

# **The Performance Center Symposium on Conflict, Consciousness and Context**

## **Proceedings**

**Upper Smith Creek Meeting Hall  
Silver Falls Conference Center  
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Attendees: Alain Gauthier, Fariborz Pakseresht, Dariush Khaleghi, Priscilla Cuddy, Stephanie Holmes, John Blakinger, Judith Aftergut, Katie Marshall, Stephen Hacker, Patti Maggiora, Mark Maggiora, Tammy Roberts, Walt Roberts

### **Areas of Investigation**

1. What is Conflict?
2. Why do we go asleep—Join in unproductive conflict?
3. Purpose of Conflict?
4. What are productive/evolving Mindsets with regard to conflict?
5. How best to engage others?

### **Outputs**

- Summary Statement for each area of Investigation—25 Words more or less.
- Post Symposium Proceedings on Website
- Identify and Develop Possible Model(s)

### **Ground Rules**

- Open, honest and direct
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be supportive
- Manage all agreements
- Stay focused and be prepared
- Be self-monitoring
- Maintain learning stance

# Summary Statements Development Notes

Eckhart Tolle Video—The Flowering of Human Consciousness

Everyone's Life Purpose

## 1. What is Conflict?

- The sense of self likes to be in conflict as a way to reinforce itself. Conflict is the epitome of self-seeking identify.
- Non-alignment of purposes. Resistance and in physics. A crucible. A way to strengthen the “mental me” or pseudo-self. A way to define who I Am and Am Not. Reactive.
- Conflict is the no, the disagreement.
- Conflict is born out of our inherent experience of being separate/oneness.
- Who are you? A name or field of awareness. Fictitious sense of self demands enhancement. The need for self-acceptance. Have we made it?
- Conflict is often with words and emotions—once removed from spirit.
- Conflict between body, mind and spirit.
- Desire to protect my “self” from an image there is something to protect. A connection to the past or projection of a future takes us out of the space of “NOW.”
- Why do we believe that we have “evolved” over time? With regard to conflict or spirituality.

## 2. Why do we go Asleep?

- Fear of losing the “image” of me—unwillingness to assume being incomplete and needing others in my life to be complete. Unwilling to let go of the “story” about Me.
- A momentary false sense of power. Avoidance; denial. Our dream of God; our dream that we know RIGHT. The ultimate pain of conflict tells us we are alive. We are exploring boundaries.
- Because we perceive the NO as “there's something wrong with this” and we try to convince that the NO shouldn't be.
- Do not honor/value the effect of suffering on dissolving our “image” of our “self.”
- We allow our *unnatural desires* of “what should have been (past)” or “what can be (future)” drive our being—taking us out of the NOW and the *natural connections* we have with others.
- It's a delusion that you need time to find yourself. Desire and fear are the motivating forces for our actions. Do not let go of desire, just learn how it operates. Stress is being in conflict with the moment. When we see the madness—that's the beginning of freedom.

### 3. **What are the productive/evolving Mindsets regarding conflict?**

- What matters is the undercurrent of Presence—who you are resides in the gap of stillness.
- The Kingdom of God is within us—it is up to us to allow the light to shine through. Veils prevent the light from shining through our Heart, Mind, Body and Soul.
- Bringing the YES into the NO. Surrendering/accepting what is, including my own resistance to the NOW.
- A desire to die—to let go of our “self”—as opposed to a desire to hold onto something that is much greater than us.
- See greatness outside of our selves—focus and orient our being around a dependent nature towards others—having a “co-traveler” mentality of mutual support and encouragement.
- The truth is not in the words, nor is it in the thoughts, it’s in the gap between the thoughts/words. When you notice the stillness in the flower or nature, you recognize it in yourself. We do not need any spiritual teachers if we can be with a flower in complete stillness. We need our mind for everything but knowing who we are.
- Allow the NO and seek to find an outcome to the NO that would transform/allow it.
- What matters is the silent field between the words—the gap between the word—the gap of stillness.
- A surrender mindset. Inclusive thinking/mindset. Possibility thinking/mindset.

### 4. **How best to engage others?**

- Recognize the nature and purpose of our conversations fully influence our relationship to the field of NOW and either generate or evaporate possibility.
- Use of conflict for the greater good.
- Don’t be trapped in a fiction your whole lifetime. We don’t have to wait for death to know who we are. The spiritual transformation is about death of the self.
- Being conscious of the body. The bell as a reminder of coming to the present moment. Alert presence. The silent field. The gap between thoughts. The name who you think you are.
- Allow the story of me to come to an end. Thought should not be problematic if you lose the self. Self seeking has come to an end. Give up the never ending search for yourself. Even the search at the spiritual level is self-gratifying.
- Imagine you don’t have a name.
- To start/build conflict is an approach.
- In stillness. With consciousness. Be seeing our essence out there manifested in the other.

