



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

Ombuds Outlook — November 2016

Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty

<http://ombudsfac.unm.edu>

November 9th Workshop

Dignity, Rank, and Professional Relationships

In this lunchtime discussion session, we will talk about thoughts proposed by Robert Fuller (former President of Oberlin College) about workplace dignity, his ideas of somebodies and nobodies, the positive aspects of rank, and the negative consequences of rankism. How members of the university community perceive and experience dignity and rank may vary greatly.

Presenter: Margaret Menache, Ph.D.
Ombuds Faculty Representative

Day/Date: Wednesday, Nov. 9th, 2016

Time: 11:30 - 1:00

Place: UNM Business Center, Room 1016
(SE corner of Lomas & University)

RSVP: Jean Civikly-Powell, Ombudsperson for Faculty
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Hick's Dignity Model for Resolving Conflict

Donna Hicks, Associate at Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and author of *Dignity: The Essential Role It Plays in Resolving Conflict* offers 10 elements for addressing conflicts with dignity.

1. Acceptance of other
2. Acknowledgement
3. Inclusion
4. Safety
5. Fairness
6. Freedom
7. Understanding through active listening
8. Benefit of the doubt
9. Responsiveness
10. Righting the wrong

For expansion on each of these 10 elements:
Hicks' book is noted above.
Also see:
<http://artsfwd.org/how-to-resolve-conflict-with-dignity>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lz133kocy8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5OKWjBQ25Y>



Asking Better Questions

“All our knowledge results from questions, which is another way of saying that question-asking is our most important intellectual tool” (Postman, 1980, p. 28).

Questions serve many functions during our communication interactions. Not only do they promote learning and thinking, but they also foster dialogue. Question-asking is central to the mediation process because a mediator’s responsibility is to facilitate conversation between the parties. Barthel and Fortson-Harwell (2016) tell us that “the mediator’s primary role is one of learning and the facilitation of learning” (p. 43). Throughout a mediation, questions are used to help generate options and ideas that might otherwise have been left out. Moreover, questions can set the boundaries for the answers that we receive, so crafting the right question requires foresight. Although this article is directed toward mediators, we see how asking better questions will serve us in our daily interactions.

Barthel and Fortson-Harwell (2016) propose that there are eight qualities of a better question.

Curiousness and Detachment- These questions ask that the parties be willing to explore with an open mind and objectivity. This helps facilitate emotional detachment and create an openness to the process.

Trustworthiness- Conflict resolution is not possible without trust. Mediators build trust when small agreements are made, therefore asking questions that will offer small deposits of trust throughout the mediation is essential.

Emotionally Intelligent- Parties in conflict are often experiencing a high level of emotion. The mediator should model emotional intelligence with such abilities as self-control, zeal, persistence, and motivation.

Balanced and Open-- These types of questions are asked for the purpose of inquiry. They lack presumption of intention, and require a narrative response. This will help promote positive dialogue between the parties.

Incorporation of Learning Styles- To tap into each person’s learning style, questions should include each of the following: *why*, *what*, *how*, and *what if*. This allows parties to process information in a way that is best for them and leaves them with the feeling of being heard.

Creativity- Using Bloom’s Taxonomy we can derive questions that are more innovative and creative. By combining learning styles with Bloom’s Taxonomy, we can develop questions that incorporate evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, comprehension and knowledge.

Future Focused- Questions that are future-focused use Appreciative inquiry (AI) and its five principles: wholeness, enactment, free choice, awareness, and narrative. This approach focuses on the parties’ strengths and invites participation.

Unifying- These questions bring parties together. By staying future-focused and combining interests, you avoid placing blame, and the solutions are shared equally by all parties.

References

- Barthel, T. & Fortson-Harwell, M. (2016). Practice note: Asking better questions. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 34(1), p. 43-56.
- Postman, N. (1980). Language education in a knowledge context. *A Review of General Semantics*, 37(1), p. 25-37.