

Sample (Session Four) from *Leading Skillfully*

This sample session is taken from the Learner's Guide, which every learner is required to obtain. The Instructor's Guide has the exact same content but also includes PowerPoint Slides, Exams, Leader's Notes and Instructor Tips for teaching each session.

Look For These Unique Design Features In This Session:

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| Session Outline | – Listed on the first page to provide a brief overview. |
| Objectives | – A primary educational objective, plus detailed supporting objectives for each main concept. |
| Main Diagram | – Each module has a main diagram to provide a “You Are Here” visual for the learner. |
| Diagrams & Boxes | – Many diagrams and visuals to enhance and support the teaching concepts. |
| Bolded Key Points | – The key points are bolded in a concise way for the Instructor and Learner to easily grasp the essential concepts. |
| Outline Format | – All sessions use an easy-to-follow outline format to make the lesson easy to teach and easy to learn. |
| Point to Ponder | – Summary or climactic thoughts placed in a shaded oval area to provide emphasis or interaction. |
| Group Application | – Every session has a Group Application at the end for small group activity, interaction, and assessment. |
| Discussion Questions | – Further questions for discussion and reflection. |
| Appendices | – Added material to study the topic further or provide assessments and resource tools. |

Leading Skillfully

Contains Seven Sessions

Teaching Sessions

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There are seven sessions in *Leading Skillfully* module. The circled session shown above is printed in this book to provide a sample for you.

SESSION OUTLINE

A. Attaining a Healthy Perspective of Conflict.

1. Conflict is inevitable.
2. People tend to view conflict very differently.
3. There are positive benefits from conflict.

B. Biblical Mandate to Confront Conflict.

1. The Bible instructs us to confront conflict.
2. Biblical leaders confronted conflict.

C. Typical Sources of Conflict.

1. Personality clashes.
2. Unmet expectations.
3. Misunderstandings.
4. Independence.
5. Inflexibility.

D. Five Stages of a Conflict Cycle.

1. Tension Development.
2. Role Confusion.
3. Injustice Collecting.
4. Attacking.
5. Adjusting.

E. Paul's Pattern for Conflict Resolution.

1. Affirmation: Begin with positive words.
2. Negotiation: Find middle ground.
3. Options: Identify the possible solutions.
4. Clarification: Clarify your intentions.
5. Decision: Ask for a decision and response.
6. Expectation: Share positive expectations of them.

Note: This module was created in partnership with Tim Elmore and Growing Leaders, Inc. All additional material will be referenced. We highly recommend the resources of Growing Leaders, Inc., to accompany this module. To order, call (770) 495-3332 or visit www.growingleaders.com.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Primary Objective:

To help leaders effectively resolve conflict and teach others to do the same.

Supporting Objectives:

- A. Participants will be able to explain three keys to attaining a healthy perspective of conflict.
- B. Participants will be able to identify two aspects of the biblical mandate to confront conflict.
- C. Participants will be able to describe five typical sources of conflict and how to help prevent them.
- D. Participants will be able to explain five stages of a conflict cycle.
- E. Participants will be able to explain six aspects of Paul's pattern for conflict resolution.



A. Attaining a Healthy View of Conflict.

1. Conflict is inevitable.

[Barnabas and Paul] had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus (Ac 15:39).

- Conflict is unavoidable as long as people are involved.
- You cannot escape it, it will eventually take place.
- You must accept this and be ready to face it.

2. People tend to view conflict very differently.

Some people view conflict as a sin to be avoided, while others view conflict as a good opportunity to assert their authority and establish their position.

- The proper view of conflict is the dual tension between truth and grace.
- When a person recognizes this dual tension, conflict becomes an opportunity to seek truth while giving grace.

3. There are positive benefits from conflict.

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Pr 27:17).

God has several purposes for allowing conflict.

- Conflict forces us to face issues not faced before.
- Conflict forces us to find common ground.
- Conflict causes us to change and grow and be like Christ.
- Conflict, when properly handled, serves to draw people together.

B. Biblical Mandate to Confront Conflict.

Many people, including leaders, tend to completely avoid conflict and hope it will just go away or resolve itself. This is a tragic contradiction to how the Bible teaches us to approach conflict.

1. The Bible instructs us to confront conflict.

There are many Bible verses that instruct us to proactively confront conflict.

- Admonish (warn by reminding) people (Col 1:28).
- Scripture is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training (2Ti 3:16).
- Reprove, rebuke, and exhort (2Ti 4:2).
- Reprove severely that they may be sound in faith (Tit 1:13).

2. Biblical leaders confronted conflict.

Listed below are a small sample of Biblical examples.

a. Various Old Testament leaders confronted conflict.

- Moses confronted Pharaoh (Ex 5:1,2).
- David confronted Goliath (1Sa 17:45,46).
- Nathan confronted David (2Sa 12:7).
- Esther appealed to the king (Es 7:3,4).
- Nehemiah appealed to the king (Neh 2:2-5).

b. Jesus confronted conflict.

- Jesus confronted the disciples' ambition (Mk 10:35-46).
- Jesus overturned the tables in the temple area (Mt 21:12, 13).
- Jesus responded to the Sadducees (Mt 22:23-29).
- Jesus rebuked the Pharisees (Mt 23:1-36).
- Jesus responded to Martha (Lk 10:38-42).

c. Paul confronted conflict.