# What is Conflict?

## Summary Statement Group Exercise

### Group Statements: (25 Words or less)

1. Duality, differences and opposites are part of the nature of reality. Conflict arises from these differences and is used by the self to create/promote identity—neither good nor bad—it just is.
2. Conflict is inherent in human nature and arises out of the sense of separation/isolation from source. It expresses itself in the inner, interpersonal and inter-group realms. (By design to reveal spirit).
3. An inherent struggle of isolated self existing/being in community seeking to express itself and align with others for a greater world.
4. Conflict is lack of connection of our spirit and to our source. It arises when we see that transformative process in ourselves and others. Hallelujah

### Combined Statement: (35 Words or less)

***Conflict or struggle is an inherent human condition  
arising from a sense of separation from source.  
It expresses itself as differences, dualities and opposites  
in the inner, interpersonal and inter-group realms.***

## **Personal statements: What's the inquiry I'm within around conflict?**

Judith: What is the role of grief in conflict?

Alain: Is it a source of polarization? Loaded with Fear.

- ❖ A struggle between Power (+) vs. Force (-) –consider the reign of Fear vs. Hope.
- ❖ Is it inevitable? A venture into Unconditional Love—Birth of the Baby.

Mark: How much of “Me-being” gets caught up and in the way?

- ❖ Function of being unconditional with others.
- ❖ Consider the purpose of Life's journey:
  - The Baby got it right.
  - Contributing to Community—Building One Another Up

Walt: Desire to accelerate the evolution. Focus on Making a Difference.

Priscilla: What is it about conflict that is good, useful, productive...?

John: Considering MLK—looking for something broader than the issue at hand—rally around.

Tammy: It is the Spirit in me – How that shows up with policy-level choices.

- ❖ Tendency to invalidate another person—challenge worldviews.

Patti: How do I remain present to the Now when conflict occurs?

- ❖ Invoke Spirit into and/or introduce it as a transformative tool.

Stephen: What is the Grand Design—seizing on conflict.

- ❖ Using oneness as a means to combat evil and overcome fear/separation.
- ❖ Being willing to place ourselves in uncertainty.

DK: Staying on purpose—overcoming conflict as a distraction.

Stephanie: Seeking the attractiveness of polarities—does it eventually come around?

Fariborz: What is the practical application – being Mindful?

- ❖ What will conflict do for us? Versus Staying on the Sideline?
- ❖ Is there a way to cut out the cycle of Birth and Death?

Katie: What should I say? Is there a question to pose to others?

# Conflict—So what, Why is it here—For what reason?

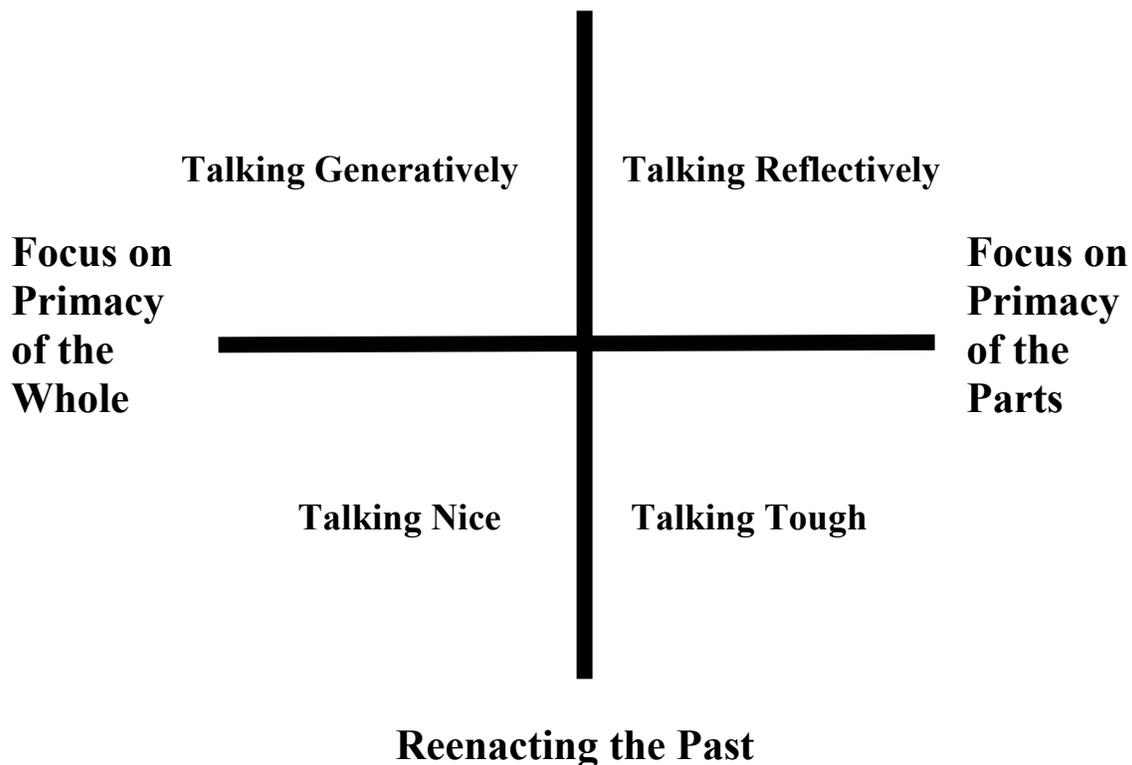
(Flip chart bullets)

