

Workplace Conflict: “A condition between or among workers whose jobs are interdependent, who feel angry, who perceive the other as being at fault, and who act in ways that cause a business problem”

- **Signs of Conflict:** Anger, Disgruntled staff, Low productivity, High turnover, Absenteeism, Frequent ‘sick days’, Dysfunctional meetings, Bullying
- **The Cost of Conflict:** Reputation, Safety, Loyalty, Production, Recruitment, Replacement, Litigation, Time, Money
- **Culture and Conflict**
 - **Dominating Organization:** Power contests are the prevailing approach to resolving conflicts
 - **Litigating Organization:** Rights contests are the prevailing approach to resolving conflicts
 - **Mediating Organization:** Interest reconciliation is the prevailing approach to resolving conflicts
- **Conflict is Productive When:**
 - Used to create and Innovate
 - The organization develops dispute resolving systems and procedures
 - It is viewed as value neutral rather than negative
 - Used as an opportunity for growth
 - New information is shared
 - New solutions are developed that include everyone’s perspective



- The people are separated from the problem
- “Hot button” triggers and effective ways to cool down reactions are discovered
- Problem solving skills are learned
- Attention is focused on hidden costs

“Conflict involves struggles between two or more people over values, or competition for status, power and scarce resources.” - Moore 1986

- **Conflict Handling and its Management**

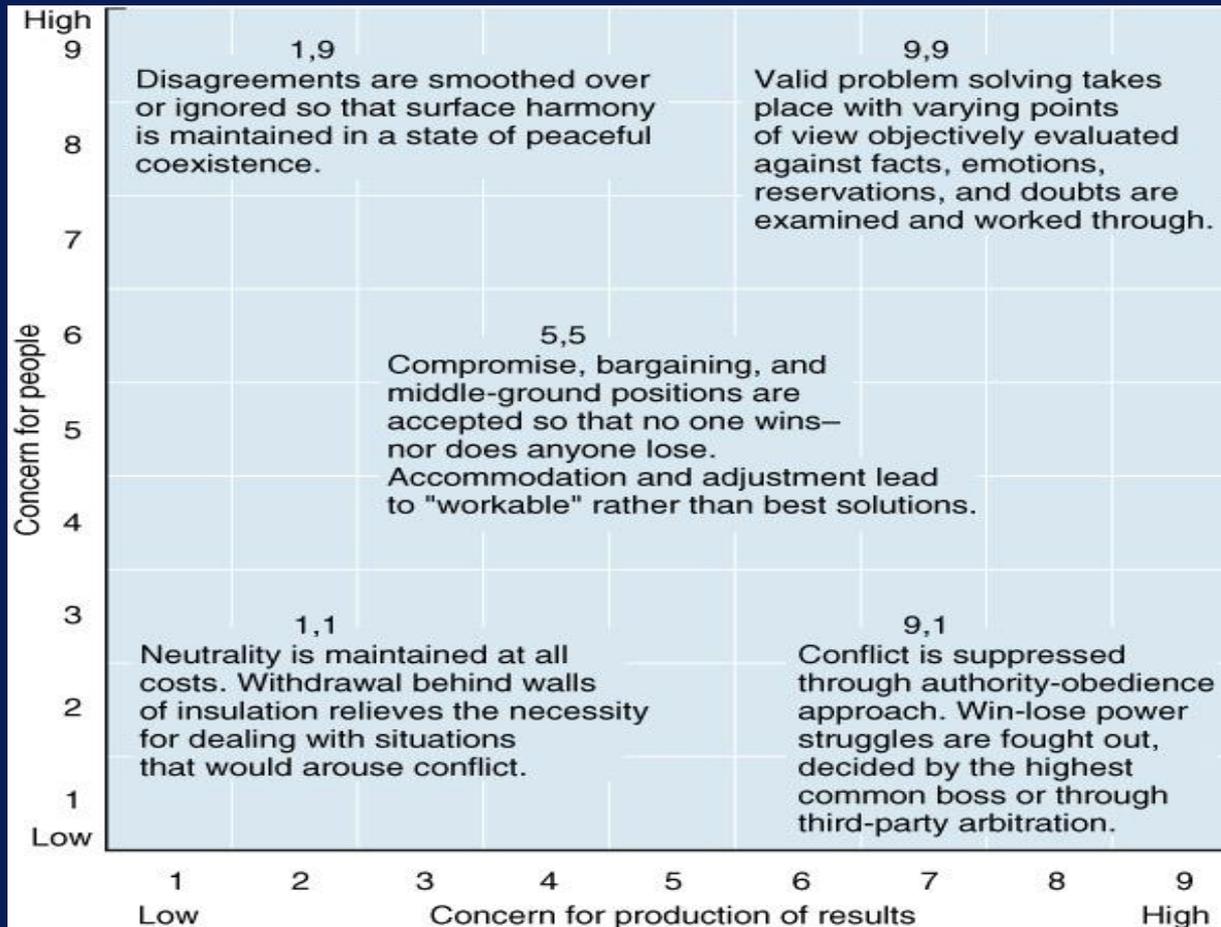
- **Conflict:** Is inevitable, Need not be viewed as a negative process, Has both productive and destructive potential, If mismanaged, can damage relationships, systems and institutions
- **Basic Approaches to Managing Conflict:** Ignoring the conflict, Avoiding the conflict producing situation, Coercion and/or violence, Negotiation, Mediation, Adjudication or arbitration
- **Historically, all societies have resolved conflict by using three primary dispute resolving processes:** Negotiation, Mediation, Adjudication

- **Conflict Resolution Options**

- Avoidance
- Suppression
- Accommodation
- Problem Solving, e.g., conciliation, negotiation, mediation, facilitation
- Escalation
- Confrontation



Toward Conflict Management—Blake and Mouton's Conflict Grid



- The 1,1 style is the hands-off approach, also called **avoidance**.
- The 1,9 position, also called **accommodation**, is excessively person-oriented.
- The 5,5 position represents a willingness to **compromise**.
- The 9,1 is the bullheaded approach, also called **competing**.
- The optimum style for reducing conflict is the 9,9 approach, also called **collaboration**.



- **Toward Conflict Management—Practical Tips for Implementing the 9,9 Style:**
 - Avoid Feelings or perceptions that imply the other person is wrong or needs to change
 - Communicate a desire to work together to explore a problem or seek a solution
 - Exhibit behavior that is spontaneous and destruction-free
 - Identify with another team member's problems, share feelings, and accept the team member's reaction
 - Treat the other team members with respect and trust
 - Investigate issues rather than taking sides on an item or seek a solution

Toward Conflict Management—William Van Dusen Wishard – 1995

- There is a need to discern what is permanent and immutable
- We must learn to make interconnections between people, events, and different categories of life because interdependence is an emerging condition of life
- We must learn to know ourselves
- We each need some understanding of how change and technology are affecting people and institutions
- We need to be open to dimensions of existence that are difficult to understand, value or control; within ourselves we need to value intuition
- There is a need to interact with people in a manner that will bridge racial and cultural differences
- There is a need to have a personal sense of creating something new for the future



The Four Agreements: Don Miguel Ruiz's Code for Life

From the ancient Toltec wisdom of the native people of Southern Mexico. The Toltec were 'people of knowledge' - scientists and artists who created a society to explore and conserve the traditional spiritual knowledge and practices of their ancestors.

- **Agreement #1: Be Impeccable With Your Words**

“Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the words to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.”

- **Agreement #2: Don't Take Anything Personally**

“Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.”

- **Agreement #3: Don't Make Assumptions**

“Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.”

- **Agreement #4: Always Do Your Best**

“Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse and regret.”