



The University of New Mexico

Faculty Dispute Resolution

Newsletter
Volume IX, No. 1

Fall 2008



The FDR logo is a Triskelion design from the late Bronze Age. A lively symbol, it gives a distinct impression of movement, always ongoing, fully connected, expressing continuity and balance.

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When you understand the situation of the other person, when you understand the nature of suffering, anger will vanish, because it is transformed into compassion.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Why didn't you say that in the first place?

Building a Culture that Supports Understanding at Work

As a specialist in the use of language in everyday life, Prof. Richard Heyman ([Why Didn't You Say That in the First Place?](#) 1994) argues that most people don't understand that "misunderstanding is normal." In most cases, misunderstanding arises because people take it for granted that others will understand them. The basic nature of language itself also contributes to misunderstanding. Heyman contends that the key to avoiding misunderstanding lies in using certain parts of our everyday talk in a systematic way that gives us the power to communicate as clearly as humanly possible.

Specifically, Heyman discusses five themes on the topic of building a work culture that supports understanding.

1) Use Power to Ensure Talk for Understanding. Heyman stresses a needed commitment from those who have the power to open the organization to free and easy communication. People in an organization should be assured the freedom to clarify and talk about what they don't understand with confidence and without fear. Once an organization uses the power of talk to flatten its hierarchy, Heyman believes both individual employees and the organization as a whole will benefit from the freedom to talk to one another in new ways.

2) Understand the Need for Clear Communication. Clarity of communication implies that people must expect misunderstanding and know how to prevent it. Heyman argues that there is no better way to prevent misunderstanding than by using everyday language systematically to help others understand our vision. Also, Heyman argues for the necessity to make open lines of communication a top priority in organizations. Organizations must work at building a culture of understanding through talk that opens up opportunities for face-to-face talk between and among all levels. (continued, page 4)

Tips for Handling the Three Most Common Difficult Conversations

In studying hundreds of different types of conversations, Stone, Patton, Heen & Fisher ([Difficult Conversations](#), 2000), of the Harvard Negotiation Project, found that there is an underlying structure to what's going on. More specifically, our thoughts and feelings in conversation have been found to fall into one of three categories. These categories include:

1) The "What Happened?" Conversation. This conversation is where we tend to spend most of our time and energy in a difficult conversation. It is the struggle we feel about three important aspects of the conversation: truth, intentions, and blame. We make assumptions about who is right, who meant what, and who is to blame.

What to (Re) Consider: It is necessary to get past the question of who is right and who is wrong, but rather focus on what is most important for each person. This may be done by considering and trying to understand both parties' perceptions, interpretations, and values given the context. This will help you further realize that one should not jump to conclusions about other's intentions and that blame is an unproductive act that leads to more confusion.

2) The Feelings Conversation. Undoubtedly, emotions accompany difficult conversations. Therefore the question is how should we choose to handle our emotions when they do arise. Typically, many of us work hard to keep cool or stay rational when we feel our blood pressure rising or tears welling up in our eyes.

What to (Re) Consider: It may seem less risky and messy to avoid discussing feelings in a difficult conversation, but because feelings are usually an integral part of any conflict, it is not entirely productive to exclude them. Instead, it is helpful to identify and share why you feel the way you do, even if it is initially uncomfortable. Sharing feelings is a learned skill that may take time to develop, but it could prevent and/or alleviate future difficult conversations.

3) The Identity Conversation. This difficult conversation is often the most challenging and subtle because it is all about who we are and how we see ourselves. It forces us to ponder our self-esteem and self-image, while asking ourselves what our actions and reactions may say about who we are in the world.

What to (Re) Consider: Often, just recognizing that our identity is part of the equation in difficult conversations helps lessen our anxiety. Still, it is important to "keep our balance" when resolving conflict associated with our identity.

—Prepared by Courtney Fletcher, FDR Graduate Assistant

— FDR Faculty Mediators —

These are the UNM faculty who have completed the FDR 36-hour mediation training. The FDR program may call upon them to assist with faculty-faculty, faculty-administrator, faculty-staff, or faculty-student disputes (with the approval of all parties involved). Faculty mediators may also assist informally with difficulties that might arise in campus interaction settings, e.g., teaching and research interactions, and faculty and committee meetings. Some mediators pursue additional mediation training and may also volunteer their mediation services in their communities, at Metro Court, and in other arenas.

They contribute to a climate of constructive communication and provide a great service to UNM!