- Checks/builds evil
- Defines me, makes me feel more alive
- Growing—offer of me to you, you to me
- Get clarity about me/you from the conflict, awakened us
- Defines boundaries, opportunity for choice
- Fuel for growth, death to birth
- Feel more powerful...identity based
- Can be conscious or unconscious
  - Choose      driven by

## Expressions of Conflict Model

(Alain's Definition & Display)

### Allowing the Future to Emerge



# Honorings Conversation & Optional Responses to Conflict

(Personal statements & Flipchart on Options)

- Humor
- Recharge
- Competition
- Break
- Act out-voice behind
- Debrief
- Sound break
- Reflection
- Call to ground rules
- Stillness
- Escalate
- Press on
- Set the stage for conflict
- See what all voices are (check in)
- Notice stillness around conflict
- Discuss what happen (name it)(call out madness)(see structure)
- Dyads/small groups
- Improve
- Leave
- Return to purpose – check alignment
- Images
- Revive oneness
- Split on tasks
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Check feelings
  - Meditation
  - Prayer
- Share suffering
- Engage generative conversation
- Questions
- Honor
  - Display appreciation for others
- Self monitor – check for conflict within and check conflict in the world

# Utility/Purpose of Conflict

(Flipchart Notes)

- Strengthens – steel sharpens steel
- Continue
- Decision making mechanism
- “Conflict break”
- Distracts attention from other problems
- Gives us a side/a group to belong to – creates social grouping
- Helps to prioritize competing initiatives
- Conflict evokes engagement and action
- Shows parts of ourselves we don’t own
- Produces adrenaline
- Justifies killing
- Creates purpose
- Makes someone whole
- Decreases population – the strong survive
- Be a hero
- Acts out hidden conflict
- Address un-reconciled grief
- Vengeance
- Wake up call
- Chance to act up – act out – break free
- Makes me better than you
- Gets me more stuff
- Exposes value differences
- Affirms

# Contributing Mindsets/How Best to Engage Others

(Flipchart bullets and Display on Honoring/Peace)

## PRODUCTIVE MINDSETS

- Oneness (Spirit) “we-ness” Greater Good
- Hold it “all” as sacred (honoring)
- Seek understanding of differences/passions
- Mindful of purpose, passion
- Building a puzzle, we all contribute to it
- Curiosity
- Equivalence – recognize unproductive and major/minor
- Expansion/willingness

## HOW BEST TO ENGAGE OTHERS

- Bring Yes to No
- *Appreciative inquiry*
- Judith’s Honoring practice –
  - Outcome of honoring is “PEACE”
  - What is the highest and best action I could take?
  - If Peace is not present, what am I not honoring?
    - What do I know about myself?
    - What do I know about audience?
    - What do I know about relevant info?
    - And what don’t I know?
- *Access my sense of humor*
- Ask why? (or other simple and personal questions)
- *Watch out for the no’s on top of no’s*
- Acknowledging the stand others might take
- *Appreciating that “it’s not heaven ‘til everyone gets there”*
- Honor the process and outcome and person and spiritual identity
- *Acknowledging major/minor perspectives/mindsets and move to equivalent model. (equal value and I take responsibility)*
- Pure thought, speech and action
- *Speak to the perfect in the other*
- Pause, breathe, and ask “what’s the purpose, passion, context, commitment?”
- *Developing comfort with silence – deep listening*
- Seeking others gifts – being fascinated with how others minds work
- *Developing muscle in shifting mindsets*
- Be willing to engage in difficult conversations
- Love, even if you don’t like the behavior
- Speak the unspeakable – COURAGE