

Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty



ODR Workshop — Spring 2011

Newsletter
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Spring 2011 Workshop Emotions at the Table

Emotions play a central role in conflict. Learn how to address effectively the emotions of parties in conflict, and how working with emotions can play a pivotal role in conflict resolution.

Presenters: Sara Holmes, PhD candidate & Meg Hoskison, PhD, MA Student ODR Graduate Assistants

Date: Thursday, March 31, 2011

Time: 12:30-1:45pm

Please RSVP by **Monday, March 28th** to Sara Holmes sholmes@unm.edu or Meg Hoskison mhoskis2@unm.edu or 277-3212.

“... when feelings are at the heart of what is going on, they are the business at hand and ignoring them is nearly impossible.”

Stone, Patton, Heen (1999, p. 87). *Difficult Conversations: How to discuss what matters most.*

Image found at <http://mediationblog.blogspot.com/2007/11/dont-neglect-emotions-in-negotiation.html>



UNM Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty provides consultation & mediation services to UNM faculty & administrators for potential or ongoing workplace conflicts. The guiding standard is resolution at the least adversarial level. The long-term vision is a widespread network of trained UNM faculty committed to dialogue, constructive conflict management & conflict prevention.

Mediation Training for Faculty — Fall 2011

Jean Civikly-Powell (Ombudsperson for Faculty and Professor Emerita, Communication) will offer no-cost mediation training for UNM Faculty in September 2011.

Over 100 faculty have taken the training and have enthusiastically reported it was an informative and transformative experience.

The goal of the training is to increase the mindfulness and practice of constructive communication and conflict resolution on the UNM campus. Jean has over 15 years experience as a mediator, trainer, and coach. The training will prepare faculty in the content, theory, and practice of conflict management and mediation.

For the September training, Jean will also include dimensions of strengths-based principles and appreciative inquiry. This is a 4-day/all-day training. The dates and times for the mediation training are:

Friday and Saturday, September 9 and 10, 8:30-4:30 and

Friday and Saturday, September 23 and 24, 8:30-4:30.

To register, contact Jean at jcivikly@unm.edu or 277-3212.

Ombudsperson:
Jean Civikly-Powell

Assoc. Ombudsperson
Carolina Yahne

Graduate Assistants:
Sara J. Holmes
Meg Hoskison

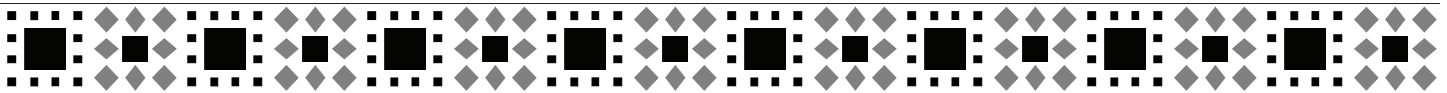
Location:
1800 Las Lomas NE
MSC 05 3140

Phone: 277-3212

jcivikly@unm.edu
<http://ombudsfac.unm.edu>

"The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress."

-- Joseph Joubert
French Essayist



This Civility Pledge is provided for your consideration. It is entirely voluntary. You are invited to print and post this pledge in your workspace. It is also available at: <http://ombudsfac.unm.edu>, click on Civility Pledge link.

Civility Pledge

UNM Ombuds/Dispute Resolution Services for Faculty
Jean Civikly-Powell, Ombudsperson for Faculty

I Choose Civility

I choose to maintain civility and respect of others -- whether or not I agree with them.

I choose to listen and pay attention to what is important to others.

I choose to check that I understand what is important to others.

I choose to be civil when I describe what is important to me and when I respond to others.

I choose to work with others, and not against others, to address concerns.

I choose to disagree respectfully without attacking the other's character or deriding the other's motives.

Name

Date

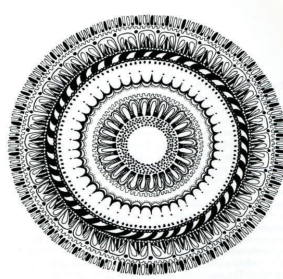


ODR Book Pick for Spring 2011

The following images and quotes can be found in Lindahl, K. & Schnapper, A. (2002), *The Sacred Art of Listening: Forty Reflections for Cultivating a Spiritual Practice*. Vermont: Skylight Paths. Illustrations are by Amy Schnapper. Their book offers forty such reflections, covering a range of listening-related topics including listening creatively, listening for meaning, and listening with openness, shown here.



