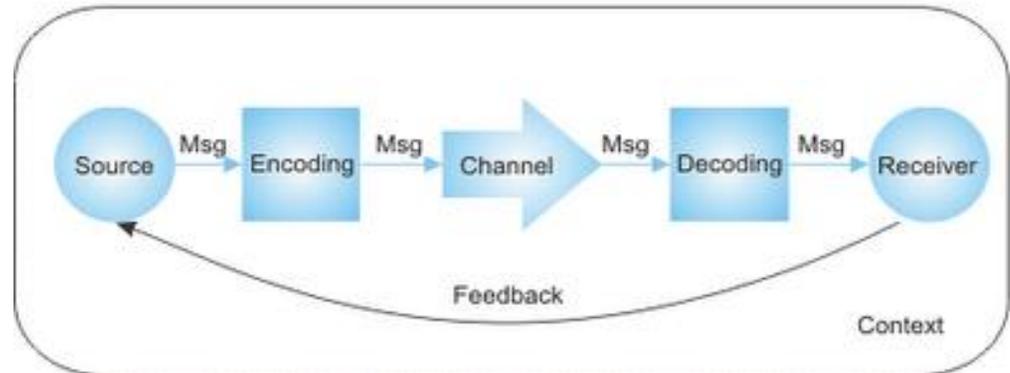
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- **Communication is a dynamic process**
- **We are responsible for our part of the process**
- **Empathetic listening is imperative**
- **Understanding intent vs impact**
- **Curiosity is important**
- **So is understanding the role of emotions**
- **We all have a conflict style**
- **Conflict begins with uncomfortableness...and escalates.**
- **Applying Servant Leadership to conflict.**

# Communication

Human communication is interpersonal, it is purposeful and it is a process.

The Communications Process



## The Communication Process visual chart

**Question:**What do we mean by process?

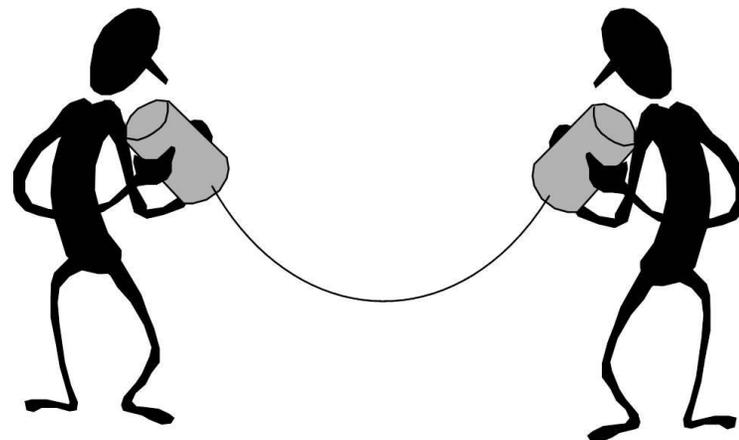
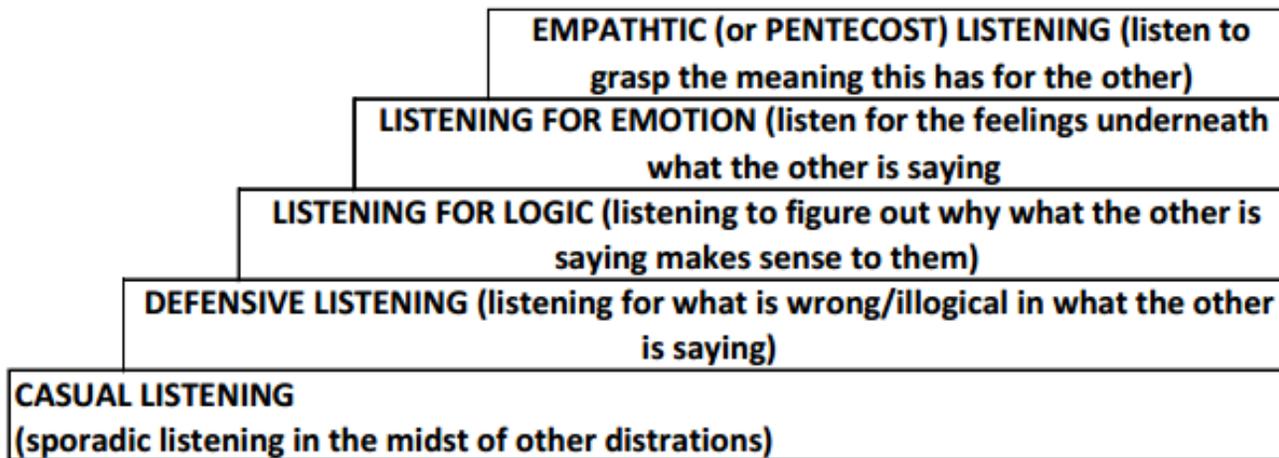
**Answer:** By process we mean that steps have to be taken and in a set/particular order to achieve a desired result/goal.

