



The Hidden Gems of Conflict

A LinkedIn Live Office Hours Event



Conflict is not the real problem: Mismanagement is. Seeing conflict as a problem, builds invisible structures, (mindsets, narratives, emotions, and desires) that contribute to mismanagement such as avoiding and appeasing. To flip the switch, leaders can shift perspective and see conflict, not as a problem to avoid but a hidden gem to explore. Click the video icon to the right to access the corresponding video.



Gem #1 Conflict Can Transform Anger

Unresolved conflict triggers anger, and [anger](#) inhibits the ability to think from the pre-frontal cortex, the executive brain. When anger catches you off guard, it's easy to become overwhelmed, lash out or react destructively. Anger and conflict are so intertwined that avoiding red flags becomes a coping mechanism. Eventually red flags become the elephant in the room that inhibits productivity, effectiveness, and personal happiness.

What to do

- Recognize anger as energy that wants to move.
- Accept the feelings as they process through your body.
- Don't act on impulse.
- Don't suppress.
- Calm yourself.
- Make a plan.

Questions to ask

1. What boundaries have been crossed?
2. What expectation has not been met?
3. What anger response behavior do I want to change?



Gem #2 Conflict Can Inspire Change

Unresolved conflicts always produce patterns. Negative patterns signal unresolved conflict, which leads to team dysfunction. For example, “I’ve told ‘em a thousand times!” Or an employee continues to miss deadlines even after coaching.

What to do

- Recognize patterns that cause bottlenecks.
- Understand that the behavior allowed becomes a standard.
- People do what you allow.
- Recognize dysfunctional patterns as the inspiration for change.

Questions to ask

1. What’s happening repeatedly that should not be happening?
2. What is this dysfunctional pattern trying to tell me?
3. What change do I need to make to shift the pattern?



Gem #3 Conflict Can Help You to Prioritize Clarity

In all drama there’s always a lack of clarity. When we are in drama, we forget about what’s most important. We stop focusing on the mission, vision, values, and desired end result. We prioritize winning, being right and stroking the ego.

What to do

- Observe the quality of the conversation and behaviors of everyone involved.
- Blame is a sign clarity has been lost.
- Disrespect is a signal that ego has taken the place of clarity.

Questions to ask

1. Does this conversation support our vision, mission and values?
2. Where have lower priorities replaced higher priorities?
3. As a leader how can I use clarity for course-correction?



Gem #4 Conflict is an Opportunity to Grow Personally

Reading a book or attending a workshop doesn't mean you'll never mismanage conflict. Conflict presents an opportunity for inner growth. The inner game is about self-awareness, reflection, emotional integrity, and a commitment to living from your highest values. You'll never get a certificate or an award for working on your inner game. Winning the inner game is a commitment to your own development.

What to do

- Name the circumstance where you have the most conflict.
- Identify one person with whom you have ongoing conflict.
- Notice your desire to win or be right.
- Pay attention to your urge to fight or freeze.

Questions to ask

1. Am I willing to take full responsibility for resolving conflicts?
2. Do I use coping mechanisms to change the other person?
3. Where do I have knowledge, but lack courage?
4. Could I teach conflict management skills to my direct reports?

Bonus

Get out of your comfort Zone.

1. What am I telling myself when I'm in conflict?
2. What one small step can I take to increase my capacity?
3. How would I lead if I had courage?

Self-regulation is goal.

Changing your narrative and interpretation is the key.



Marlene Chism works with leaders and their teams to create drama-free cultures that drive growth and reduce costly mistakes. Marlene is known for helping managers address “*the elephant in the room*” and initiate conversations that get results.

Marlene is a recognized expert on the LinkedIn learning platform, producing five educational video series on topics that include anger management, working with high conflict people, and having difficult conversations.

She has a degree in Communications, a master’s in human resources development, and she’s an advanced practitioner in Narrative Coaching.

Her most recent book, *From Conflict to Courage* was nominated for an international award in the category of **Learning Impact** by getAbstract.



Services

Services include consulting, coaching, virtual and onsite training.

To set up an exploratory email marlene@marlenechism.com

Sign up for resources at www.marlenechism.com

Learning

Follow Marlene on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/in/marlenechism) to get notifications of future live programs.