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The Easy to Cook Five Step Frustration Dissolving Recipe

INGREDIENTS

Before we start this journey, we need to deal with the elephant in the room. How does a bean counting CPA get to pontificate about a soft skill like de-escalating crisis or turning a frustrated owner, director, vendor, colleague, etc. into a rational supportive ally? Well, it is a long story and a long journey. Here is the short version.

Since I was already a CPA licensee when I attended graduate school to earn my MBA, I focused my attention on the leadership and decision sciences which began my journey into the communications arts and sciences. After graduate school I embarked on several corporate ventures – Senior Management Consultant in a national CPA firm, Senior Vice President of a bay area regional bank, etc. And, of course, the last 40 plus years in the CID world. All leadership positions that required both subject matter expertise and the ability to implement change.

RECIPE

DIRECTIONS



Here is what I learned:

- “Smart” skills are must have “Permission to Play” skills
- “Healthy” leadership and soft skills make things happen
- Either skill set by itself is useless. You need both.

I have spent a good part of the last 50 years on a quest to learn about and master these “soft” leadership and organizational healthy skills. It is a quest and I fail often.

Today I dipped into my tool kit and pulled out a technique authored by Dr. JM Perry, board-certified psychotherapist, designed to reduce frustration and, perhaps, produce a productive new path forward. I will, also, sprinkle in a few other of my own Yoda like words of wisdom.

The academic and practical sources of this commentary are cited at the end. I heartily recommend you add those cited sources to your **Leadership Library**. Obtain them. Read them. Learn them. Integrate their teachings into your life as if your emotional health and leadership success depends upon it. Because, they do.

On the surface, the stuff we are going to explore here appears simple. However, do not be fooled. The actual learning and integrating it into who you are and how you operate will prove daunting. Moreover, all we can expect to achieve with these tools is to improve our batting average. There will always be the impossible individual or group. They require more industrial strength solutions than presented here.

One more scene setting item and we will get started.

I have a core belief that most people do not do well with interpersonal conflict, not because they don't care. They simply don't know how. They tend to operate at either end of the conflict continuum –**War** on one end and **Artificial Harmony** on the other. Community Managers and directors tend to seek Artificial Harmony:

- **Can't we all just get along?**
- **Don't anybody raise their voice!**
- **Play well with others.**

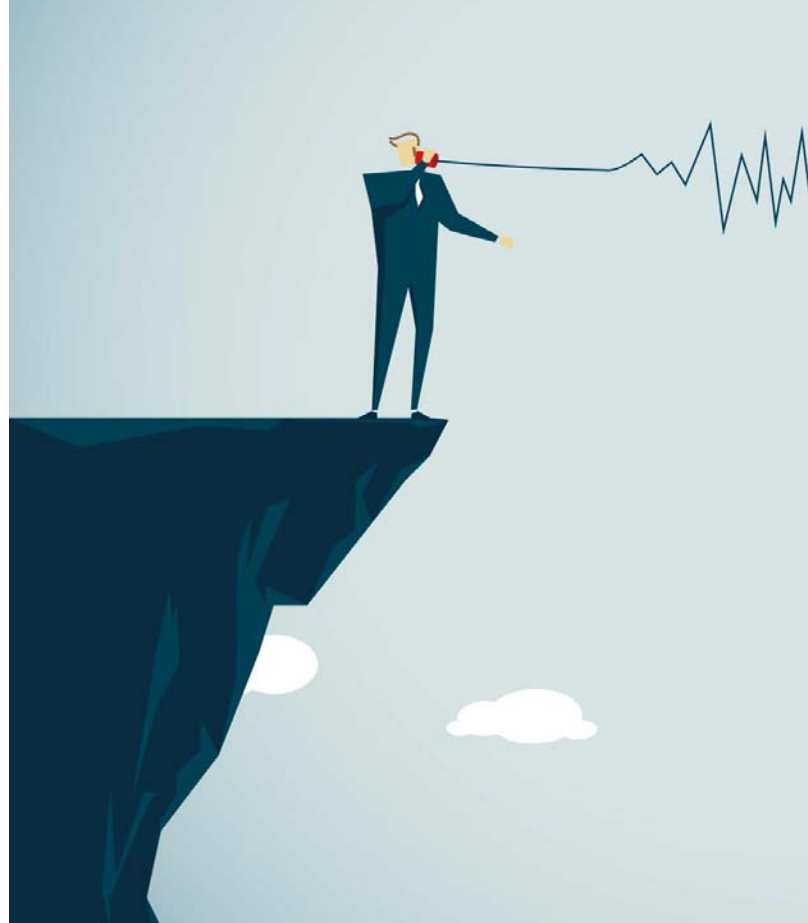
I suggest to you that both extremes are dysfunctional and ineffective strategies. Whereas, somewhere in the middles lies **Productive Conflict** as a functional and effective strategy. My life experience suggests that - **nothing changes or improves without some type of conflict**. Learn how to engage in and lead organizations using productive conflict skills and your functional, emotional, and organizational health will thrive.