These are the important elements of the communication process:

1. SENDER/ENCODER
2. MEDIUM
3. CHANNEL
4. RECEIVER
5. FEEDBACK
6. CONTEXT
7. NOISE (also called interference)

The communication process is dynamic, continuous, irreversible, and contextual. It is not possible to participate in any element of the process without acknowledging the existence and functioning of the other elements.

# Empathetic Listening



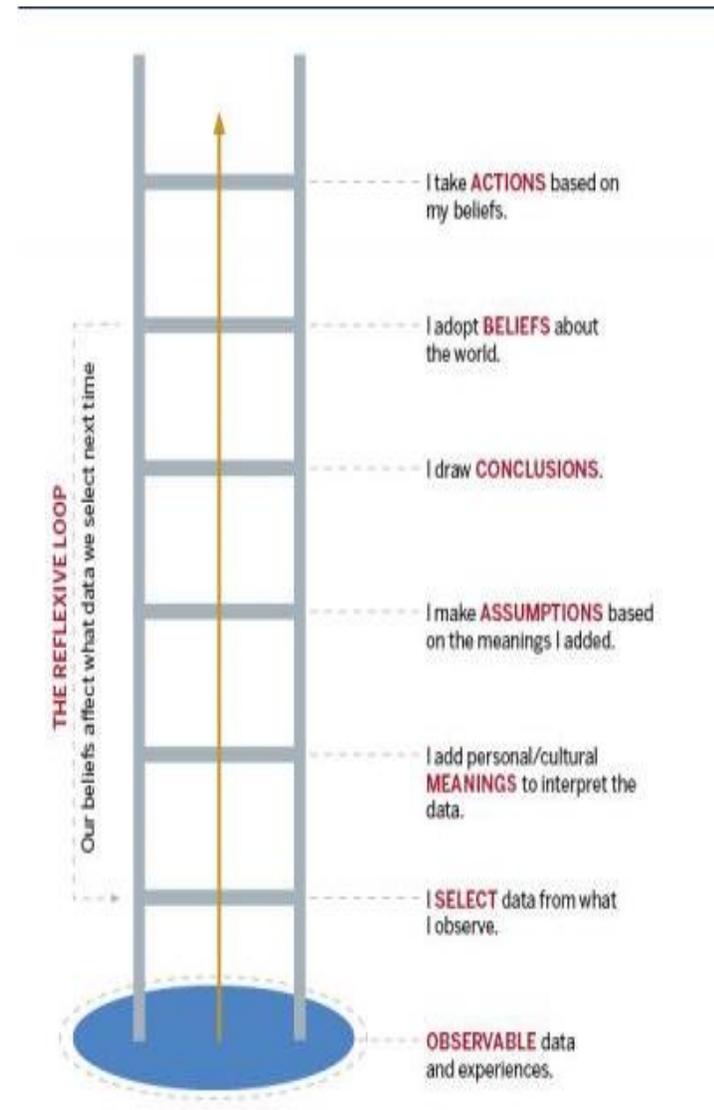
# The Ladder of Inference

## The Ladder of Inference From Redeeming Conflict, Anne M. Garrido

Chris Argyris, a Harvard Business School professor describes the process by which two persons in the same place at the same time can translate the same events in ways that make no sense to one another.

