Peacemaking

A Biblical Model for Resolving Conflict and Restoring Relationships for Clinicians and Ministries

Dr. Janeen Davis, PsyD, MFT

Purpose & Peace Solutions

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Learning Objectives

▶ Analyze a relational conflict based on endogenous theories and reframe the offense according to individualized expectations

▶ Describe and employ research-based techniques that promote increased agency, self-reflection, forgiveness, and conflict resolution in faith-based clients

▶ Evaluate conflict-generating expectations using criteria that promote an internal locus of control

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Defining Conflict

At its essence, conflict is a _____ problem.

Differences become relational problems when _____

We're often not fighting about what we THINK we're fighting about.

Theories of Conflict Etiology

Exogenous

▶ Task, Process, Relational, Cultural

▶ Power balance, resource control

▶ Goal dissonance, social exchange

▶ Communication styles

▶ Interpersonal Dynamics

Endogenous

▶ Schemas and expectations

▶ Perceptions of threat

▶ Moral Intuition

▶ Rumination and negative affect

▶ Motive attributions

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Research on conflict has often been guided by sociological interests about differences between cultural and societal norms, or about differing ways that groups perceive and resolve disagreements (Bar-Tal, 2019; Corey et al., 2014; DiFonzo et al., 2020; Shapiro et al., 2019).

As intimacy and interdependence in a relationship increase, so too does the potential potency of topical disagreements (Botsford et al., 2019; Choi & Murdock, 2017; Crenshaw et al., 2020; Curran & Allen, 2017; Grover et al., 2019; Handley et al., 2019; Hawkins et al., 2019; Kuster et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016; Luginbuehl & Schoebi, 2020; Roberson et al., 2018; Scharp & Curran, 2018; Scher et al., 2017). Some prominent topics where expectations are often unmet or unequal include shared finances, parenting practices, domestic responsibilities, gender roles, jealousy provocation, relationship equity and power, sexual intimacy, quality time, and perceived bad habits (Overall & McNulty, 2017). These topics all contribute to the quality of life, interpersonal dynamics, and behavioral norms of family units, making them powerful conflict catalysts when interdependent parties have incompatible convictions.

Some of the more consistent catalysts for conflict have been identified as particular types of communication: shouts, insults, threats, rejection, disapproval, belittlement, disparagement, criticism, sarcasm, and crude or undermining remarks (Keser et al., 2020; Rockett et al., 2017). The degree of conformity expected during conversations is largely determined by family-of-origin norms, and parties influenced by high–conformity family values tend to interpret

differing opinions and stressful interactions as threatening and hurtful (Curran & Allen, 2017).

Exogenous conflict catalysts cannot trigger SIRCs without an endogenous, intermediary filtering process (Haj & Miller, 2018). When an undesirable or painful interaction occurs, cognitive filters rapidly process the circumstantial details, preexisting beliefs about the other party, and expectations unique to that relationship (Spaulding, 2018). Automatically generated perceptions can trigger rapid feelings of offense or can defuse the moment by framing interactions as non-offensive (Clark & Winegard, 2020; Smeijers et al., 2020). Conflict does not necessarily stem from rational evaluations, but from affect–driven oversimplifications of what opposing parties represent in the pursuit of personal goals (Heltzel & Laurin, 2020; O'Doherty et al., 2017; Rinker & Lawler, 2018; Tappin et al., 2020).

Existing literature identifies myriad endogenous mechanisms of perception, interpretation, attribution, and meaning-making by which the external world is filtered and interpreted to generate self-motivated perceptions and recollections (Carlucci et al., 2018; Önal & Yalçın, 2017; Vanderveren et al., 2017). Perceptions determine the meaning, relevance, and implications of lived experiences, newly acquired information, endogenous contemplations, remembered and relived events, and anticipated or imagined future events (Kunzmann et al., 2017; Rubin et al., 2019). As Vranić and Tonkovic (2017) made clear, perceptions are strongly influenced by schematic expectations and momentary moods. Memory retrieval involves a conglomeration of past and present neurological patterns, motivations, perceptions, and emotions, and as a result, both the present endogenous state and the encoded memories are slightly modified each time they are actively remembered (Reiheld, 2018).

Task, Process, Relational, Cultural. Common conflict classifications of task, relationship, or cultural (Brett, 2018; Corey et al., 2014; Kozusznik et al., 2020; Mauersberger et al., 2018; Su et al., 2015; You et al., 2019). Interpersonal conflicts are most commonly described as either task– or relationship–oriented, and these distinctions are sometimes expanded to include nuanced variations of process, procedure, identity, or status (Ayoko, 2016; Brett, 2018; Clark et al., 2020; DiFonzo et al., 2020; Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017; Kozusznik et al., 2020; Semerci, 2019; You et al., 2019; Zhang & Wei, 2017). Cultural values have a functional effect wherein group members are conditioned to understand, expect, and prefer specific behaviors (Corey et al., 2014). These values produce distinct, implicit social rules that determine how individuals should respond to conflict, uncertainty, gender roles, and authority.

Power Balance, Resource Control. Relationships with greater intimacy, vulnerability, and interdependence are far more susceptible to opportunities for conflict. As intimacy and interdependence in a relationship increase, so too does the potential potency of topical disagreements (Botsford et al., 2019; Choi & Murdock, 2017; Crenshaw et al., 2020; Curran & Allen, 2017; Grover et al., 2019; Handley et al., 2019; Hawkins et al., 2019; Kuster et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016; Luginbuehl & Schoebi, 2020; Roberson et al., 2018; Scharp & Curran, 2018; Scher et al., 2017). The concept of *power* in relationships has been considered from many different directions. Individuals can possess varying levels of power derived from positional authority and hierarchy, disposition and charisma, social standing and reputation, or control and influence over resources.

