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Juan Madera received his M.A. and Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology from Rice University. Dr. Madera's primary line of research focuses on human resource management as it applies to diversity management. In this research he has examined how perceptions of diversity influence applicant and employee work attitudes. He has over 50 publications and has been cited by over 300 local and national media outlets, including the Houston Chronicle, Forbes.com, Reuters.com, USA Today, and U.S. News & World Report. During his tenure at the University of Houston, Dr. Madera received both the Teaching and Research Excellence Awards from the Hilton College, where he teaches courses for the undergraduate, Master's, and PhD programs. As a graduate student at Rice, Dr. Madera was a recipient of a Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowship and the Gardner Award for the best dissertation in Social Sciences.

# Conflict Resolution

**Texas Hotel & Lodging Association**  
*Short Course*

**Juan M. Madera, PhD, CHE**  
*Professor, Conrad N. Hilton College of  
Hotel & Restaurant Management*

# What's on Tap Today?

Section 1: Conflict Resolution: Your Conflict Style

Section 2: Dealing with Customers: Listening Tips

Section 3: Conflict with Coworkers

Section 4: Conflict BETWEEN Others



# When we are finished...

1. Personal foundation/Your conflict style

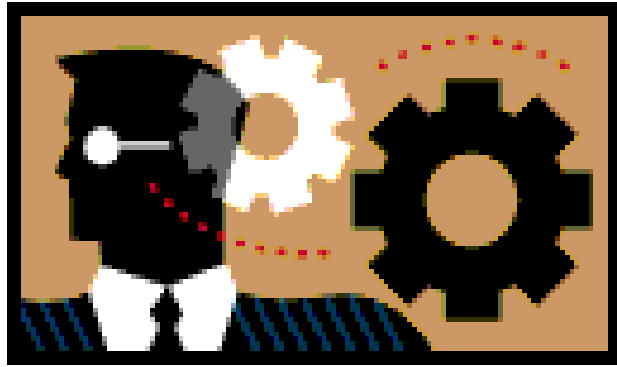
2. Listening tips and practices

3. Basic mediation skills



# Conflict 101

1. **A conflict is more than just a disagreement.**  
*When one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not it is real).*
2. **We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions.**
  1. Conflicts trigger strong emotions.
  2. Conflicts continue to fester when ignored.
3. **Choose your battles wisely – not everything is a conflict.**



## Where does conflict come from?

- Our personal fears and insecurities
- Misunderstandings in communication
- Lack of information or communication
- Need for control and predictability in our lives

## What does it cost you?

- Stress and burnout
- Decreasing productivity
- Quitting
- Getting into fights at home
- Decreased physical well-being: tension headaches, increased blood pressure, or abdominal pain
- Decreased emotional well-being: stress, depression, or mood swings





# **SECTION 1**

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION: YOUR CONFLICT STYLE**

# *Assessing My Preferred Style of Conflict Resolution*

**Instructions:** Using the following scale, rate each item in the manner which best reflects what you actually do in a conflict situation. This is a self-assessment of your current style of conflict resolution. Be honest as to what you actually DO versus what you think you should do in a conflict.

5-Always

4-Usually

3-Sometimes

2-Rarely

1-Never

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I go along with other's decisions rather than disagree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I encourage others to give a little.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I point out what we agree on rather than dwell on things we disagree about.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I stand my ground.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I go along with others – but after I tell them I disagree.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I agree to things and hope they will work out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I try to keep others from feeling bad in an argument.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I am concerned that we both get what we want.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I argue to get a portion of what I want.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I point out problems in the other person's logic.



5-Always

4-Usually

3-Sometimes

2-Rarely

1-Never

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. I try to figure out “why” people want what they want, and “why” I want what I want.

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. I avoid people when they are angry.

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. I try to keep the peace.

\_\_\_\_\_ 14. I operate from a “give and take” position.

\_\_\_\_\_ 15. I have trouble admitting I’m wrong.

\_\_\_\_\_ 16. I put the needs of others above my own.

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. I will “give a little to get a little” and expect the same of others.

\_\_\_\_\_ 18. I win arguments.