“Create an environment that calls for listening in a new way.”



“A whole new world of freedom, possibility and creativity emerges when we can listen to change.”



“When I honor that voice in myself and in others, I lose my attachment to a predetermined outcome.”



The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything

Stephen Covey, with Rebecca Merrill

New York: Free Press, 2006

In his book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*, Stephen Covey describes how trust in the workplace decreases cost and increases speed, productivity, collaboration and innovation. He explains that 13 specific behaviors are powerful for building trust because they build on enduring principles that govern trusting relationships, reflect personal credibility, can be put into action immediately, and can be applied to any relationship.

These behaviors build on several common ideas, which are briefly introduced here before elaborating on "Talk Straight," which is the specific behavior chosen for this summary

Background: Behavior

Behavior matters; specifically, what people do very often means more than what they say. Words can be useful to describe to others what they may expect, and, when these words are followed by consistent action, this helps build trust.

Behavior can be changed. Most people probably can think of behaviors that they personally have changed, even very difficult ones -- behaviors are malleable. Covey notes that, "for the most part, the difference between those who change behavior and those who don't is a compelling sense of purpose" (p. 129).

Each of the 13 behaviors can be thought of as existing on a continuum. The optimal balance is to strive for the middle; below that level is ineffective, and going past the optimal spot can take a potentially effective behavior too far.

Background: Trust

Building trust can be thought of in terms of "trust accounts," and within this concept are a few key points that Covey articulates using financial vernacular. These trust accounts are positively affected by trustworthy behavior (deposits), and are negatively impacted by trust-deducting behavior (withdrawals).

Each trust account we have is different, depending on the people with whom we are working to build trust. For example, building trust may look different with a 3-year-old than with a 30-year-old.

Each relationship has two trust accounts (your perception and the other person's perception of the trust in the relationship).

All deposits and withdrawals are not necessarily equal; some withdrawals, such as excluding a colleague's citation may be a much bigger deal than forgetting to say thank you for something.

Withdrawals often make a much bigger impact than deposits.

Often, trust is most efficiently built by reducing withdrawals.

A "deposit" to one person may not be viewed as such by another. For example, being taken to dinner may be seen as a deposit to one person, and an imposition (withdrawal) to another.

Behavior #1: Talk Straight. Tell the truth AND leave the right impression.

Most people can probably think of situations where they have felt like others were withholding information about facts, opinions or agendas. A 2005 study found that only 40 percent of employees believe that their bosses communicate honestly (Mercer Management Consulting study, 2005).

While distorting facts and leaving out information may convey a message that could be considered technically correct, this practice will leave others with the wrong impression, and will NOT inspire trust.

While not being outright deceptive, certain communication styles, such as beating around the bush, spinning, posturing, double-talking, and mincing words, may serve to manipulate others and will significantly diminish trust.

Effectively Talking Straight: The Optimum Level.

Below this optimum level is ineffective. Characteristics associated with *not* talking straight include a lack of courage, a self-focused agenda, a lack of verbal/interpersonal skills, or a failure to focus on outcomes that build trust.

Characteristics associated with talking too straight include a lack of humility, lack of caring, overbearing style, or insensitivity to consequences. Covey cautions to not take "Talk Straight" too far, nor to use this concept to justify being cruel or brutal in communication.

Suggestions for Improving the Ability to Talk Straight:

Preface discussions with a declaration of intent. This is particularly useful in close relationships and/or if you have difficult topics to discuss.

Ask yourself: What keeps me from talking straight? Is it a fear of being wrong or unpopular? A lack of courage? Work to identify the reason(s) and recognize the benefits of being honest and the price you pay when you're not.

Be aware of your conversation. Stop and ask yourself in the middle of a conversation, Am I talking straight? If you're not, figure out why, recognize you are paying a price for it, and work on your integrity and intent.