Goal Dissonance, Social Exchange. Semerci (2019) drew upon theories of social and economic exchange to explain interpersonal conflict. When interdependent parties perceive one another symbolically, as a barrier, competition, opposition, or threat to highly valued goals, needs, wants, and objectives, the relational dynamic can become adversarial. In such cases, interactions may be reduced to a reciprocal cycle of negative behaviors, interpretations, and reactions (Brett, 2018; Rinker & Lawler, 2018; You et al., 2019). In cases of intense conflict, external differences in goals or preferences become relationally damaging when the parties identify one another as symbols of opposition (Shapiro et al., 2019). The concepts of tribalism and polarization signify attitudes of competition, where the goals of one party seem to directly threaten the goals of another, creating a zero–sum scenario (Clark & Winegard, 2020; Kearney, 2019; McCoy et al., 2018; Singh & Nayak, 2016).

Communication Styles. Some of the more consistent catalysts for conflict have been identified as particular types of communication: shouts, insults, threats, rejection, disapproval, belittlement, disparagement, criticism, sarcasm, and crude or undermining remarks (Keser et al., 2020; Rockett et al., 2017). The degree of conformity expected during conversations is largely determined by family-of-origin norms, and parties influenced by high–conformity family values tend to interpret differing opinions and stressful interactions as threatening and hurtful (Curran & Allen, 2017). Keser et al.'s (2020) research revealed that individuals who drew upon their own emotional well-being and healthy interpretations of conflict events were better able to tolerate communication comprising differing thoughts and values, self-disclosure, confrontation, or emotional expressiveness.

Interpersonal Dynamics. The relationship conflict label often indicates a negative change in interpersonal behavioral dynamics, observed through attitudes of reduced cooperation and tension (Parsons et al., 2020; Semerci, 2019; Witvliet, 2020). Interpersonal consequences of conflict comprise a spectrum of behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes, such as emotionally harsh language, demonstrations of negative attitudes, diminished relationship satisfaction, loss of trust, refusal to be vulnerable, unwillingness to seek reconciliation, loss of working partnerships, and total loss of the relationship (DiFonzo et al., 2020; Dunaetz & Greenham, 2018; Frawley & Harrison, 2016; Gordon & Chen, 2016; Webb et al., 2017; You et al., 2019).

Schemas and Expectations. Triggering topics are those in which parties' opinions, goals, and preferences have a mutual impact and are influenced by early childhood schemas about behaviors, values, and routines in daily life (Bar-Tal, 2019; Brännmark, 2017; Clark et al., 2020; Crenshaw et al., 2020; Hawkins et al., 2019; Parsons et al., 2020). Stereotypes influence expectations of and motivations attributed to others, based upon norms associated with their gender, age, religious affiliation, or leadership position (Grover et al., 2019; Heltzel & Laurin, 2020; Rinker & Lawler, 2018). Optimistic or pessimistic dispositions and default assumptions about the nature of life influence how individuals assign meaning to their experiences (Alkozei et al., 2018; Berzins et al., 2018; Gordon & Chen, 2016).

Perceptions of Threat. Sometimes opposition, dissonance, or competition between individuals is more a matter of perception than of objective reality. As Dunaetz and

Greenham's research (2018) clarified, interpersonal differences, prevention of goal attainment, and opposing concerns can be conflict catalysts created by fear, misperceptions, and incomplete information. Shapiro et al. (2019) provided a useful framework for this phenomenon, using the terminology of threats and counterthreats. Threats are determined by the perceptions, desires, strengths, and vulnerabilities of each party. Conflict does not necessarily stem from rational evaluations, but from affect–driven oversimplifications of what opposing parties represent in the pursuit of personal goals (Heltzel & Laurin, 2020; O'Doherty et al., 2017; Rinker & Lawler, 2018; Tappin et al., 2020). You et al. (2019) explained that a shift in thinking occurs when parties interpret task–oriented debates as personal attacks. Kozusznik et al. (2020) affirmed that perceived threats to personal identity transmuted task conflicts into more serious, damaging interactions with greater interpersonal consequences. Mauersberger et al. (2018) suggested that threats to fundamental human needs for social esteem induce emotions of hostility and distress, which give rise to strained and frictional interactions. Benitez et al. (2018) reasoned that individuals react this way when they perceive a threat to the most sensitive areas of their personal identity. The matters of value threatened by SIRCs are often intangible: they can include goals, opportunities, reputation, control, preference, autonomy, self-esteem, security, stability, confidence, acceptance, and pride (Kozusznik et al., 2020; Peterson et al., 2017). When an interaction seems to harm these conceptual values, it is perceived as morally wrong and signals a potential threat to matters of utmost value, such as moral identity, self-worth, innate personhood, self-schemas (Allemand & Flückiger, 2020; Brännmark, 2017; Farmer & Maister, 2017; Leder, 2017; Zahavi, 2020).

