

Tough at the Top

Resource #9



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How to Ease conflict.

Chapter 9: The Odd Couple

Isn't it nice when employees are happy? Generally speaking, we're happy when we are able to work to our strengths - and also, in accordance with our values.

Values embody what's truly important to us. They are complex and intangible, and are linked to our beliefs about what is good and bad, right and wrong. Our values guide our every decision and the satisfaction or crossing of them can produce strong emotional reactions.



Here, Lola's and Ted's motivators are totally different.

“Ted wants to do a new act. He’s really excited about it. He says it’s a world first.

“There are so many ways it can go wrong. And if he misses –“

Lola's values are fear driven – she's afraid of getting hurt, and she needs her feelings to be acknowledged. Ted's values are goal driven – he wants to create an amazing new act and he needs to be supported.



When we consider our values, NLP tells us that we have ‘moving towards’ values, which when satisfied, bring us pleasure and satisfaction. We also have ‘moving away’ from values which attempt to keep us from feeling pain. The important thing is that we are all different. Ted has a moving toward goal – creating an amazing new act - and Lola a moving away from goal - avoiding injury or even death. Here are some example of different values.

Moving away from VALUES

Moving towards VALUES

- I don't want to fail
- I don't want to be left behind
- I don't want to get ill
- Change means the unknown
- I feel trapped

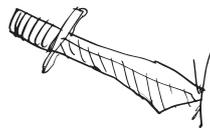
- I want to be successful
- I want us to lead/show others how it's done
- I want to feel healthy
- Change means new things
- I feel part of something

Values are hard, if not impossible, to change. They link to the fight or flight part of our brain (from our caveman days). No one's perception is better than another, but being aware of them can be half the battle. It's important to know, not just what kind of values we ourselves hold, but what kind of values are held by the people we work with. It's also important to remember that there is no “good” or “bad” type of value...they're just different ways of looking at the world. So what's your type – toward or away from?

State a value that's important to you in work. Is it a moving toward or away from value?

Now think about the conflicts you observe amongst the team - perhaps someone you feel you are always up against. We know you aren't a mind reader, but what do you think their values are? Away from or towards?

Try and jot down what you think their values may be? Whats important to them?



The engaging leader will seek out the common ground, and help employees in conflict understand each other's perceptions. Adam helped Ted and Lola understand where their miscommunication was and how it was linked to their crossed values – fear and safety. Pointing this out made them sit up, realise that everyone's value-driven needs must be appeased, and then find the areas of agreement.

“We’ve got an idea for a new routine,” said Ted, holding tightly to Lola’s hand. We thought we’d combine two elements we already have...”

Thinking again about a conflict you’ve observed or been part of - what are the values that need to be appeased (on both sides) before you can move forward?

Considering these, do any solutions spring to mind? Remember these solutions don't need to be generated by you - they could be more successful when created collaboratively?