

MANAGING CONFLICT



FOR TODAY'S
LEADERS

RESOLUTION CONFLICT

TIPS FOR MANAGING

As communicators we inherently know that real negotiations should be conducted in a way that isn't productive to both parties. When one party is losing power or status, causing us to only want to win, this behavior is referred to as unfair fighting. It can lead to disastrous consequences.

Unfair fighting is not only a liability to professional negotiators, but when we negotiate with only ourselves in mind we lose sight of the other party with us. Here we will discuss the signs and characteristics of unfair fighting in order to help avoid these disastrous consequences.



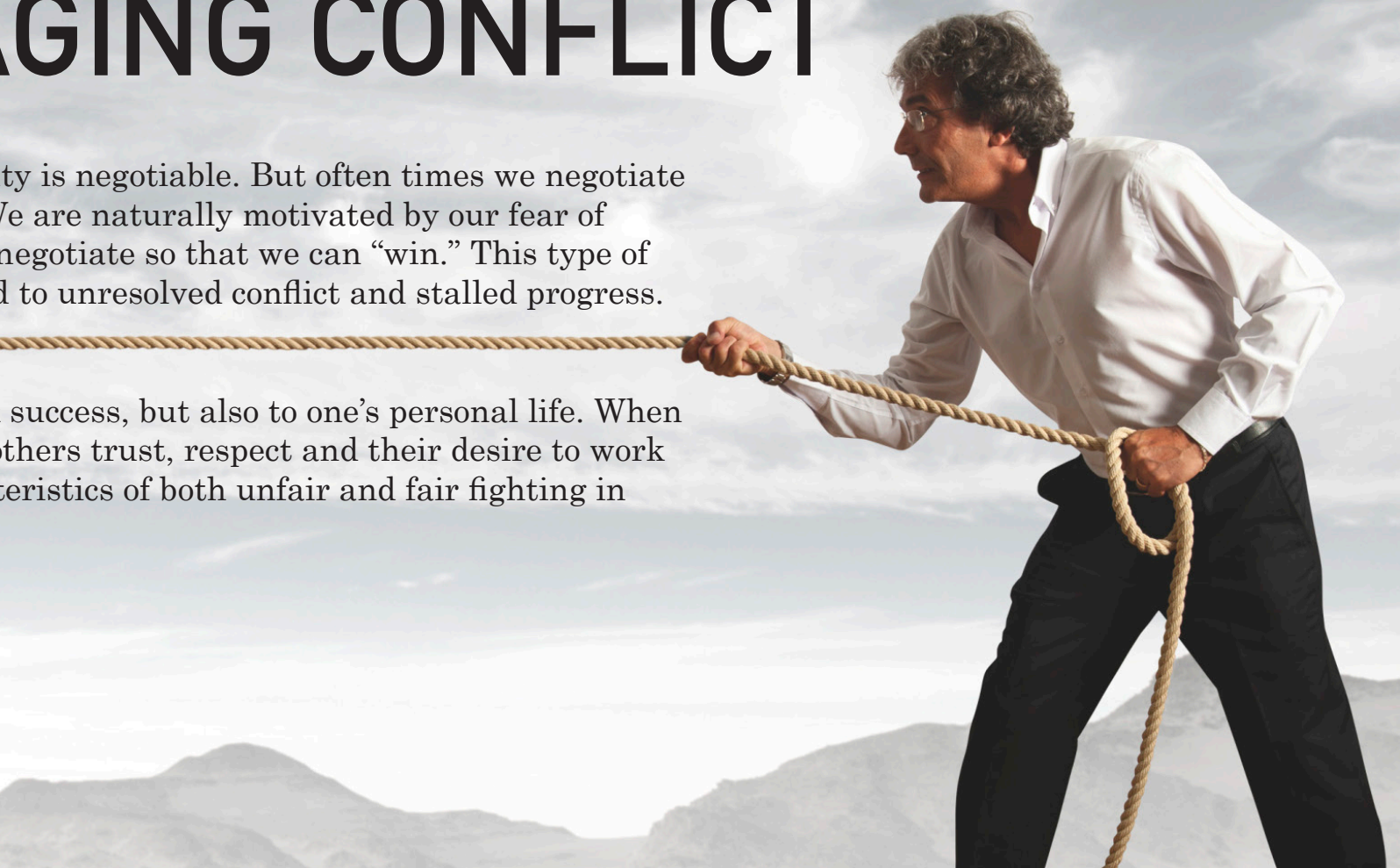
LIVING

CONFLICT

AGING CONFLICT

ty is negotiable. But often times we negotiate
We are naturally motivated by our fear of
negotiate so that we can “win.” This type of
d to unresolved conflict and stalled progress.