\_\_\_\_\_ 19. I keep my thoughts to myself rather than create a conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_ 20. I ask others to tell me what they want and I work with them to find solutions that satisfy both of us.

\_\_\_\_\_ 21. I do whatever I can to avoid hard feelings.

\_\_\_\_\_ 22. I am very concerned with how others feel.

5-Always

4-Usually

3-Sometimes

2-Rarely

1-Never

\_\_\_\_\_23. I try to get the other person to compromise.

\_\_\_\_\_24. I clearly state what I want out of a situation and am open to coming up with options to help me get it.

\_\_\_\_\_25. I try hard to get others to see my logic and the advantages of doing things my way.

\_\_\_\_\_26. I seek to find a middle ground.

\_\_\_\_\_27. I go out of my way to avoid an argument.

\_\_\_\_\_28. I let others have their way.

\_\_\_\_\_29. I listen carefully to the other person to see if I understand their point of view.

\_\_\_\_\_30. I will go to extremes to win an argument when I am “right”.

# Assessing My Preferred Style of Conflict Resolution

Score the exercise using the following scoring key to determine your preferred style and your “backup” style. Your “back-up” style is the approach in which you scored second highest.

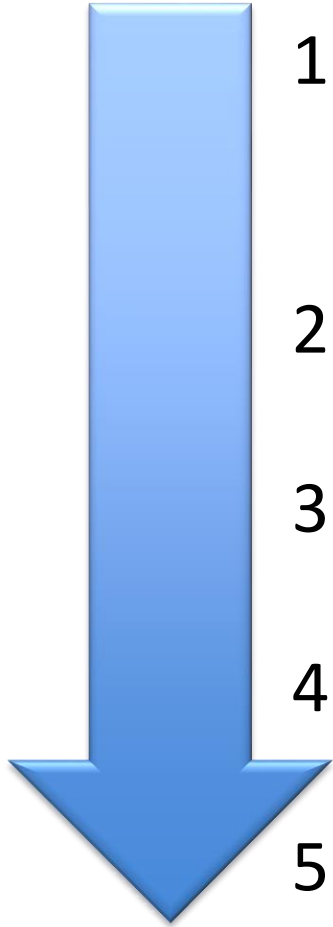
Confronting		Avoiding		Accommodating	
Item	Score	Item	Score	Item	Score
4	___	1	___	5	___
10	___	6	___	7	___
15	___	12	___	13	___
18	___	19	___	16	___
25	___	21	___	22	___
30	___	27	___	28	___
Total	___	Total	___	Total	___

Compromising		Collaborating		PREFERRED STYLES
Item	Score	Item	Score	
2	___	3	___	What is your preferred style? (Highest score)
9	___	8	___	_____
14	___	11	___	
17	___	20	___	What is your “back-up” style? (Next highest score)
23	___	24	___	
26	___	29	___	_____
Total	___	Total	___	

# Five Basic Responses to Conflict

Worst to Best Conflict Resolution Style



1. Confronting: using aggression, passive aggression, or violence
2. Avoiding: withdrawing or giving in
3. Accommodating: smoothing or submitting
4. Compromising: “splitting the difference”
5. Collaborating: working to solve the problem

## **Highest Level**

### **Collaborating: working to solve the problem**

I POINT OUT WHAT WE AGREE ON RATHER THAN DWELL ON THINGS WE DISAGREE ABOUT.

I AM CONCERNED THAT WE BOTH GET WHAT WE WANT.

I TRY TO FIGURE OUT “WHY” PEOPLE WANT WHAT THEY WANT, AND “WHY” I WANT WHAT I WANT.

I ASK OTHERS TO TELL ME WHAT THEY WANT AND I WORK WITH THEM TO FIND SOLUTIONS THAT SATISFY BOTH OF US.

I CLEARLY STATE WHAT I WANT OUT OF A SITUATION AND AM OPEN TO COMING UP WITH OPTIONS TO HELP ME GET IT.

I LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE OTHER PERSON TO SEE IF I UNDERSTAND THEIR POINT OF VIEW.



