



THE UNIVERSITY of  
NEW MEXICO

## Ombuds Outlook — February 2017

Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty  
<http://ombudsfac.unm.edu>

### Daniel Shapiro's Negotiating the Nonnegotiable

Although we are often counseled not to be emotional in a heated discussion, the research of Daniel Shapiro suggests it's not possible. He explains how conflict is an affront on three levels: our rationality, our emotions and our identity/our sense of who we are. Understanding the forces that drive both ourselves and the other gives us options to create a path toward co-existence, if not harmony.

In this workshop, we will discuss the main points of Shapiro's research and provide a worksheet on steps you might take to defuse emotionally charged discussions.

#### Presented By:

Margaret Menahce, Ph.D.  
Emerita Faculty, and Community Medicine  
Faculty Representative, Ombuds Services for Faculty

**Day/Date:** Thursday, February 23, 2017  
**Time:** 12:00—1:30 PM  
**Location:** UNM Business Center (SE Corner of Lomas and University)  
Room 1016  
**RSVP:** Jean Civikly-Powell, Ombudsperson for Faculty  
[jcivikly@unm.edu](mailto:jcivikly@unm.edu)

### Workplace Anger

Geddes' dual threshold model of anger is a useful sociocultural framework to interpret both expressions of anger and reactions to them in the workplace.

This workshop will explore why we get angry, and it will use the model to understand the nature of workplace anger, and in particular the thresholds for anger in the UNM settings, and whether they can and should be 're-set'.

#### Presented By:

Jonathan Bolton MD  
Associate Professor, Psychiatry  
Director, Office of Professionalism, Health Sciences Center

**Day/Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2017  
**Time:** 12:00—1:30 PM  
**Location:** Dane Smith Hall  
Room 231  
**RSVP:** Jean Civikly-Powell, Ombudsperson for Faculty  
[jcivikly@unm.edu](mailto:jcivikly@unm.edu)

## The Power of Identity on Conflict Resolution

For Daniel Shapiro, founder and director of the Harvard International Negotiation Program, conflict resolution is the process of creating harmony from discord. This, his latest book, addresses the emotionally charged elements of very difficult conflicts. He presents a new paradigm with which to approach and navigate conflicts that “speaks as much to the heart as to the mind” (p xi) The book focuses on recognizing and utilizing the emotional forces emerging in conflict that can nurture cooperative relations.

So often we approach conflict through typical binary concepts of me vs. you and us vs. them. Shapiro asks we consider the space in between those in conflict, identify that space as the relationship and navigate it effectively for mutual benefit. Three key dimensions of conflict resolution directly influence this space in between and create positive outcomes to our perceived nonnegotiable differences - *rationality, emotions and identity*.

**Rationality.** Typically, our main motive in any situation is to get our interests met as much as possible. Its plain sense to ensure we get what we need and want out of a difficult situation. Our interests reflect our values and worldview so attachment to what we want supports what we believe in. Though significant, focusing on our interests has its limits and can even prevent us from rationally acknowledging that needs and interests of others must also be considered.

**Emotions.** Emotions give us passion and drive to reach for goals and nurture our relationships. They allow us to feel the importance of our needs. In a conflict, it is important we listen to what our emotions and the emotions of others tell us. “Emotions alert you to unmet needs” (p 8). We need to effectively read and use our emotional capacity to maintain the relationship in a conflict. We must not allow the challenges and frustrations of conflict drive us to anger, pride and ultimately make us fixed on our position and resist the change necessary to resolve a conflict.

**Identity.** Identity is the sense of self. It is founded on the concept that human beings seek importance in their existence. Emotional conflicts become charged because they threaten aspects of how we “conceive of meaning in our lives” (p 9). In a conflict, our identity can become very attached to an issue or a position within a conflict.

Effective conflict resolution considers these aspects of human behavior as interconnected and influencing one another. Attention to these help unlock the power of identity and how it can be used to resolve emotionally charged conflict.

Shapiro warns us to *overcome fixed identity fallacy, acknowledge the multiplicity and fluidity of our identities so as to be more open to conflict resolution strategies. Our identities are supported by five pillars, aka “BRAVE”:*

**Beliefs** – convictions, principles and morals

**Rituals** – holidays, family traditions, & rites of passage

**Allegiances** – loyalties towards family, friends, colleagues and groups

**Values** – ideals

**Emotionally meaningful experiences** – Intense events, positive or negative, such as births, first heartbreak, etc.

Since emotionally charged conflicts challenge one or more of the pillars of our identity, and your identity is fluid in nature, you can adjust those more vulnerable pillars, maintain your overall identity and be more adaptable and amenable to resolving your conflict.

### References

Shapiro, D. (2016). *Negotiating the nonnegotiable: How to resolve your most emotionally charged conflicts*. New York: Viking Press.

Prepared by: Andrew West, Graduate Assistant, Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty, 2017.