We've been trained to pay attention to whatever pertains to us. We each have our own ladder. In times of conflict, our conversations tend to start at the top of the ladder – where our conclusions and beliefs reside.

The most effective thing we can do is move backward down the ladder and be curious about what is happening at the other's lower rungs.



# Intention and Curiosity

Intent ≠ Impact

MY INTENT	MY IMPACT ON THEM ?
THEIR INTENT ?	THEIR IMPACT ON ME

Intent does not equal impact!

We are called to:

- Test Assumptions – Ask!
- Practice the Principle of Charitable Interpretation.
- Everyone is usually always doing their own best at any give time.
- Remember that all communications problems are two person problems.

## Curiosity

### Adopting a stance of Curiosity

- What is the other person's truth?
- What if this is not about truth?
- What are my own purposes?

### Right-sized aims for a conversation

- We can always find out more!
- We can share our own partial truth with the aim of contributing to an ever more adequate picture of reality
  - We can always invite others to problem solve with us.

**Listening is the #1 Skill we all need to further develop.**

# Emotion

## Emotional triggers

Harvard law professors Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro researched the role emotion plays in arriving at negotiated agreements. They identified five core emotional needs that seem wired into human nature:

Autonomy – We all want a certain degree of control over our lives and work

Affiliation – We all want a sense of belonging, of inclusion.

Appreciation – We want others to notice and value what we do.

Status – We want to be seen in right relation to others based on what we believe has value

Role – We want to have a part that contributes to the overall whole.

When our needs are met, people are collaborative, forgiving, creative and generous. When needs are not met, people are frustrated and angry.

We should welcome our emotions and those of others, never suppress them. Researchers Sheila Heen and Douglas Stone note that each of us has our own emotional baseline, our own emotional swing and our own emotional recovery time. We can vary as much as 3000 percent in terms of how long it takes us to return to baseline. Ann calls this our unique “Emotional Fingerprint”

Don Miguel Ruiz’s Four Agreements:  
(That we need to make with ourselves)

- Be Impeccable with Your Word
- Don’t Take Anything Personally
  - Don’t Make Assumptions
  - Always Do Your Best

What am I afraid of?  
What are they afraid of?

# Conflict Styles

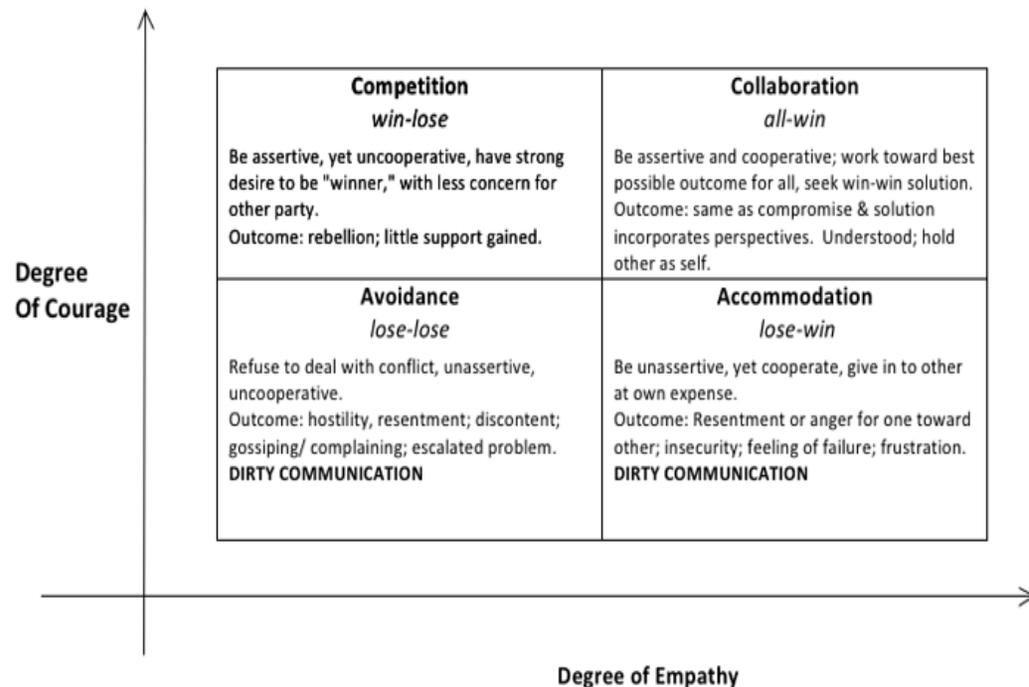
Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. However, they also noted that different styles were most useful in different situations.