## **SECTION 2**

# **DEALING WITH CUSTOMERS: LISTENING TIPS**

# DEALING WITH CUSTOMERS



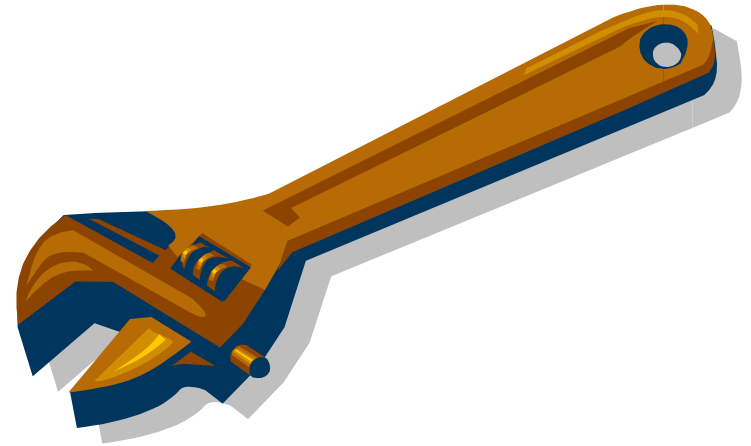
**Service Recovery:** Sometimes you or your employees make mistakes and customers don't like it.

## What customers want:

1. An apology
2. To resolve the problem
3. And sometimes: Free stuff!

## Your job:

1. To apologize
2. Resolve the problem
3. And sometimes give them free stuff (what policy does your company have?)



# Tips to Improve our Listening Skills

- First, learn to listen; then, listen to learn.
- Limit your talking
- Don't be distracted by what you are going to say next
- Stop being so quick to judge
- Employ empathetic listening



# Tips to Improve our Listening Skills

- Hold your fire!
- Focus on the speaker's words
- Keep an eye on non-verbal communication
- Paraphrase what you heard (active listening)!



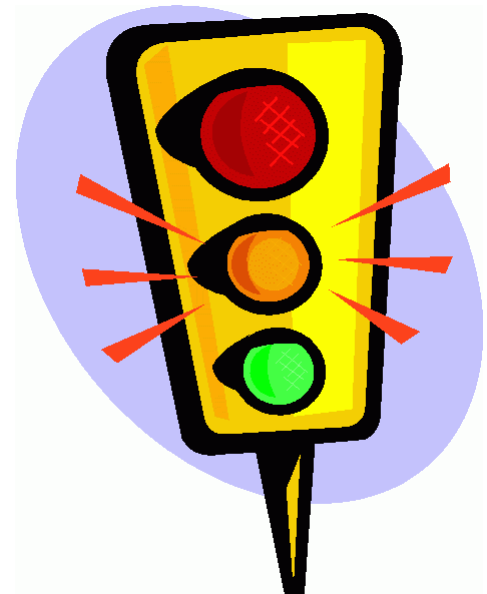
# ***Summarizing Phrases to Clarify and Communicate Better***

- ☐ What you're telling me is ...
- ☐ Let me see If I understand what you said ...
- ☐ As I understand your situation ...
- ☐ It seems to me that what you're saying is ...
- ☐ Please correct me if I'm wrong, but I hear you saying ...