Get to your point quickly. Avoid lengthy preambles, and recognize that in most cases, "less is more."

Involve other people. Let appropriate others know your goal for improving your ability to talk straight and ask for feedback. This will help encourage your growth and development, and will also enlist the help of others who may be able to point out your blind spots.

Succinct Overview:

"Be honest. Tell the truth. Let people know where you stand. Use simple language. Call things what they are. Demonstrate integrity. Don't manipulate people or distort facts. Don't spin the truth. Don't leave false impressions." (Covey, 2006, p. 143)

Truth Distortions in Interpersonal and Organizational Conflict

Excerpted, with permission, from the author: Darrell Puls, February 2011, <http://www.mediate.com/articles/pulsD11.cfm>

We all have basic beliefs about how the world actually is and how it should be. These views are always biased but we believe them to be true. Thus, we make several instantaneous assumptions about the “facts” as we apprehend them:

- The facts are universal
- The facts are incontrovertible
- The facts follow a logical progression, e.g., A is to B as C is to D, etc.
- My rendering of the facts is forensic truth and yours is not. (Argyris & Senge 1990, 2006)

Unfortunately, many of what we understand as “facts” are actually opinions based on untested assumptions.

Truth stories collide as the result of concluding something to be factual when it is only an interpretation of partial or (rarely) a complete set of facts. For example, we often infer motive from actions and conclude the inference to be truth, when the reality is that we cannot know the full spectrum of intentions behind most acts. . . .

The approach to breaking the truth assumption must be handled very carefully.

1. A quiet sideways approach is most effective and least threatening.
2. Instead of challenging, ask simple questions:
 - a. What led you to that conclusion?
 - b. What would happen if some of the underlying data or assumptions were wrong or just a bit off?
 - c. Does everyone else agree with that conclusion?
 - d. Is it possible to reach another conclusion using the same information? (It is always possible and is usually what actually happened.)
 - e. Is it possible that those who disagree with you are at least partially right?
 - f. Is it possible that the others have information that you do not have?
 - g. Have you ever had the experience of believing something was true and later learning it was not?

Organizational Implications

Organizational fights are based on “collective truth” and “collective memories,” both of which are skewed as individual stories are absorbed and subsumed into the larger, more looming and powerful/threatening group narrative. Since individual truth is an amalgam of fact, interpretation, and distortion, collective memory tends to absorb and push forward the most sensational parts of the individual narratives, turning them into a stronger, more cohesive truth narrative that is also much more resistant to challenge. This is why there often is a sudden sense of “coming together” as the new amalgamation is presented as overarching, uncontested truth. This also tends to escalate the conflict.

The stronger the attack on the collective truth narrative, the more deeply it is believed and defended. When the fight is between factions within the same organization, each faction will defend more and more vociferously its “truth” against the other factions just as the entire organization will defend against the outside world.

The more effective and far more subtle approach from direct assault is finding common points of agreement and the deeper (and more likely shared) interests between conflicted parties. These can then form a new anchor point for the factions from which to view each other in ways of commonalities rather than in divergences. The intervener then moves on to help them identify all of their common interests, which usually will vastly outnumber their differences. For instance, both sides want to feed their families. Both sides want their children be safe and healthy. Both sides want to be financially secure. Once they see that they agree on far more than they disagree, their willingness to continue working cooperatively is strengthened (Broome 2004).

By identifying common interests without challenging truth narratives, it becomes possible for conflicted parties to begin working on a future together by side-stepping what might otherwise derail the enterprise: conflicting truth narratives and histories. Once they have successfully begun to work together, it becomes easier for them to discuss rationally those things that might have provoked a deeply emotional response earlier.

Eventually, if they are successful, they will renegotiate and rewrite their history to be more congruent with what is becoming a common future. With a rewritten and agreeably congruent history, they can move together into the future without being bogged down by competing “truths.”

Argyris, Chris and Peter Senge. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, 1990, 2006.

Broome, Benjamin J. “Reaching Across the Dividing Line: Building a Collective Vision for Peace in Cyprus,” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 2 (March 2004): 191-209.