Moral Intuition. Moral and social conventions are clearly understood by children from an early age, and parents uniquely model, instruct, and enforce these interpersonal rules according to their own parenting style and cultural norms (Hawkins et al., 2019; O'Doherty et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2017). Once wrongdoing is judged to have occurred, the offended person will often form subjective, moral evaluations about the other party's motivations and about the importance of the rules that were violated (Adams, 2016). Social interactions related to SIRCs are often retroactively perceived through a self-defending and other–blaming moral framework (Haidt, 2001; Haidt & Joseph, 2008).

Rumination and Negative Affect. Keser et al. (2020) identified negative attribution and rumination as a distinct cognitive style that is predictive of stress, depressive symptoms, conflict, and negative evaluations of self, others, the present, and the future. In studies on conflicts in organizational settings, emotional outcomes of annoyance, animosity, anger, irritation, hostility, and distaste toward the other party were designated as definitive features of relationship conflicts (Alipour et al., 2018; Ayoko, 2016; Benitez et al., 2018; Kozusznik et al., 2020; You et al., 2019). Shapiro et al. (2019) observed that when parties became polarized, reactive emotions drove conflicts forward and created entrenchments that defied rational analysis. Rumination behaviors were consistently found to increase offense durability, feelings of anger, and perceived victimhood while also reducing empathy and forgiveness (da Silva et al., 2017; Siem & Barth, 2019; Witvliet, Root Luna, Vlisides-Henry, & Griffin, 2020).

Motive Attributions. Keser et al.'s (2020) research on conflict and communication addressed the critical impact of inference, attribution, and interpretation on both intrapersonal and

interpersonal well-being. Dissonance between intentions and behaviors may originate from low self-awareness about the way personal emotions and behaviors are experienced by others, or from self-righteous inclinations to judge others based only on the unwelcome effects of their behaviors, without considering their circumstances (Raimundo, 2020).

REFERENCES

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Conflict Comorbidities

▶ <u>Intrapersonal</u>: Direct and indirect correlations with mood and behavior disorders, such as depression, anxiety, anger, suicidality, problematic alcohol and substance use, and eating disorders

▶ <u>Physiological</u>: Elevated concentrations of cortisol, suppressed immune functioning, inflammation, fatigue, greater use of prescription medications, arthritis, osteoporosis, tumor formation, metabolic syndrome, higher blood pressure, modified neural patterns, and impaired neurovisceral regulation systems

▶ <u>Organizational</u>: Reduced employee wellness, individual job performance, departmental productivity, and overall organizational stability, profitability, and success

▶ <u>Interpersonal</u>: Damage to marital and family relationships, childhood development, Christian witness, and spiritual health

Consequences of **Unresolved Conflict** - not all conflict is harmful, but SIRC and unresolved conflict is associated with stress, relational instability, loss of social support, decreased perceived quality of life.

SIRCs are harmful stressors because they become ongoing, emotionally intense, defining characteristics of valued relationships that threaten matters of self-worth (Brett, 2018; Peterson et al., 2017), family stability (Scharp & Curran, 2018), job performance (Benitez et al., 2018), and psychological health (Curran & Allen, 2017). This is a problem of both clinical and societal significance because SIRC has a well-established negative relationship with nearly every aspect of life and well-being **(**Ilies et al., 2020; Keser et al., 2020; Roberson et al., 2018).

These types of ongoing relational problems not only harm individual mental health, but are known to damage the stability, longevity, productivity, and profitability of professional organizations (Ilies et al., 2020; Mroz & Allen, 2020). Previous research demonstrated significant direct and indirect relationships between SIRC and clinical problems with anger (Choi & Murdock, 2017), alcohol use (Rodriguez et al., 2019), self-esteem (Curran & Allen, 2017), depression (Roberson et al., 2018), subjective well-being (Alkozei et al., 2018), marital and family relationships (Sutton et al., 2017), family health (Scharp & Curran, 2018; Singh & Nayak, 2016), long-term medical issues (Allen et al., 2018), social attributions (Önal & Yalçın, 2017), employees and professional teams (Benitez et al., 2018), and organizational

culture (Rockett et al., 2017).

Witvliet's extensive research on this topic (Witvliet, 2020; Witvliet & Root Luna, 2018; Witvliet, Root Luna, Worthington, & Tsang, 2020; Witvliet, Wade, et al., 2020) has described conflict as a perceived violation of relational expectations for interpersonal behavior that activates painful cognitions, negative emotions, and psychophysiological stress.