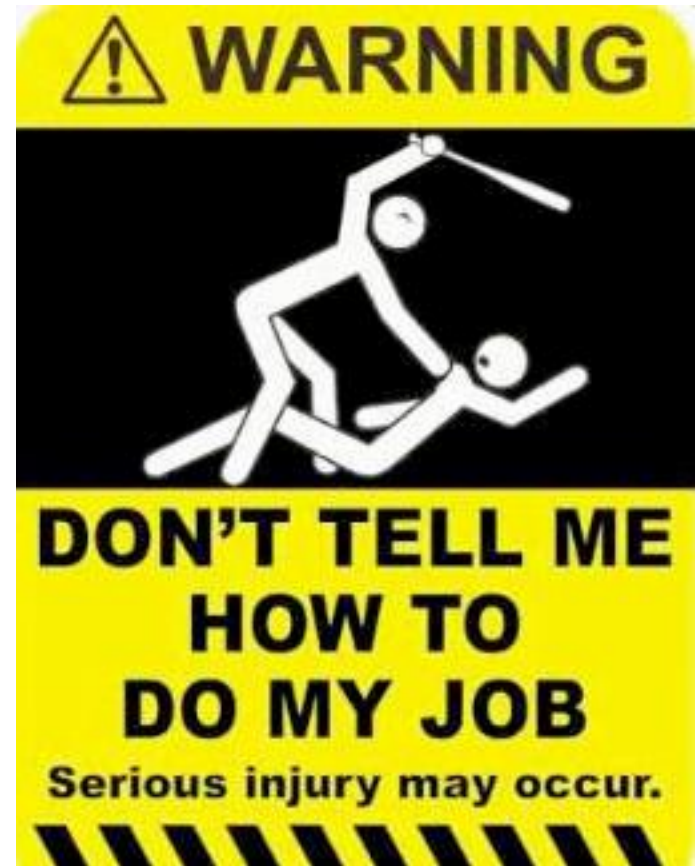
# Empathy is Important

- Think about driving in a large city:
  - Traffic
  - Getting cut off
  - Not using the turn signal
- Think about why people...



## Section 3

# DISAGREEMENTS WITH OTHERS



# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others

- Listen (doctors diagnose then prescribe)
- Ask questions and paraphrase (parrot)
- Remain calm (the first one to lose it loses)
- Know why you're arguing (don't get swept up in emotion)
- Be firm and clear



# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others

- Don't focus on the negative
- Don't look for the negative
- Remember Bugs Bunny!

# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others



How? Through “Crucial Conversation”