Andrea Allan	Neurosciences	Sarah Morley	Health Sciences Center Library
Rosa Auletta	Dev. Sts, Learning Comm., UNM-V	Leslie Morrison	Neurology/Academic Affairs, SOM
Marsha Baum	Law	Helen Muller	ASM, Emerita
Gloria Birkholz	Nursing, Emerita	Bruce Neville	University Libraries
Steven Block	Music	Bruce Noll	Educ. Ldshp. & Org. Learning
Lisa Broidy	Sociology	Eric Nuttall	Chemical & Nuclear Eng., Emeritus
Stephen Burd	ASM	Leslie Oakes	ASM
William Buss	Neurosciences, Emeritus	John Oetzel	Communication & Journalism
Anne Calhoun	Lang., Lit., & Sociocultural Studies	Lee Orosco	Civil Engineering
Jean Civikly-Powell	Faculty Dispute Resolution, C&J Emerita	Daniel Ortega	Law
Dorothy Clough	Nursing, Emerita	Patricia Payne	Nursing
Mary Jane Collier	Communication & Journalism	Susan Pearson	Theatre & Dance
John Cornish	Extended University, English	Mary Power	English
Patricia Covarrubias	Communication & Journalism	Ric Richardson*	Architecture & Planning
Janet Cramer	Communication & Journalism	Deborah Rifensharp*	Indiv., Family, & Community Educ.
Terry Crowe	Occupational Therapy	John Rinaldi*	Education, Emeritus
Gary Cuttrel	Dental Services	Sherry Rogers	Cell Biology & Physiology
Zina Daniels	Orthopedics, Physical Therapy	Susan Romano	English
Susan Deese-Roberts	University Libraries, Emerita	Randy Rosett	Anesthesiology
Gloria Dyc	Arts & Letters, UNM Gallup	Barri Sanders	UNM Taos
Mark Emmons	University Libraries	Laurie Schatzberg	ASM
Santa Falcone	Public Administration	David Scott	Sports Administration
Corey Ford	Neurology/Office of Research	Virginia Seiser	University Libraries, Emerita
Barry Gaines	English	Virginia Shipman	Indiv., Family, & Community Educ.
Patricia Gillikin	English, UNM Valencia	Anne Simpson	Internal Medicine, Geriatrics, Ethics
Tim Goldsmith	Psychology	Brian Solan	Family and Community Medicine
Maria Dolores Gonzales	Spanish & Portuguese	Patricia Stall	Education, Emerita
Cathy Gutierrez-Gomez	Indiv., Family & Community Educ.	Pamela Stovall	UNM Gallup
Shuhong Guo	Pharmacy Basic Sciences	John Trotter	School of Medicine, Emeritus
Miriam Gustafson	English, UNM Valencia	Tim Wadsworth	Sociology
Mary Harris	Education, Emerita	Howard Waitzkin	Sociology, Fam. & Comm. Med.
Gary Harrison	English	Eileen Waldschmidt	Teacher Education
Karl Hinterbichler	Music	Olaf Werder	Communication & Journalism
Scott Hughes*	Law	Sherman Wilcox	Linguistics
Dubra Karnes-Padilla	UNM Valencia	Ebtisam Wilkins	Chemical & Nuclear Eng., Emerita
Kate Krause	Economics	Fran Wilkinson	University Libraries
Vonda Long	Counselor Education, Emerita	Amy Wohlert	Interim Dean: ASM
Wanda Martin	English	Carolina Yahne	CASAA, Emerita
Estella Martinez	Ind., Fam., & Comty. Educ., Emerita	Steven Yourstone	ASM
Prasad Mathew	Pediatric Hem/Oncology, HSC		
Virginia McDermott	Communication & Journalism		

*Trained Mediator, with program other than FDR

Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS to the FDR Mediation Class of Fall

Claire-Lise Bénaud, Ctr for SW Research/Univ. Libraries

Anne Calhoon, Lang., Lit., & Sociocultural Studies

Mary Jane Collier, Communication & Journalism

Julia Gallegos, Psychiatry

Jami Lynn Huntsinger, English

Roger Martinez, UNM Taos

Margaret Menace, Family & Community Medicine

Nancy Middlebrook, Provost Office

Jay Parkes, Educational Psychology

Tryphenia Peele-Eady, Lang., Lit., & Sociocultural Studies

Lisa Tannenbaum, Continuing Education

Eileen Waldschmidt, Teacher Education

Qian-Yun Zhang, Pathology

And, a huge *THANK YOU* to our Faculty Mediator Coaches!