Here is an all too familiar exchange I hear out there between community managers (CM) and the frustrated owner (FO).

FO: “I am mad as h#!* about XXXX and what are you going to do about it?” This rant may go on for a while.

CM: (Who has heard this issue a thousand times and can hardly wait and may not wait for FO to shut up so the CM can tell the FO the gospel according to the CM), replies with – “The CCRs state...; The rule is...; We sent you multiple notices about...; Your idea (thought, solution, etc.) is crazy” and/or offers some other “facts”, “information”, or passive aggressive responses that invalidates the FO's position or person.

This cycle repeats in some form or another



The Recipe-The

» Step 1 - ASK:

Seek first to understand. “Why” is a **bristle** word. It must be repackaged.

- What is it about that (concept, belief, idea, position, notion, etc.) that you found attractive?
- How is it that you chose to do that (action)?
- Because (back end) If I understand you correctly,
- Additional (Front End) Tell me about...Help me understand...
- What are your thoughts? The perfect open-ended question

» Step 2 - LISTEN:

Listen and play back what you think they said

- Let me see if I got that right.....is that right?
- What I hear you saying isis that accurate?
- So, if I understand you is that correct?

» Step 3 - EMPATHIZE and/or REINFORCE:

- Empathize: If I were in your shoes, I can see what that would be like. I can certainly see why that is so important to you. I can see why you are so bothered. That outcome surprised you. Living in an HOA is filled with rules, isn't it?
- Reinforce: I see how that makes sense to you. I think you are right on track. That is brilliant



One Page Summary

» Step 4 - REPEAT STEPS 1 THRU 3:

Until you get permission to problem solve.

- Are we ready to see if we can resolve this issue?
- How would you like to proceed?
- Is there anything else about this situation that troubles you?
- Would you be open to hearing what it looks from my side?

» Step 5 - STEER:

- Option 1: (5% successful) You receive permission to give them the gospel according to you.
- Option 2: (75% successful) Pull for their conclusions
 - i. One solution – I have an idea...
 - ii. Three options – preferred option last
- Option 3: (20% successful) Pull for multiple options. What might be some options we could consider here that could improve things?

Follow this recipe and you will start to see your outcomes improve.



So, now I am going to give you the gospel according to me. Find a “Pull” buddy or form a “Pull” group. Practice it with your buddy or group using some recent frustrating events for role-playing sessions. Contact me if you want to learn more about the process. My absolute money back guarantee is that if you learn this process and integrate it into your everyday life, you will dramatically reduce both yours and others frustration index and improve your outcomes.

To make this process work, you will need to change your underlying assumption about the “other.” The other may be unaware about some rule and is (usually) not irrational, uneducated, or sick. They are making the best choices from those of which they are aware. Your job is to enlarge their awareness and let them have your way by running Perry’s Five Step Recipe.

There is wide and deep pool of leadership concepts, tools and techniques out there. Besides the Perry stuff, here is your beginning **Leadership Library**.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Covey. An oldy but goody.

Principle Centered Leadership, Covey. His follow up book.

Getting to Yes. Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, Fisher & Ury. Don’t leave home without it.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, Lencioni. Best articulation of the problem and cure I have seen.

The Advantage. Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business, Lencioni. Forget mission vision. These concepts and techniques change the game.
Crucial Conversations. Patterson, Grenny, etc. Perry on steroids.

Finally, web search “Problem Resolution Templates.” Find one that works for you. After you get permission to solve the problem, master and use a proven technique. When you master these words of wisdom, get back to me and I will get you the upper division stuff. 🏠



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