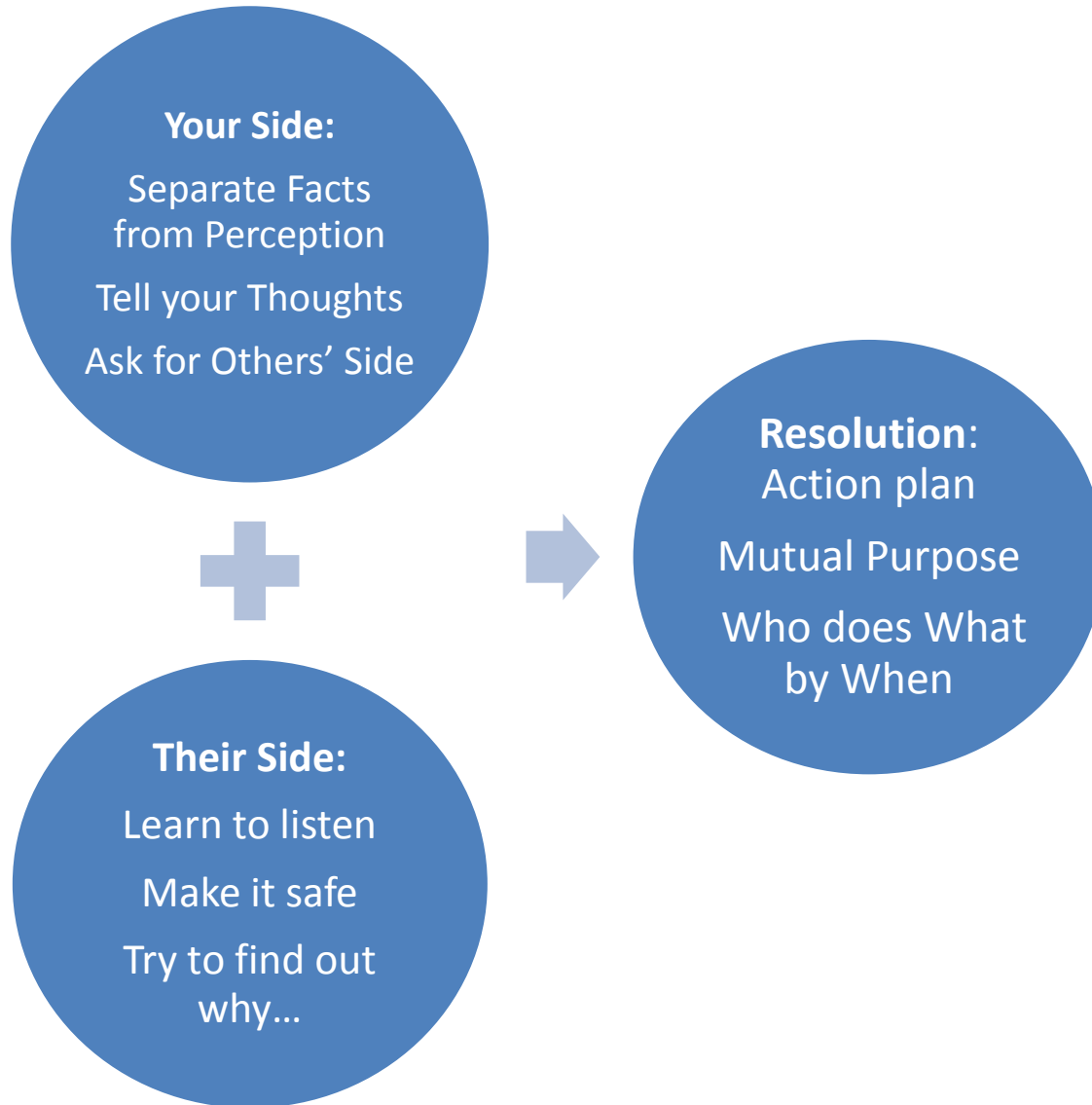
Specific steps in resolving conflicts

Separate Facts from “Perceptions”

Hear the other side

**- Tips: Don't rely on email or  
texts messages!**

# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others Through “Crucial Conversation”





# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others Through “Crucial Conversation”

## Your Side:

Separate Facts  
from Perception  
Tell your Thoughts  
Ask for Others’  
Side

## How we feel, interpret, and then act:

See &  
Hear

Feel

Perceive  
& Tell  
our Story

Act

## How we should interpret and then act:

FACTS  
only!