Jean Civikly-Powell, FDR

Mark Emmons, University Libraries

Mary Harris, Education, Emerita

Karl Hinterbichler, Music

Anne Lightsey, Communication & Journalism

Wanda Martin, English

Bruce Neville, University Libraries

Bruce Noll, Educ. Ldshp. & Org. Learning

Deborah Rifenburg, Ind., Fam., & Community Education

Virginia Seiser, University Libraries, Emerita

Laurie Schatzburg, ASM

Want to learn more about Faculty Dispute Resolution?

Please visit us at: <http://www.unm.edu/~facdr>

The FDR website provides information on resolving workplace conflicts and moving forward to productive interactions. The website offers extensive information about the following topics:

- What is Faculty Dispute Resolution?
- What is Mediation?
- Information about Confidentiality
- Mediation Agreement Forms
- Information about Mediation Training
- Workshops
- Newsletters
- Article and Chapter Summaries
- Roster of Faculty Mediators
- FDR Advisory Board
- Dispute Resolution Links
- and more...



Change occurs

when we name our emotions
as we feel them.

In telling the truth, energy is released.

-- Erika M. Hunter

(Continued from Page 1)

3) Create Policies and Structures that Ensure Clear Communication. To help ensure that the power of everyday talk is realized appropriately, Heyman stresses the centrality of establishing and supporting policies and structures that ensure clear communication. Heyman suggests implementing policies that:

- encourage open lines of communication within the organization and with its clients and customers;
- support questions that should be asked, e.g., rewarding people for taking time to talk about work-related issues;
- build a culture of clear communication based on an atmosphere of trust and understanding through examples from the top down;
- supplement written communication on critical issues with talk; and
- create or support a specialized language for communication of critical information.

For organizational structures, Heyman argues for the need to put positive structures in place that enhance opportunities to create shared context and shared understanding. Heyman cautions that some of these structures must be created by management and instituted throughout the organization; others can be started less formally. To work toward the goal of clear understanding, Heyman proposes structures such as:

- continual and regular training that creates a common context for understanding;
- mediated communication where someone can act as an intermediary when people need to communicate across perceived boundaries;
- backups through overlapping responsibility that create an important safeguard for clear communication; and
- inverted pyramid for clear communication through opening the lines of two-way communication

4) Recognize the Personal with the Culture. Heyman emphasizes the need for people to talk to each other in organizations about and beyond work-related business. Heyman believes that talking with people, regardless of content, goes a long way towards producing a desirable work culture. Heyman argues that there are two ways in which the personal intersects with and matters for the culture. First, good social relationships in organizations make it possible for people to enjoy talking to their colleagues. Thus, maintaining good relationships through talk enables people to know how to avoid offending or embarrassing others unintentionally. And, maintaining good social relationships in organizations is also an important part of creating a culture for understanding. Second, we all have personal practical interests – motives, expectations, desires, ambitions, and fears – that create part of the context for understanding each other’s talk. Successful communication and leadership means understanding that those practical interests will affect not only the ways others understand what we are saying but also the meanings of what others say. Ultimately, shared understanding means talk flows in both directions.

5) Use Talk to Ensure Understanding. Since listeners make their own interpretations, the task of understanding requires the use of strategic talk. That is, the occurrence of understanding requires talk, dialogue, and give-and-take. Also, we must not only determine *what* we want to say but also *how* to communicate the right meaning to people in our organization. If we want people to understand us clearly, *what* we say cannot be separated from *how* we say it.

—Prepared by Yea Wen Chen, FDR Graduate Assistant

FDR Fall Workshops

Managing Faculty Advisor/Graduate Student Conflicts

Presenters: Yea Wen Chen & Courtney Fletcher
Ph.D. Candidates, FDR Graduate Assistants

Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2008

Time: 12:30—2pm

Place: Communication & Journalism Building,
Room 121, (NW Corner, Central & Yale)

Learn about relationship dynamics,
challenges, and ways to resolve conflicts.
Seating is limited. Please check with Jean Civikly-Powell
at jcivikly@unm.edu or 277-3212.

You’ve Got E-Mail! Blessings and Curses

Presenter: Jean Civikly-Powell, FDR Director

Date: Tuesday, November 11, 2008

Time: 12:30—2:00 pm

Place: TBA

We love e-mail—we hate e-mail.
Let’s talk about ways to use e-mail —
without creating or contributing to conflict.

Please RSVP by **Wednesday, November 5th** to Jean Civikly-Powell at jcivikly@unm.edu or 277-3212.