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Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable

It is estimated that the average manager spends in excess of 40% of their time dealing with conflict in the workplace.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: We will cover . . .

- Definitions of Conflict
- Causes of Conflict
- How Conflict impacts day-to-day decisions
- How corporate culture, business atmosphere, personal experiences influence these decisions.
- Behaviors exhibited during Conflict
- Shifting from Destructive Conflict to Productive Conflict

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable

1. Introduce yourself to the person next to you.
2. Explain to them—*What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about conflict?*
 - Arguing?
 - Compromising?
 - Hurt feelings?
 - Gossiping?
 - Other?
 - Or . . . A colleague taking ownership for their mistakes?
3. Do you focus on Victory? Feelings? Consensus? Logic?

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Definitions

- Conflict—A Difference of Opinions Involving Strong Emotions.
- Conflict contains both destructive AND productive behaviors.
- From brief, explosive disputes to subtle, long lasting issues.
- Conflict is inevitable.
- Influenced by many factors.
- It is within your control.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Causes

- Personality differences.
- Workplace behaviors regarded by some co-workers as irritating.
- Unmet needs in the workplace.
- Perceived inequities of resources (human, financial, technological, time).
- Unclear roles in the workplace.
- Competing job duties or poor implementation of a job description—for example, placing a nonsupervisory employee in an unofficial position of "supervising" another employee.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Causes

- A systemic circumstance such as a workforce slowdown, a merger or acquisition, or a reduction in force.
- Mis-management of organizational change and/or transition.
- Poor communication, including misunderstood remarks and comments taken out of context.
- Differences over work methods or goals or differences in perspectives attributable to age, sex or upbringing.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Causes/Consequences

- 1998—25% of employees report being treated rudely at work.
- 2011—55%
- 2016—62% . . . Why the change?
- 85 percent of employees deal with conflict on some level
- 29 percent of employees deal with it almost constantly
- 34 percent of conflict occurs among front-line employees
- 12 percent of employees say they frequently witness conflict among the senior team
- 49 percent of conflict is a result of personality clashes and “warring egos”

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Causes/Consequences

- 34 percent of conflict is caused by stress in the workplace
- 33 percent of conflict is caused by heavy workloads
- 27 percent of employees have witnessed conflicts leading to personal attacks
- 25 percent of employees have seen conflict result in sickness or absence
- 9 percent have seen workplace conflict cause a project to fail

Conflict and Ethical Decisions:

It's Inevitable: Impact on day-to day decisions

- The Conference Board reports that 53 percent of Americans are currently unhappy at work. Consider that for a moment. Half of the workforce is unhappy.
- Global Studies reveal that 79 percent of people who quit their jobs cite 'lack of appreciation' as their reason for leaving. People don't leave companies. They leave bosses.
- A Harvard Business Review survey reveals 58 percent of people say they trust strangers more than their own boss.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions:

It's Inevitable: Impact on day-to-day decisions

- 89% of bosses believe employees quit because they want more money.
- (It's actually 12%).
- A recent study by CareerBuilder.com shows that 58 percent of managers said they didn't receive any management training.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- Dr. Stephen R. Covey, The 8th Habit.
 - 37% of employees have a clear understanding of what their organization is trying to achieve and why.
 - 15% felt they worked in a “high trust” environment.
 - 10% felt that their organization holds people accountable for results.
 - 13% have high trust, highly cooperative working relationships with other departments.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- If a soccer team (11 players) had these same scores . . .
 - Only 4 out of 11 would know which goal is theirs.
 - Only 2 out of 11 would care.
 - Only 2 out of 11 would know what position they play and know exactly what they are supposed to do.
 - 9 out of 11 would be competing, in some way, against their own team members rather than the opponent.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- Patrick Lencioni: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team
 - The Absence of Trust
 - Fear of Conflict
 - Lack of Commitment
 - Avoidance of Accountability
 - Inattention to Results



Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- Marcus Buckingham, “First, Break all the Rules—What the World’s Greatest Manager’s Do Differently”
- 26% Engaged—loyal and productive.
- 55% Disengaged—just putting in time.
- 19% Actively disengaged—spreading discontent.
 - I know what is expected of me at work.*
 - I have the resources to do what is expected of me at work.*

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- We can see that being able to engage in productive conflict is important to team/organizational success. They why do teams/organizations have so much trouble with conflict?
- On a scale of 1-10 (10 being high) how would you rate your own comfort level with conflict?
- What factors in your culture and experience might have affected the way you feel about conflict?

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable Corporate Culture, Business Atmosphere, Personal Experiences

- Personal Histories Exercise:
 - Where did you grow up?
 - How many siblings do you have? Where do you fall in the order?
 - What was the most difficult, important, or unique challenge of your childhood—of being a kid?

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Destructive Behaviors Exhibited During Conflict

- Arguing
- Belittling
- Caving in
- Defensiveness
- Dismissing others' opinion
- Becoming overly dramatic
- Exaggerating the problem
- Finger pointing/blaming/scapegoating
- Gossiping
- Becoming hypercritical
- Over powering
- Passive-aggressive
- Revenge/evening the score
- Sabotage
- Sarcasm
- Stonewalling

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Behaviors Exhibited During Conflict

- Think of a conflict situation that you dealt with in the past 24 hours.
 - How did you handle it?
 - Which of these behaviors did you use?
 - What was the result?

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Shifting from **Destructive** Conflict to **Productive** Conflict

- Acknowledge your emotions and how they might influence your judgement.
- During conflict, our emotions, often times, cloud our perspective and hinder our ability to make healthy decisions.
- Many of our emotions fall into two broad categories:
 - Anger: frustration, resentment, outrage, aggression.
 - Anxiety: fear, panic, worry, upheaval, disorientation.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It's Inevitable: Shifting from **Destructive** Conflict to
Productive Conflict

Destructive Tendencies

- Insensitivity, impatient, create “win-lose” situations, refuse to bend, over power others.

Productive Tendencies

- Straightforward with opinions, acknowledge tough issues, willingness to have objective debates.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions:
It's Inevitable: *Shifting from **Destructive** Conflict to
Productive Conflict*

Destructive Tendencies

- Become overly emotional, talk over others, impulsive, gloss over tension, make personal attacks.

Productive Tendencies

- Communicate empathy, encourage open dialogue, provide reassurance, verbalize emotions.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions:

It's Inevitable: *Shifting from **Destructive** Conflict to **Productive** Conflict*

Destructive Tendencies

- Withdraw, give in to please others, ignore problems, let issues simmer beneath the surface, avoid tension.

Productive Tendencies

- Show flexibility, look out for other people's feelings, communicate tactfully, listen to others, find compromises.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions:

It's Inevitable: *Shifting from **Destructive** Conflict to **Productive** Conflict*

Destructive Tendencies

- Defensiveness, use passive-aggressive tactics, become overly critical, isolate yourself, over analyze the situation.

Productive Tendencies

- Find the root cause of the problem, sort out all of the issues, give people space, focus on the facts.

Conflict and Ethical Decisions: It's Inevitable: Ethics

- The branch of philosophy that deals with morality. **Ethics** is concerned with distinguishing between good and evil in the world, between right and wrong human actions, and between virtuous and nonvirtuous characteristics of people.
 - A set of principles of right conduct.
 - A theory or a system of moral values.

Thank you!

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