- **Competitive:** People tend to take a firm stand and know what they want.
- **Collaborative:** People tend to try to meet the needs of all people involved.
- **Compromising:** People who tend to try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone.
- **Accommodating:** People are willing to meet the needs of others at the expense of their own needs.
- **Avoiding:** People seek to evade the conflict entirely.

Ask yourself:

What is your preferred style? When have I used different styles? What styles do I need to improve?

# Courage and Empathy



## Conflict Escalation

Cornelius and Faire, their book "Everyone Can Win": show the escalating steps that can happen when we do not manage conflict well.

- Uncomfortableness – you have an inner, intuitive feeling that something is going wrong with somebody or the group
- Incidents – You feel a little bit irritated by small things that involve somebody else, but you tend to forget them
- Misunderstandings – You don't understand somebody else's words or behavior. Communication is deficient and there is not clarity in people expectations.
- Tension – You feel tense each time you meet that person or that part of the group. There is an abundance of negative attitudes. Consciously or unconsciously people hurt each other.
- Crisis – Repressed emotions release. Violence can appear.

Research indicates that a typical manager loses 25% of the day responding to unhelpful conflict.

This is time lost to creative, productive work!

(Shay and Margaret McConnon, from their book "Conflict Management in the Workplace")

# Resolving Conflicts as Servant Leaders

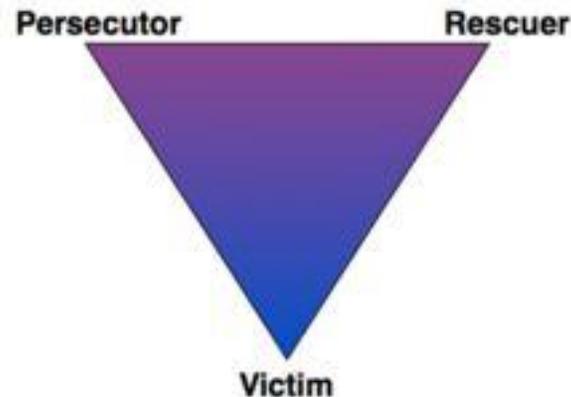
## Avoiding Triangulation

It's a natural pitfall of new leadership.

Murray Bowden, a professor from Georgetown coined the phrase “Triangulation” to describe when two persons in a conflicted relationship draw in a third person to ease the tensions or rally support.

The triangle consists of Victim, Villain and Rescuer. At different times in our lives, each of us has no doubt been in all of these roles.

Triangulation is not in keeping with the L'Arche value of Subsidiarity.



# Resolving Conflicts as Servant Leaders

## The Interest-Based Relational Approach

IBR respects individual differences while helping people avoid becoming too entrenched in a fixed position.

1. Make sure that **good relationships** are the first priority. Try to build mutual respect. Be courteous. Be kind.
2. Keep **people and problems separate**. You always love the person, if not their actions.
3. **Listen empathetically**. Be curious. Understand the other's viewpoint, even if you don't agree with it.
4. Clearly identify/agree on **what is the problem**
5. **Brainstorm possible solutions**. Be open to all ideas.
6. **Negotiate a solution**. Try for a win-win.



## Discussion

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Am I a good listener?
- Do I notice what around me I pay attention to?
- Am I curious about other people's truth?
- Do I consider the impact my intentions have on others?
- Do I practice the Principle of Charitable Interpretation?
- Do I tend to take things personally and make assumptions?
- What is my preferred style in dealing with conflict?
- Where do I fall on the Courage and Empathy spectrum?
- How much time have I lost due to conflict at work?
- Do I tend to get caught up in Triangulations?
- How can I grow in my approach to conflict resolution?