Intrapersonal: Intrapersonal consequences of conflict include reduced information processing ability, inattention, internal distress, and low personal satisfaction (Adams, 2016; Alipour et al., 2018; Ayoko, 2016; Halilova et al., 2020; Siem & Barth, 2019; Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis & Schumann, 2018; You et al., 2019). Valued relationships are entrusted with the power to bolster well-being, which exposes a risk for serious harm if the trust is violated (Grover et al., 2019; Petersen & Le, 2017). Numerous studies have found a relationship between SIRCs and problematic drinking and substance use. Rodriguez et al. (2019) explained this as a maladaptive coping strategy for individuals unable to handle the negative emotions instigated by the construals and attributions that compose SIRCs. Numerous studies have identified connections between SIRCs and suicidal behaviors (Halilova et al., 2020). Depression and alcohol use were prevalent in cases of completed suicide and were both associated with SIRCs. Stulz et al. (2018) found that 68% of patients who attempted suicide described it as unplanned and impulsive, and 55% identified a SIRC as the trigger that prompted their action. Interpersonal conflict is associated with numerous disorders, including borderline personality disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, depression, substance usage disorders, and several forms of disordered impulse control (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Physiological: Numerous studies measured physiological reactions to SIRCs and conflict ruminations, which produced increased levels of proinflammatory cytokines, greater muscle activity, activated skin conductance, increased heart rate and blood pressure, slower heart rate recovery, and asymmetrical activity in the frontal brain (Allen et al., 2018; Bassett et al., 2018; da Silva et al., 2017; Prager et al., 2019; Witvliet, Root Luna, Vlisides-Henry, & Griffin, 2020; Witvliet, Root Luna, Worthington, & Tsang, 2020). The stress caused by SIRC exposure is responsible for immune system inflammation 15% above typical levels and is a risk marker for life-long problems with metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, premature aging, arthritis, tumor formation, and osteoporosis (Allen et al., 2018).
Studies on the cumulative effects of repeated or sustained SIRC stress revealed correlations with elevated concentrations of cortisol, suppressed immune functioning, inflammation, fatigue, greater use of prescription medications, premature aging, arthritis, osteoporosis, tumor formation, metabolic syndrome, higher blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, modified neural patterns, and impaired neurovisceral regulation systems (Alkozei et al., 2018; Allen et al., 2018; Baker et al., 2017; da Silva et al., 2017; Noreen & MacLeod, 2020; Witvliet, 2019). Researchers directly and indirectly linked conflict with various health effects, with results indicating that mortality rates were impacted when individuals lacked social support or withheld forgiveness (Alkozei et al., 2018; Prieto-Ursúa et al., 2018).

Organizational: Conflicts in the workplace can distract team members, reduce team

productivity and efficiency, harm overall team performance and outcomes, and threaten the entire organizational culture, performance, and stability (Alipour et al., 2018; Kozusznik et al., 2020; Su et al., 2015; You et al., 2019). Individuals who experienced SIRCs in the workplace were vulnerable to decreases in job satisfaction, cooperative and sharing behaviors, organizational commitment, performance, motivation, and productivity, and increases in complaints, turnover intentions, anger, rumor spreading, incivility, depression, anxiety, and perceptions of malice (Ayoko, 2016; DiFonzo et al., 2020; Gunkel et al., 2016; Ilies et al., 2020; Semerci, 2019; You et al., 2019).

Interpersonal: Social relationships have their own intrinsic value, and they also contribute to many aspects of personal well-being, physical health, stress, and mortality (Webb et al., 2017). Sutton et al. (2017) observed a clear link between negative couple interactions and increased depression in both spouses, and Roberson et al. (2018) posited that low marital quality leads to psychological distress and depression because important relational support is replaced by increased stress and hostility. When an individual causes harm in a valued relationship, emotions of regret, guilt, and shame can further damage the relationship (Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis & Schumann, 2018). Withdrawal behaviors were associated with depression in husbands and feelings of distance and dissatisfaction in wives (Parsons et al., 2020; Prager et al., 2019). Unforgiveness is another well-established effect of SIRCs that is associated with significant relational damage (Halilova et al., 2020; Ho et al., 2020; Jennings et al., 2016; McLaughlin et al., 2019; Stackhouse et al., 2018). Members of family systems with dysfunctional conflict management tended to experience lasting consequences that extended far beyond the original family conflicts, impacting their individual development and future relationships (Kuster et al., 2017; Marshall et al., 2019; Scharp & Curran, 2018). Research examines comorbidity between conflict and stability and well-being within marriage and family systems (Alkozei et al., 2018; Ripley et al., 2018). The relationship conflict label often indicates a negative change in interpersonal behavioral dynamics, observed through attitudes of reduced cooperation and tension (Parsons et al., 2020; Semerci, 2019; Witvliet, 2020). Interpersonal consequences of conflict comprise a spectrum of behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes, such as emotionally harsh language, demonstrations of negative attitudes, diminished relationship satisfaction, loss of trust, refusal to be vulnerable, unwillingness to seek reconciliation, loss of working partnerships, and total loss of the relationship (DiFonzo et al., 2020; Dunaetz & Greenham, 2018; Frawley & Harrison, 2016; Gordon & Chen, 2016; Webb et al., 2017; You et al., 2019).

