

THE RESOLVING CONFLICT POCKETBOOK



By Max A Eggert and Wendy Falzon

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

Dedication

For Kerry, whom we both love dearly and hope that all her conflicts will be minor.

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PERSONALITY TYPES AND CONFLICT



A FORMULA FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT

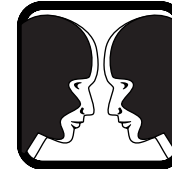
For very minor issues and disagreements, application of the following formula can often reduce potential conflict and bring about a discussion rather than a full blown argument. It does not work all the time, but is very useful nevertheless.

The process is:

Affirmative statement	You agree with the person
Softening statement	You show that you understand their position
Flag	You indicate that you have something to say
Give reasons for your position	You help them understand your position
Negative statement	You say 'no'
Offer a compromise if appropriate	You offer an alternative where you can

You can see that it works rather like judo - you walk alongside the person before you turn them. If you just said 'no' the tension would rise with the likelihood of conflict developing. Even if you just said 'no because...', you still might get an argument. By responding in judo fashion, you appear reasonable and, if there is to be an argument, it begins with facts rather than emotions (referred to elsewhere).

PERSONALITY TYPES AND CONFLICT



A FORMULA FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT

EXAMPLE

The manager's request: 'I want you to come in and work this Saturday morning.'

The employee's response:

Affirmative

'Yes.'

Softening

'We have been exceptionally busy; everyone has been very rushed recently and there is a backlog. I can see why you need me.'

Flag

'But I have to tell you...'

Reason for refusal

'...the difficulty is that this Saturday my son is playing in his soccer final and I just must support him.'

The refusal

'So I am sorry, I just cannot come in this Saturday.'

Compromise

'If it is of any help, I could stay behind on Thursday and Friday?'

PERSONALITY TYPES AND CONFLICT



A FORMULA FOR PREVENTING CONFLICT

EXAMPLE

The employee's request: 'Can I have next Thursday morning off to have my dental check-up?'

The manager's response:

Affirmative 'Yes.'

Softening 'It is very important to look after your teeth and regular check-ups are essential.'

Flag 'But I have to tell you...'

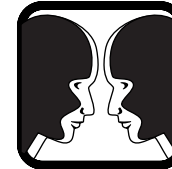
Reason for refusal '...that this week as you know is month-end and we must get all the reporting done by Friday.'

The refusal 'So I need you on Thursday.'

Compromise 'See if you can change the appointment to next week.'

PERSONALITY TYPES AND CONFLICT

SOCIOGRAMS



Sociograms are useful for identifying sources of potential interpersonal conflict in teams and for creating teams of people who will work together well.

It is a fact of life that we find some people more attractive than others. We enjoy their company and their conversation. For others the synergy is just not there. There may also be differences in culture, power, status, aspiration, education and a host of other things that bring about different levels of liking or understanding between people.

At a basic level the sociogram maps out who relates well to whom.



PERSONALITY TYPES AND CONFLICT

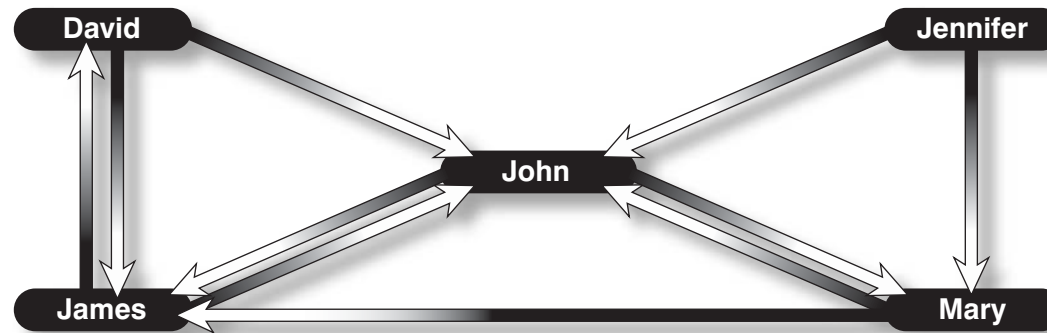
SOCIOGRAMS



For instance, in a group of five people we could have:

- David likes John and James
- Jennifer likes John and Mary
- James likes David and John
- John likes James and Mary
- Mary likes John and James

If you drew this as a sociogram it would look like this:



PERSONALITY TYPES AND CONFLICT



SOCIOGRAMS

From the sociogram on the previous page you can see that:

- John could work with almost anybody
- David, James and John would make a good team
- John, James and Mary would work well together
- You would have to be careful about Jennifer, who is nobody's first choice, but she would like to work with John and Mary
- If David and James were put with Jennifer there could be interpersonal conflict
- If you put Mary and David together sparks might fly

Sociograms are also useful for working out aspirations and positions of stakeholders, as well as for anticipating alliances.

They will also tell you who is likely to be bullied (see final chapter on harassment and bullying).

About the Authors

Max A. Eggert BSc, MA, FCIPD, CFAHRI, ABPS, MAPS

Max is a management psychologist specialising in assisting individuals reach their maximum potential. Besides being retained by major international corporations as coach, mentor and strategist, he has been interviewed frequently on TV, radio and in the print media both in Australia and in Europe. Max has degrees in psychology, industrial relations and theology. He has fifteen books in print in twelve languages, one of which is a standard text and two are frequently in the ten best business books. Several of his books are on the recommended reading lists of Sydney, London, Harvard, Westminster and Sussex Universities.



Contact: Level 31, 88 Phillip Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Tel: +61 2 8211 0500 Fax: +61 2 8211 0555 Mobile: 040 360 2286

E mail: max@transcareer.com.au

Wendy Falzon

Wendy is an HR professional working in the areas of interpersonal development and maximisation of talent for both individuals and organisations. Her expertise includes career development, coaching, conflict resolution and team integration. Wendy is married, lives in rural New South Wales, is an accomplished singer and has a consuming passion for tennis.



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