Improving Interpersonal Relationships

Chapter 7
**Chapter Goal**

- Incorporate appropriate and productive ways of managing conflict in our interpersonal relationships.

**Communication Climate**

- Defined:
  - Confirming messages - lead to a warm/positive climate
    - Recognition
    - Acknowledgment
    - Endorsement
  - Disconfirming messages

**How Comm. Climate Develops**

- Perpetuating spiral
  - Escalatory conflict spirals
  - De-escalatory conflict spirals
Gibb’s Approach to a Warm Comm. Climate

- Defensive Behaviors
  - Evaluation
  - Control
  - Strategy
  - Neutrality
  - Superiority
  - Certainty

- Supportive Behaviors
  - Descriptive
  - Problem Orientation
  - Spontaneity
  - Empathy
  - Equality
  - Provisionalism

Conflict Defined
- Expressed struggle
- Interdependence
- Perceived incompatible goals
- Perceived scarce resources

Types of Conflict
- Goals to be pursued
- Allocation of resources
- Decisions to be made
- Behaviors that are considered appropriate by only one partner
- Psychological/Relational
- Values

Which is the hardest type of conflict to solve???
Styles of Expressing Conflict
- Nonassertion
- Direct Aggression
- Passive Aggression
- Indirect Communication
- Assertion

Steps to an Assertive Message
1. Behavioral description
2. Your interpretation of the other person's behavior
3. A description of your feelings
4. A description of the consequences
   - What happens to you, the speaker
   - What happens to the listener
   - What happens to others
5. A statement of your Intentions
   - Where you stand on an issue
   - Request of other
   - Descriptions of how you plan to act in the future

Methods of Conflict Resolution
- Win-Lose
- Lose/Lose
- Compromise
- Win/Win
COMMUNICATION CLIMATE:

DEFENSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE MESSAGE BEHAVIORS

A supportive communication climate encourages open, constructive, honest and effective interaction. A defensive climate, on the other hand, leads to competitive and destructive conflict. The competent communicator strives to maintain a supportive communication climate.

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<th>DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORS</th>
<th>SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORS</th>
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<td><strong>Evaluative:</strong> The evaluative message is engulfed in judgment. The message can be blatantly evaluative or can carry nonverbal overtones of judgment. &quot;When are you going to start coming to the meetings prepared?&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Descriptive:</strong> Descriptive messages are clear and specific assertions. The creator of descriptive messages strives to avoid loaded words and is aware of nonverbal cues. &quot;Mary, I noticed you have not had the status reports prepared for the last two staff meetings.&quot;</td>
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<td><strong>Control:</strong> Control messages are not honest attempts to persuade, but rather, attempts to impose one's will on others by coercion or manipulation? &quot;If we knew what we were doing, we would...&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Problem Orientation:</strong> This message poses an invitation to the group to work together on finding a solution to a mutual problem. This approach focuses on the issues. “Okay, here’s the problem, let’s discuss the options.”</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy:</strong> Strategic messages convey an air of deceiving, or misleading. Although the receiver's perception plays a central role, speakers should attempt to avoid producing strategic messages. “Isn't 9:00 a.m. a little late to be coming in?”</td>
<td><strong>Spontaneity:</strong> Spontaneous messages are characterized by openness and honesty. This forthright message indicates that the speaker's contribution is unplanned and free of ulterior motives. “I think you need to come in at 8:00 a.m.”</td>
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<td><strong>Neutrality:</strong> The neutral message demonstrates a lack of empathy or interestedness. &quot;I don't care what the group decides.&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Empathy:</strong> The empathetic message is responsive to others' feelings and thoughts. It conveys understanding and interest. “I know it's a tough decision. I'm fine either way.”</td>
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<td><strong>Superiority:</strong> These messages not only attempt to portray the speaker as superior but also imply the inferiority or inadequacy of the listener. These messages also discourage interaction since the speakers is indicating a lack of desire for input or feedback.</td>
<td><strong>Equality:</strong> These messages indicate worth in the other and in others' contributions. An equality message asks for others' input and follows up with confirmation or clarification of others' comments.</td>
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<td><strong>Certainty:</strong> Certainty messages portray something as an absolute. The creator of these messages sees the world in black and white, and believes to have a corner on the reality market. “We don’t need to review the report. It’s fine.”</td>
<td><strong>Provisionalism:</strong> The provisional message poses a point of view, but with an open attitude. This is an invitation to investigate or explore alternatives. “We have reviewed the report numerous times. I’m not sure we have time to review it again.”</td>
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### Chapter 7 - Communication Climate Exercise

**Directions:** Label the following statements as evaluation, certainty, control, neutrality, strategy, or superiority. After doing that, rephrase **three** of the statements so that they are descriptive, provisional, problem oriented, empathetic, spontaneous or equal.

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<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>Laura, turn that radio off! Nobody can study with all that noise!</td>
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<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>In response to a team member making a suggestion on process improvement, John says, “I remember when I used to think that.”</td>
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<td><strong>3.</strong></td>
<td>Friend to friend - “I don’t want to get involved in your disagreement with your mom.”</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td>Supervisor to employee - “The work you turned in yesterday was sloppy.”</td>
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<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td>When asking the lead investigator Paul whether the new guy, Jason, should accompany him on this inspection, Paul replies with, “It doesn’t matter.”</td>
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<td><strong>6.</strong></td>
<td>“That idea will never work.”</td>
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<td><strong>7.</strong></td>
<td>“You think you know how to handle the situation, but you really don’t have the experience. I know when something’s over your head.”</td>
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<td><strong>8.</strong></td>
<td>Spouse talking to spouse - “Terry, it’s not that big of a deal. You’re acting like a kid.”</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong></td>
<td>“Switching apartments before your lease is up is a stupid idea.”</td>
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<td><strong>10.</strong></td>
<td>Co-worker to co-worker: “Don’t you owe me a favor from when I worked late for you last month so you could leave early on Friday?”</td>
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Chapter 7 – Interpersonal Relationships & How To Manage Conflict Scenarios

I. Review your assigned scenario
II. Identify the type of conflict involved (goal/resources/decision, etc)
III. Re-write the statements using the 5 steps of an assertive message

1. You’re late again. You’re always late. Your lateness is so inconsiderate of my time and my interests. What is wrong with you?

2. I just can’t bear another weekend of sitting home watching television. You never want to do anything. I’m just not going to do that again and that’s final.

3. Guess who forgot to phone for reservations again? Don’t you remember anything?

4. You can’t possibly go out with Pat. We’re your parents and we simply won’t allow it. We don’t want to hear any more about it. Stop asking. Sneaking out of the house was a dumb thing to do

5. I’ve been watching my neighbor’s dog for her when she travels all the time now. She never says “Thank you.” Now, she doesn’t even ask me if I want to watch the dog she just drops the dog off in my yard. She’s gone too far now.

6. My ex-roommate owes me $650 from deposit fees that I didn’t get back because her dog damaged the apartment. I’ve asked about it a couple of times now but she doesn’t seem too concerned about getting me my money. I know she’s been out of a job for a while, but I need the money too now.