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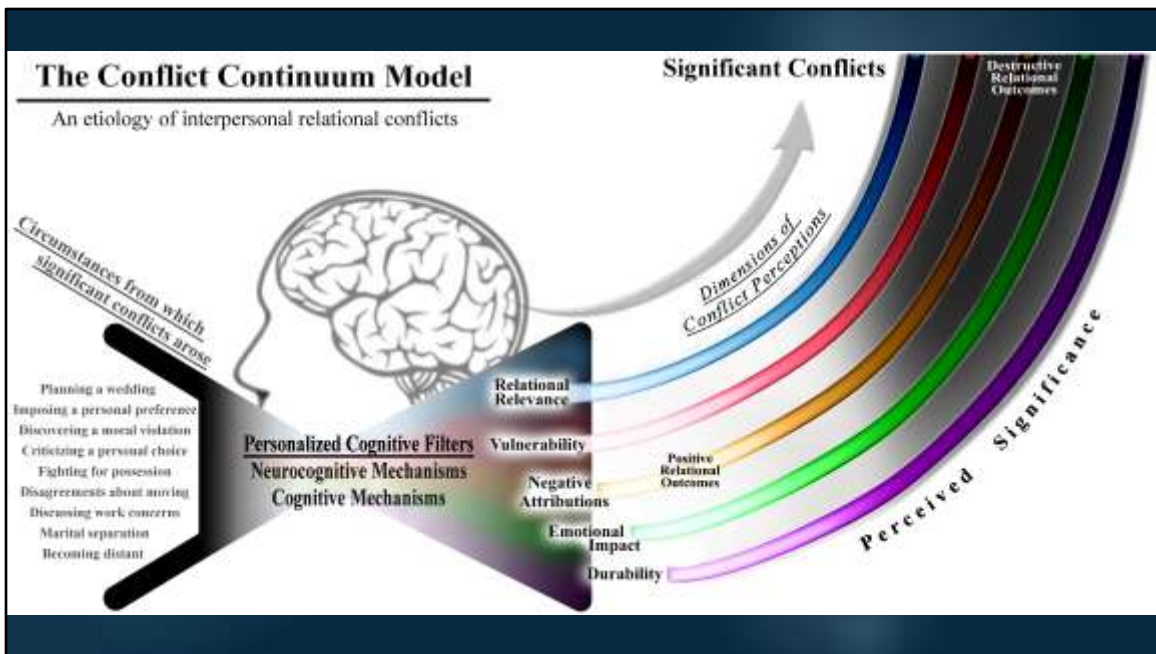Davis, J. K. (2021) *The conflict continuum: Multidimensional perceptions that generate and escalate interpersonal relational conflicts* (Publication No. 30246660) [Doctoral dissertation, California Southern University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
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The Essence of

Significant
Interpersonal
Relational
Conflict

A clash of any type within an important relationship that threatens a matter of personal value, leading us to perceive the other person as "the problem," making negative moral attributions about their character or motives, which generates unpleasant emotions, and a sense of gravity about the offense.

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In contrast to prominent descriptive, categorical models of conflict that orient toward external and interpersonal factors, the conflict continuum was constructed as a perception-oriented framework that depicted the essence of conflict as an endogenous process of interpreting and responding to external circumstances.

Literature on neurocognitive and cognitive mechanisms of perception, emotion, memory, interpretation, and judgment indicates that endogenous processes may impede accurate perceptions about the underlying cause and essence of an offense. The literature review in this study generated a conflict continuum that framed interpersonal relational conflicts as the product of multidimensional perceptions, which are determined by the PCFs through which conflicts are experienced and understood (Hackel et al., 2020; Javanbakht, 2019; Kensinger & Ford, 2020). Cognitive neuroscientists have produced a growing body of literature that

examines the nature, processes, and biases of perception (Baldassano et al., 2017; Farmer & Maister, 2017; Frankland & Greene, 2020; Hackel et al., 2020; Javanbakht, 2019; Kensinger & Ford, 2020; Nam, 2020).

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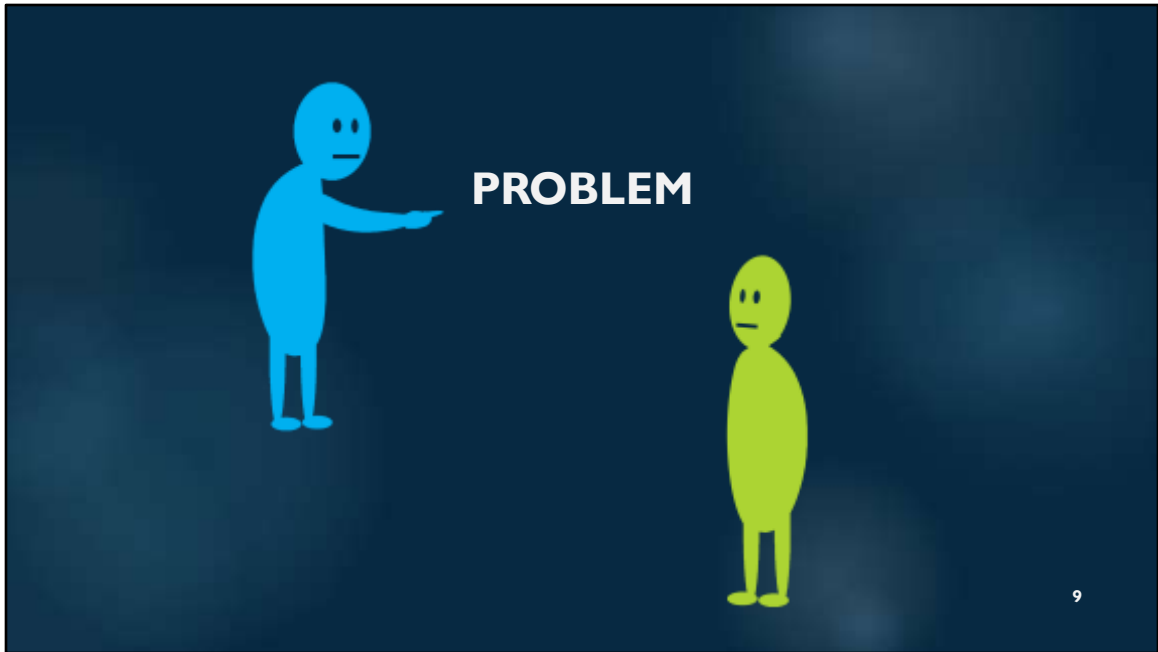
Problems escalate into relational conflicts when we start to think of the other person AS the problem.

Relational consequences occurred when parties viewed one another as the problem, rather than as partners addressing a problem together (Karaszewska et al., 2019).