Then tell  
your  
Thoughts

Then ask  
for the  
Other Side

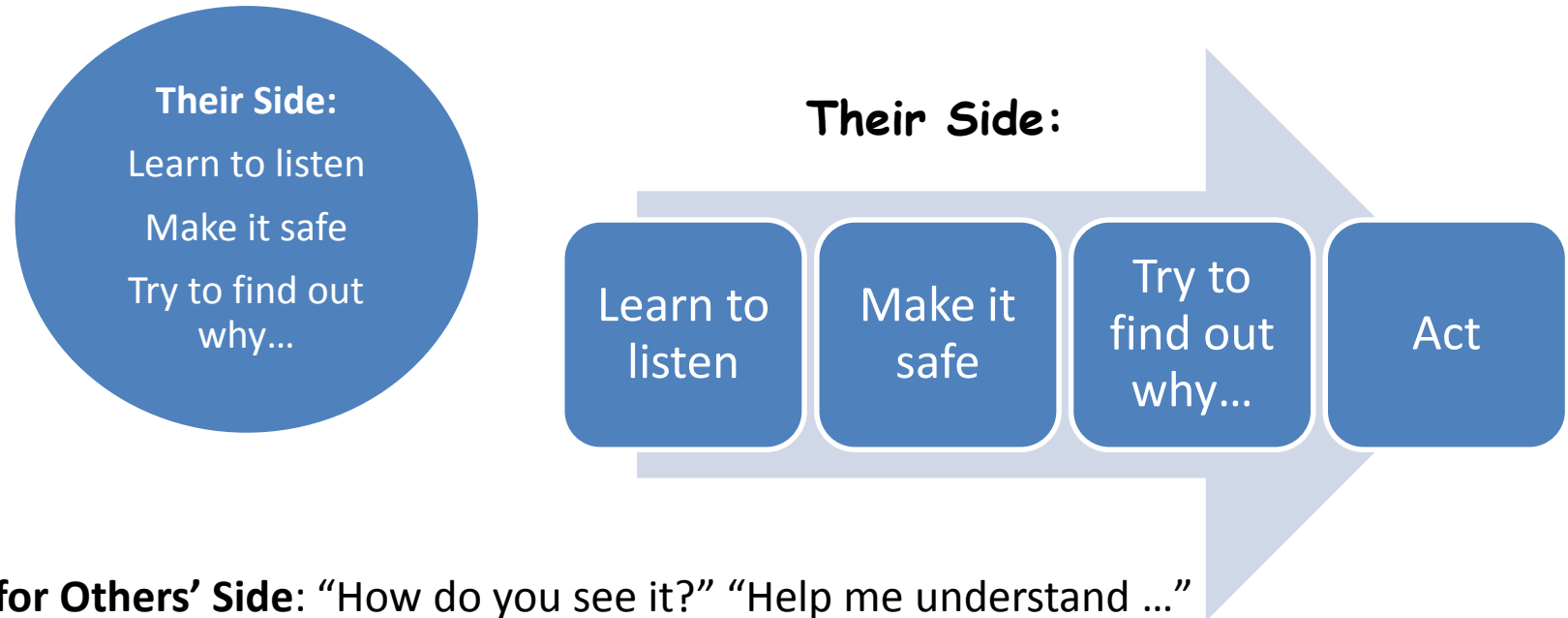
Act

**Share your Facts:** “I noticed ...”  
“Twice you ...”

**Tell your thoughts:** “I’m beginning to  
wonder if ...” “It seems to me ...”

**Ask for Others’ Side:** “How do you  
see it?” “Help me understand ...”

# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others Through “Crucial Conversation”



**Ask:** “I want to know what you think about ...”

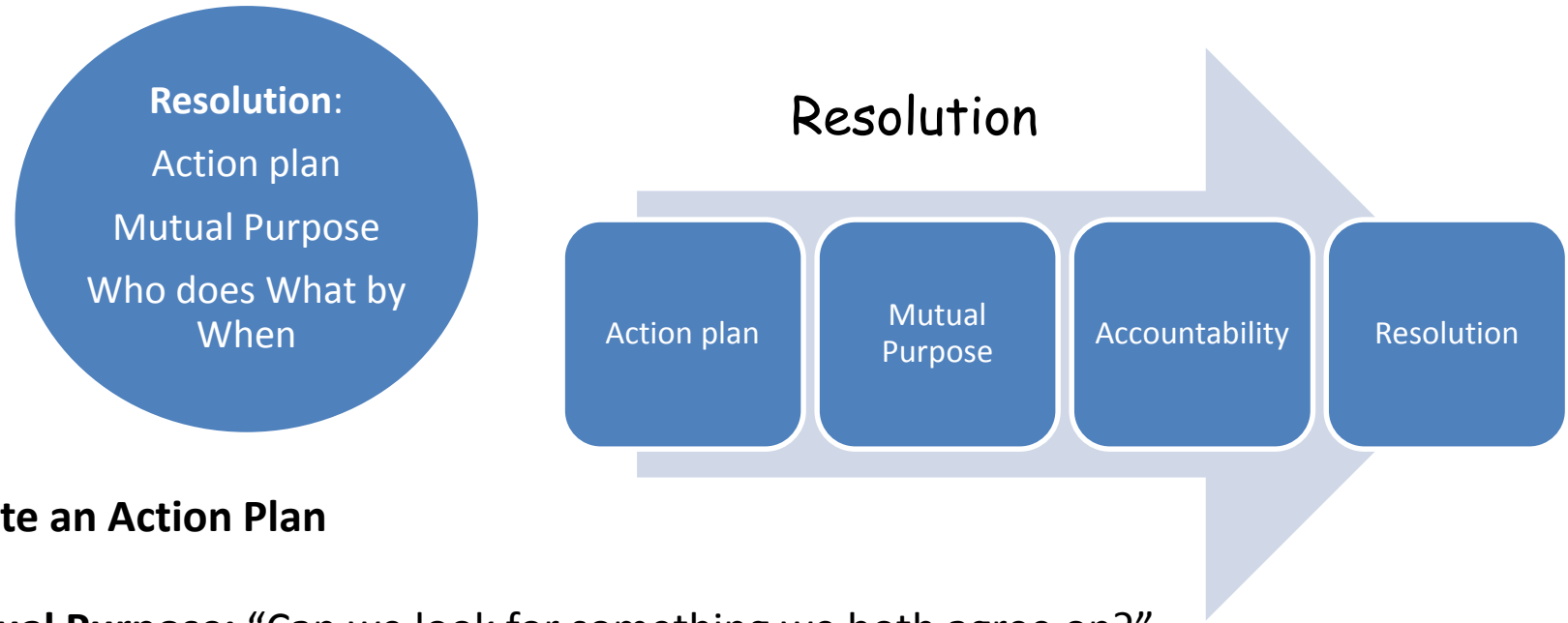
**Paraphrase:** “So you’re saying \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Potential problems:**