success, but also to one’s personal life. When
others trust, respect and their desire to work
characteristics of both unfair and fair fighting in



UNFAIR FIGHTING

There are several characteristics that can help identify when you are fighting unfairly. Recognizing these behaviors will help you stop them before there are repercussions.

BAD TIMING: It's important to approach a conflict situation at an appropriate time. The other party may feel blindsided or may be unwilling to negotiate if they feel unprepared for the confrontation. Meet them on neutral ground, like in a conference room or common space, when you both have adequate time to give the issue your full attention.

BLAMING: When your voice takes an accusatory tone, the other party will almost always react defensively. You must ensure the conversation places no blame on anyone, even those outside of the situation. A productive solution can only be achieved if both parties feel respected and heard.

THREATS AND ULTIMATUMS: Negotiating may seem easier when you force, threaten, or back the other party into a corner. But requiring them to make a hasty decision based on your motivations alone will only provoke the situation instead of solving it. These tactics make you seem less willing to compromise and not interested in a win-win situation for both parties.

ESCALATION: The pitch, volume and tone of your voice is extremely important in keeping the confrontation professional. When you raise your voice at someone, become heated, or practice any of the above characteristics, the situation has a higher risk of exploding. Once this happens it becomes very difficult for both parties to reach a plausible solution. You must learn to avoid using any of these tactics initially so that you can also avoid escalating the conflict.



FAIR FIGHTING

Now that we have identified what tactics to avoid in conflict conversations, let's discuss what we can do to make everyone involved feel heard, respected, and valued. It is only in this environment that true win-win solutions are created.

REDUCE/ELIMINATE PERSONAL THREAT: In any given confrontation both parties will initially feel threatened by the ideas of the other. Personal differences can easily influence the tone of the discussion. It is always necessary to meet on neutral territory, and cast aside grudges and bias.

STATE THE PROBLEM: It is easy for people to view the root or cause of a conflict differently. Perhaps each party has a contrasting opinion, view, or concern regarding the issue. It is also possible that not everyone has been given all the pieces of relevant information. Fleshing out the problem in its entirety will help all parties understand what they are trying to address.

FIND COMMON GROUND: Analyze which portions of the problem are important to those involved. Are there key issues that all parties can agree on? Are there common tactics or strategies everyone wants to see in a solution? This common ground can be used to reach other parts of the situation that may be more highly debated.

STICK TO ONE ISSUE AT A TIME: Jumping from issue to issue without creating any firm resolution will only result in wasted time. Creating a framework for discussion will help the conversation flow smoothly toward positive solutions.



**“CONFLICT IS
INEVITABLE
BUT COMBAT IS
OPTIONAL”**

DESCRIBE YOUR FEELINGS: Communicate your side of the issue calmly and effectively. Connect your thoughts and emotions about the issue to logical reasoning that can be issued to combat the conflict. Give the other parties adequate time to do the same and find common ground in your reactions.

EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES: Consider all angles of the problem, and every possible solution. Are there potential ideas you haven't thought about? Are there resources available that you aren't aware of? What creative strategies might there be to help address the needs of everyone?

END PRODUCTIVELY: Close the discussion only if you are satisfied with the progress made. A productive confrontation should either end in agreement or resolution of the issue, a counter proposal waiting for evaluation, or postponement of the issue until a specified date and time. Without consensus and understanding of what is to be done next, confusion and further conflict will ensue.

Finally, remember the importance of communicating effectively. Use your words wisely and send consistent messages. Avoid double meanings and be clear about your desires and needs. Tackle one issue at a time and send positive signals with your body language. Avoiding unfair fighting characteristics, listening actively, communicating effectively, and following fair fighting tactics will lead to win-win solutions for everyone.





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