Heltzel and Laurin (2020), Kozusznik et al. (2020), Moore-Berg, Hameiri, and Bruneau (2020), and You et al. (2019) all corroborated this lived experience with their observations of polarization and ingroup biases; American individuals and groups repeatedly and rapidly transformed content–based, cognitive disagreements into personalized, emotional, relational conflicts, through spirals of amplified reactions and misattributions about other parties. You et al. (2019) explained that a shift in thinking occurs when parties interpret task–oriented debates as personal attacks. When individuals assess the motives and intentions of another party to be hostile, they may respond as though the other party was seeking to threaten them personally, rather than simply opposing their ideas. Kozusznik et al. (2020) affirmed that perceived threats to personal identity transmuted task conflicts into more serious, damaging interactions with greater interpersonal consequences.

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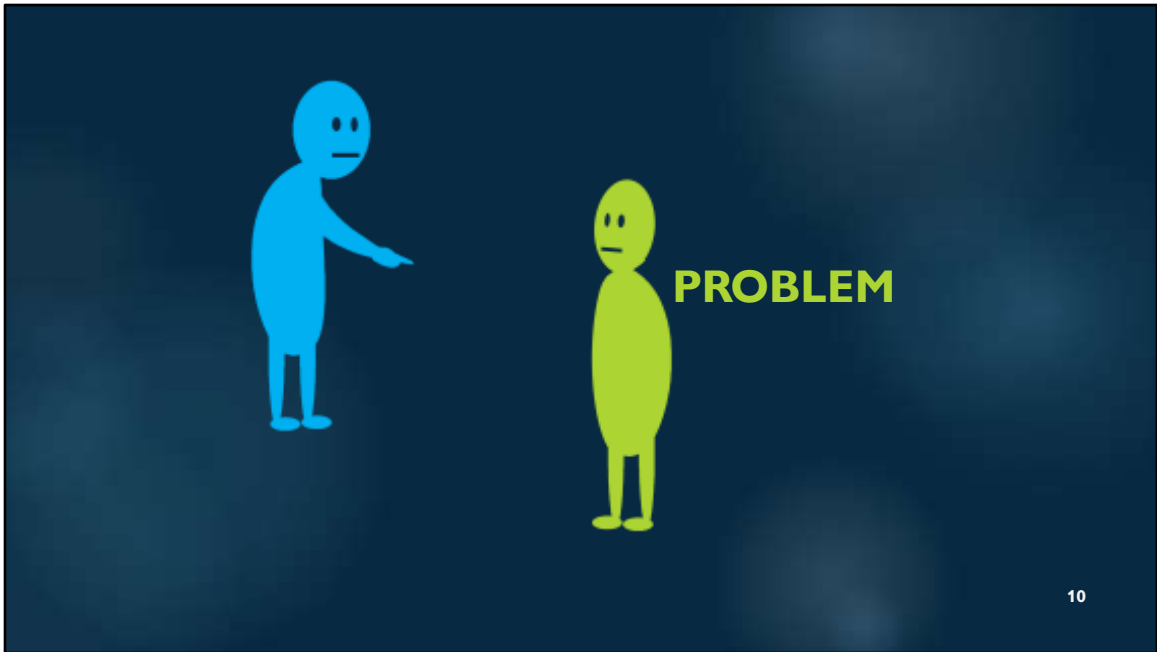
This is why, when we try to resolve a relational conflict
by negotiating some agreement about the practical problem,
it's generally ineffective and only a temporary solution at best.

Because we have now come to see that PERSON as the problem.
At this point, fixing the initial problem doesn't automatically fix this bigger problem.
And when an external challenge escalates into a relational problem,
our relationship with God is also impacted.

PROBLEM
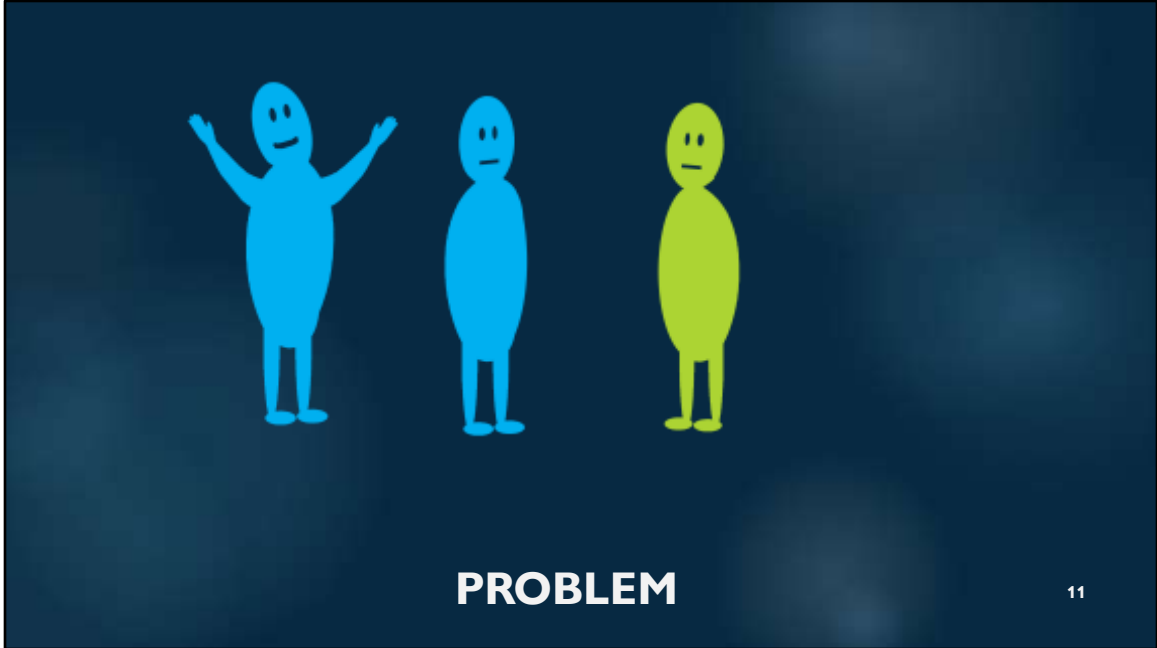
When we fix our attention, our hope, our hurts all on Christ, and make HIM ALONE the source of our contentment…
this is our right response to any pain and trial we face in life:

We go to The Healer for healing. We remember that this God who loves us and gives us life has commanded us to seek peace and pursue it and strive for it with everyone (1 Peter 3:11, Hebrews 12:14-15). When we have reminded ourselves of what is good and true and the life and future God has given us so generously….
Then we will forgive our brother as a response to the forgiveness we have received (Mark 11:25-26). We will love our brother because we have been loved completely (1 John 4:19).

And then we can deal with the problem!
The problem is still there, and we can more effectively understand and address the problem when we are already at peace in our hearts, before the Lord, from the Lord, and with our brother.

Obstacles to Conflict Resolution

"You can't AVOID conflict.
           You can only avoid conflict RESOLUTION."

~ Peace Pursuit

► We misunderstand the essence of conflict as an external rather than internal problem, so we try to fix the wrong thing.

► We don't know *WHO* should do *WHAT, WHEN*, and *HOW*

12

Common Practices to Avoid

- Determine who is to blame ◄ Strengthens the villain-victim dichotomy

- Require an apology ◄ Conditional forgiveness

- Identify and condemn wrongdoing ◄ Assumes sin versus unmet expectations

- Reach agreement on the goal or process ◄ Unity depends on unanimity

- No ongoing tension or hard feelings ◄ Denies consequences and need to rebuild trust and closeness

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Models of conflict behaviors describe avoidance as an effort to escape, deny, or withdraw from relational tension, and this common reaction hinders mutual understanding, increases anxiety, indicates low concern for self or others, and is generally ineffective for conflict resolution (Bultena et al., 2017; Kozusznik et al., 2020; Petersen & Le, 2017; Zhang & Wei, 2017).

Research demonstrates that external resolutions are short lived if **the relationship** between two people is not **addressed first**.

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Evidence-based Aspects of Reconciliation

► Cognitive reappraisal

► Reframing

► Perspective change

► Increased self-awareness

► Increased empathy

► Feeling understood

► Perceived sincerity

► Disconnect person from the problem

► Improved perceptions of forgivability

► Increased interpersonal compassion

► Express apologies and forgiveness

► Repentant and remorseful attitude

► Attempted atonement and reparation

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Karaszewska et al. (2019) studied universal patterns associated with *conflicts of interest*. When parties were simultaneously interdependent and irreconcilably divergent, they became blind to positive traits and solution possibilities, and they perceived the other party only as an opponent and obstacle to their objectives. Insights about these widespread norms can improve resolution strategies by promoting self-awareness, interpersonal compassion, perspective–taking, and disconnecting the person from the problem (Gutenbrunner & Wagner, 2016; Kaleta & Mróz, 2020; Witvliet, Root Luna, Vlisides-Henry, & Griffin, 2020).

Conflict resolution strategies like reflective listening, reframing, and apologies can induce changes to the original conflict perceptions (Alkozei et al., 2018; Devinatz, 2018). These approaches attack one-sided perceptions, weakening a party's certainty about what happened, who is to blame, the intentions of the other party, and the cost demanded for reconciliation. Bell and Georgakopoulos (2018) described this as a process of transforming conflict narratives to eliminate demonization and victimization, which then opens pathways to reconciliation.

Numerous studies have identified specific elements of apologies that most effectively transform initial conflict perceptions and promote possibilities of forgiveness (DiFonzo et al., 2020; Grover & Hasel, 2018; Grover et al., 2019; Mroz & Allen, 2020; Nigro et al., 2020; Oostenbroek & Vaish, 2019; Schumann, 2018; Schumann & Orehek, 2019; Syme & Hagen, 2019; Weiss, 2018). Effective apologies most often contained expressions of care and value

for the well-being of the offended party, acknowledgement of responsibility, desires to repair harm, and conveyed attitudes of honesty, humility, remorse, and sincerity, all of which challenged attributions of indifference, untrustworthiness, enmity, hostility, threat, and unfavorable intentions. Bassett et al. (2018) referred to this transformation as empathy, which they found directly related to forgiveness.