**Silence:** “You seem reluctant. Are you sure you’re OK with it?”

**Aggression:** “Wow, you seem really upset. What’s up?”

# Resolving *your* Conflict with Others Through “Crucial Conversation”



## Create an Action Plan

**Mutual Purpose:** “Can we look for something we both agree on?”

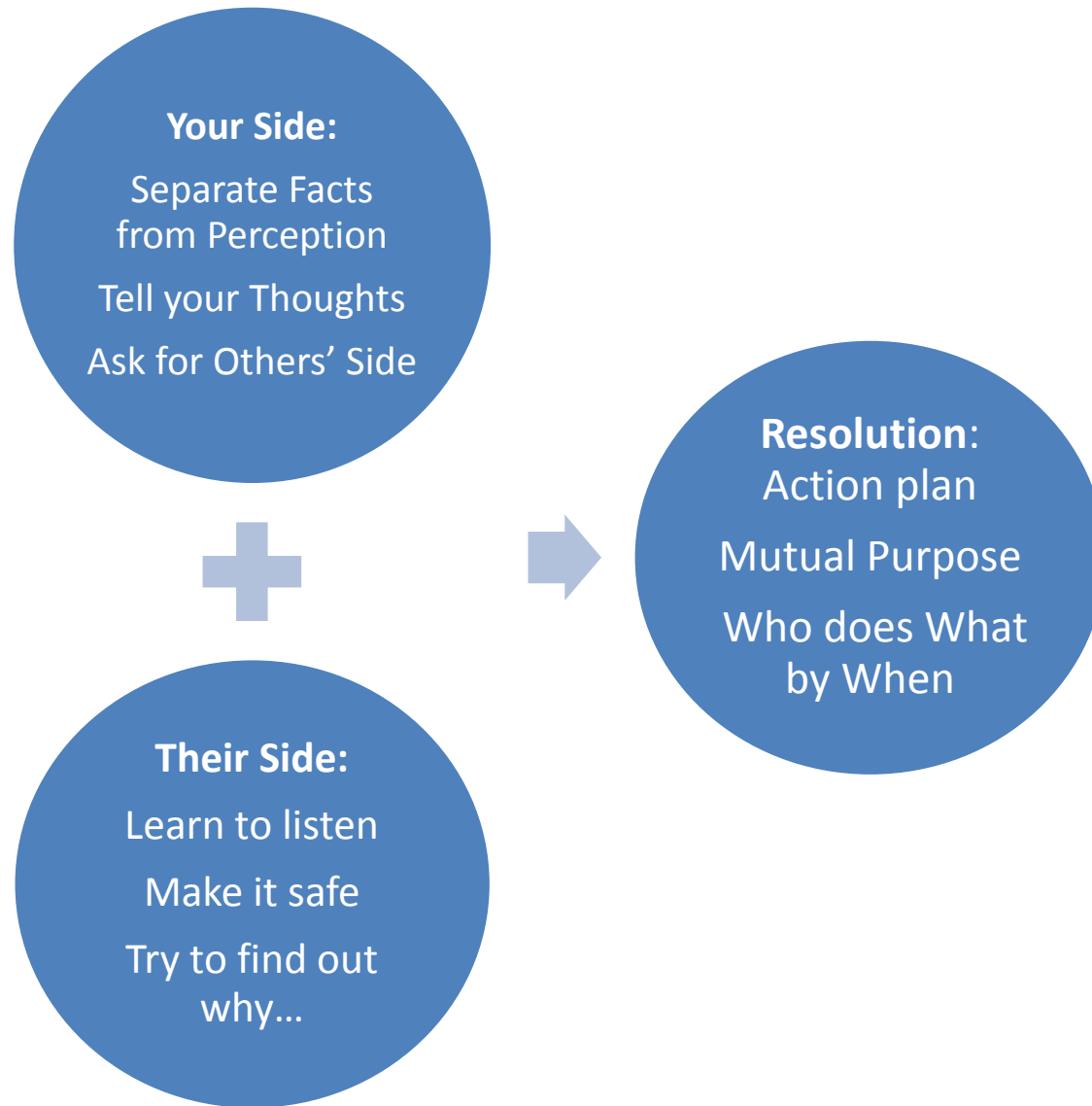
**Recognize Purpose:** “Why do you want \_\_\_\_\_?” “This is why I want \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Brainstorm strategies:**

