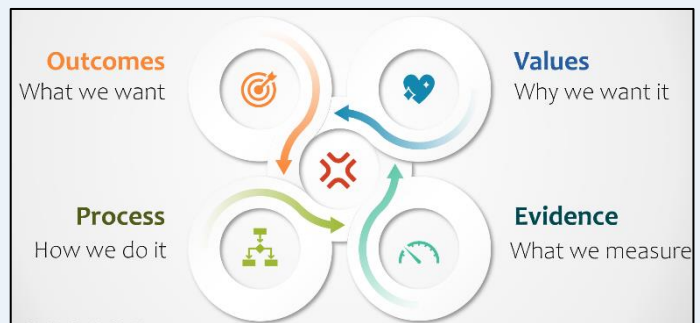


FOUR DOMAINS OF CONFLICT

Conflict happens when expectations don't match reality. This may be because they are:

- Unrealistic
- Poorly explained
- Misunderstood
- Unspoken
- We make assumptions

Navigating conflict is always easier when we're both playing in the same domain. The four domains are:



OUTCOMES – WHAT WE WANT

Many conflicts are about two or more sides who feel the other is preventing them from getting or keeping something they want. For example. One partner wants to hire someone. The other partner doesn't. An employee wants a raise; The employer says, 'No'. A supervisor assigns a new responsibility. The staff member chooses to ignore it. Someone is given responsibility for a project. The results are not up to the standards everyone expected. The difference between expected and actual outcomes is most often due to less than adequate communication. Instructions may not be clear or precise enough. Or assumptions are made without getting proper clarification first.

- What is it about this outcome that doesn't work for you?

PROCESS – HOW WE DO IT

Some conflicts are about how an outcome is to be achieved. A process to be followed, a system to use, a workflow already in place. It may also be about expectations of who should be included in discussions and decisions. Sometime the outcome is achieved, but the process used creates tension or disagreement. Sometimes people have a different way of operating that others are not used to or are uncomfortable with. Conflicts about process are a great opportunity to examine our systems and workflows to make sure we are doing things the most effective way possible.

- What is it about this process that you feel is not helpful or appropriate?

EVIDENCE – WHERE WE LOOK

Conflict can also arise from where we look for evidence to support our decisions and actions. If we are operating from faulty, incomplete or inaccurate data, we are less likely to achieve a suitable outcome or use an appropriate process. Sometimes the data is accurate and complete, but different parties interpret and understand the data in different ways. Conflict allows us to question our evidence and make sure we take into account what is relevant and useful (and disregard what isn't).

- What evidence is giving you this perspective? What else might be important to consider?

VALUES – WHY WE WANT IT

All of us have an internal value set that drives our actions and decisions. Some people have a very high value on punctuality, others have a more relaxed attitude towards timeliness. For some, keeping their workspace well organised and tidy at all times is important. Others may have a much higher tolerance for disorder and are happy to get everything done then tidy up later when they have time. Some may be motivated by achievement and success. Others may be more interested in making sure everyone feels included and supported. Conflict helps us uncover values that we didn't know were important for ourselves or other people.

- Why is this important for you?

Bruce Williams