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One example of an
Effective and
Evidence-based
Model of Conflict Resolution

Downloadable free resource available at www.peacepursuit.org
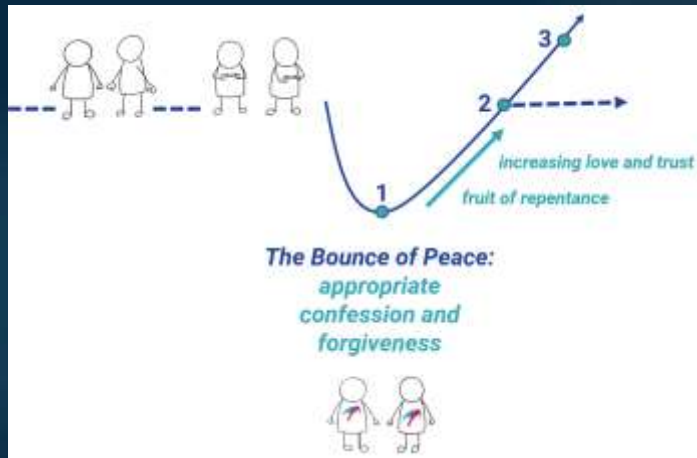
Clearly defining the GOAL of peacemaking based on individual choices and actions taken before God.
(Promoting an internal locus of control)

Agreeing to the goal of peacemaking promotes motivational cooperation with the process and primes the individual to engage in peacemaking decisions.

Identifying the role in the conflict initiates rational reflection on the events of the conflict and the perspectives of both parties.

STAGE 1 – Meet with God reorients the individual toward humility and gratitude, and prompts conviction about previous conclusions and condemnation of the other party. This time of intentional reflection and prayer deescalates negative affect and promotes increased empathy, compassion, forgivability, self-awareness, and revised conflict narratives.

Step One: *Define the goal of peace*

Step Two: *Reframe the conflict into terms of unmet expectations*

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The ANALYZE step within STAGE 1 is a structured process of cognitive reappraisal and reframing. This challenges moralized judgements on the other party's actions and promotes more objective and neutral assessments of the conflict event.

In the analyze box, you learn to reframe the moral conflict into expectations.

Analyze: *reframing conflicts as unequal or unmet expectations*

Clearly Understood | Legitimate
Reasonable | Loving

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These criteria may validate or invalidate the unmet expectations that generated the feelings of offense. The reflective and rational process decreases the emotional intensity and promotes a thoughtful, insightful understanding of the nature of the offense and potential steps for forgiveness and future prevention.

Case Study and Coaching Practice
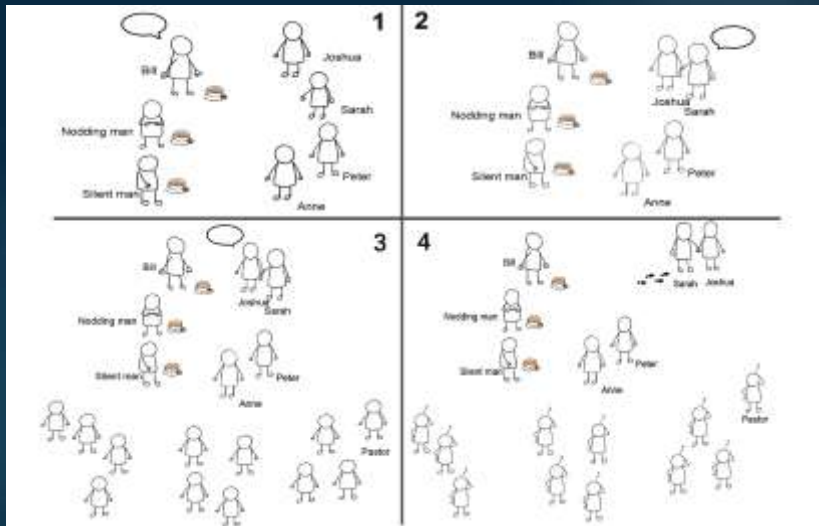
Practice identifying & reframing expectations and coaching toward peace – promoting compassion, reappraisal, forgiveness, looking at One Anothers.

Step One: *Define the goal of peace*

Step Two: *Reframe the conflict into terms of unmet expectations*

Step Three: *Seek peace from the Prince of Peace, and then honor Him through obedience*

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A faith-based internal locus of control provides unhindered access to peace and contentment in any and every circumstance.
(2 Thessalonians 3:16, Philippians 4:11-13)

In this process, we put obedience to GOD before GOD as the primary place of action.
This all happens during STAGE 1 – where the individual meets with God.

Two Dimensions : *Vertical and Horizontal*

Stage 2

Horizontal:

Repent to the offended

Stage 2

Horizontal:

Grant forgiveness

STAGE 2 is where we talk with the other person.
We don't always have a Stage 2!
But when we do, we go to them having ALREADY repented to God and ALREADY forgiven them.

Step One: *Define the goal of peace*

Step Two: *Reframe the conflict into terms of unmet expectations*

Step Three: *Seek peace from the Prince of Peace, and then honor Him through obedience*

***   *Individuals only*

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Discussion on Application

► Describe scenarios in which you could effectively utilize techniques within this model to help willing, faith-based clients?

~ what types of clients?
~ what types of counseling issues?

► In what scenarios could this model, or techniques from within this model, be appropriate in treating non-faith clients?

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Evaluation and Appraisal

► How does this model promote an internal locus of control, compassion, and other evidence-based components of peacemaking?

► How is this model similar or different to other conflict resolution strategies and general therapeutic models?

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Questions and Answers

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Free Peace Pursuit Resources

Contact Information and Follow Up

► PurposeandPeace.com

► JANEEN@PeacePursuit.org

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Contact Dr. Davis through her website: www.purposeandpeace.com

Access free Peace Pursuit resources at www.PeacePursuit.org