“What ideas do you have?” “I was thinking it may help if ...”

**Accountability:** Determine Who, does What, by When, and how we will Follow up.

# Summary of “Crucial Conversation”

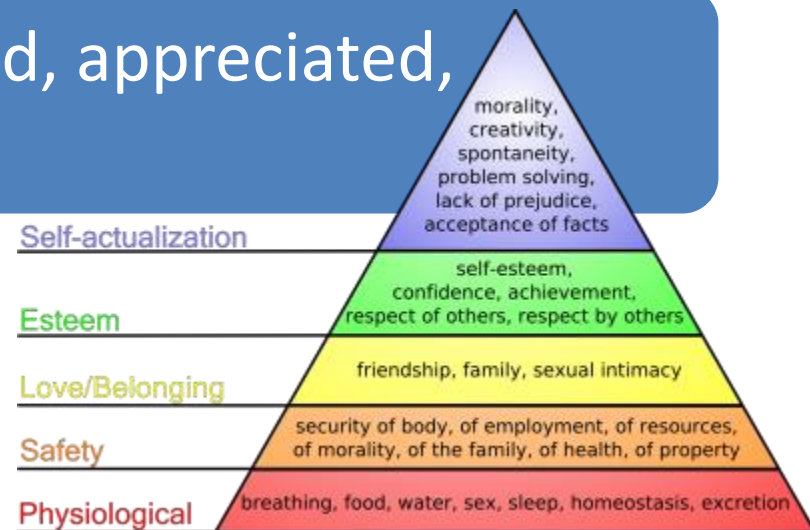


# Resolving *your* Disagreements with Others

- Focus on needs (win/win)

- Physical, mental, financial needs

- Mental needs needed, validated, appreciated, understood



## Section 4

# ***REDUCING & REFEREEING*** **CONFLICTS BETWEEN OTHERS**

# REDUCING Conflicts Between Others

To keep conflict from erupting:

1. Establish a strategic plan  
– reference point

2. Establish unequivocal office policies  
– accountability



# REFEREEING

## Disagreements Between Others

Once conflict erupts between two supporting staff:

1. Be aware that resolutions can take time
2. Speak to parties separately – let them speak uninterrupted
3. Bring parties together
4. Remain neutral
5. Get parties to express FACTS!!!
6. Keep the solution in the spotlight





# REFEREEING

## Disagreements Between Others

### 8. Impasse

– what are the risks of not finding an acceptable solution?

### 9. Mutually choose a solution

### 10. Thank both parties

### 11. Follow up



# Conflict Resolution Quiz

## True or False?

The use of email during conflict is a wise decision

Talking more will improve your listening.

Straightforward office policies help prevent conflict from occurring

Refereeing disagreements between others can sometimes be a long process

Repeating what you've heard shows good listening skills

When conflicts arise, do not give ultimatums

When you have a disagreement with others, clear demands are key

When listening, be quick to assess and make a judgment.

A mediator should never take sides when refereeing

When refereeing disagreements between others, no steps are needed after a solution is agreed upon.

# Conflict Resolution Quiz

## *Answers*

False

False

True

True

True

True

False

False

True

False