- Paul at the Jerusalem council (Ac 15:1-21).
- Paul confronted Peter (Gal 2:11-14).
- Paul appealed to Philemon for Onesimus (Philemon).

Point to Ponder

The number one reason ministry leaders leave the ministry is over unresolved conflict with their peers.

George Barna

C. Typical Sources of Conflict.

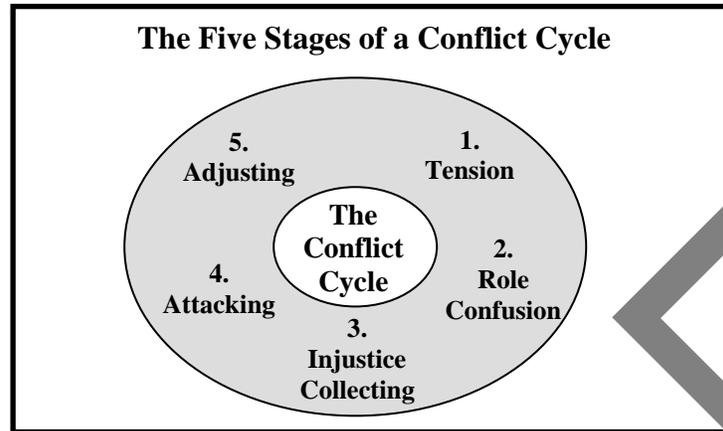
The following issues represent the typical sources of conflict between people.

1. **Personality clashes.**
 - Vastly different personality types often clash.
 - To help prevent conflict, we should study personality profiles to better understand and relate with diverse people.
2. **Unmet expectations.**
 - Conflict arises when one party does not experience the expected results of a discussion, meeting or agreement.
 - Expectations are often unclear, or even unspoken.
 - To help prevent conflict, state or even document your expectations. Clarify them!
3. **Misunderstanding.**
 - Misunderstanding comes via: poor communication, false assumptions, not listening well, or simple memory loss.
 - To help prevent conflict, review key points and write things down. Follow up often to confirm the details.
4. **Independence.**
 - Some people think and act without input or awareness of others, which often causes problems for everyone involved.
 - To help prevent conflict, seek more interaction, communication, and cooperation.
5. **Inflexibility.**
 - Some people must have everything their way and are unwilling to consider other views or methods.
 - To help prevent conflict, work on flexibility, negotiation, and allowing the freedom of ideas.
[See Appendix 4A]

Behaviors That Indicate Conflict Is Likely

- Hostility: Frequent anger, harshness and sudden outbursts.
- Ungratefulness: No gratitude, feel they deserve more.
- Distrusting: No trust, feel deceived, betrayed, or suspicious of others.
- Anxiousness: Stressed, fearful, constantly worried about the future.
- Negativity: Critical, skeptical, always seeing the negative.
- Inexpressive: Unable to express oneself, will not speak up.
- Oversensitive: Overreact to small comments, temperamental.
- Overcompensating: Too aggressive or talkative, hiding inner struggle.
- Codependency: Needy and attracts needy people, tries to “fix” others.

D. Five Stages of a Conflict Cycle.



1. **Tension Development.**

Tension is often sensed, yet ignored. A sense of the loss of freedom in the person gives way to a lack of trust as well as confusion regarding proper roles and behavior.

2. **Role Confusion.**

Because of confusion or discomfort, the person may attempt to identify the source of tension by asking questions like: “What am I doing to cause this tension? What is he or she doing? What is happening here? Who is in charge?”

3. **Injustice Collecting.**

- The person is convinced that things will get continually worse. They begin to isolate themselves and gather “ammunition” for the coming battle.
- All past and present injustices are recollected, focused on blame or internal accusation. At this stage, the person looks for the “enemy” rather than focusing on the issues.

4. **Attacking.**

- The person either accuses someone or talks about the perceived injustices with others.
- At this point, the person often makes a defense that blames the other person for the conflict. At this stage, a poorly managed response will lead to an unresolved problem.

5. **Adjusting.**

- Each participant chooses as to how they will end the conflict. Breaking fellowship or new relational patterns emerge that apply to everyone involved.
- Poorly managed conflict results in avoidance or dislike, while properly handled conflict results in a better relationship and commitment to proper conflict resolution.

E. Paul's Pattern for Conflict Resolution.

The Apostle Paul presented an effective pattern for conflict resolution with his letter to Philemon.

1. **Affirmation: Begin with positive words.**

⁴I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. ⁶I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith..... ⁷Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you ... have refreshed the hearts of the saints (Phm 4-7).

- Get your emotions settled down before making contact.
- Take initiative in contacting and meeting the person.
- Always focus first on the person's positive qualities.
- Practice the 101% Principle, which means find the 1% you can agree with, and give it 100% of your attention initially.

2. **Negotiation: Find middle ground.**

¹⁰I appeal to you for my son Onesimus.... ¹¹Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. ¹²I am sending him... back to you. ¹³I would have liked to keep him with me...(Phm 8-13).

- Meet people in the middle by accepting some responsibility for the conflict.
- Acknowledge the differences in view, personality style, and perspective. Recognize where you might have misunderstood.
- Listen carefully and quietly to their perspective.

3. **Options: Identify the possible solutions.**

But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced (Phm 14).

- Express the possible options, as you understand them.
- Appeal to the person why your choice is desired.
- Attempt to maintain everyone's dignity and continued friendship.

4. **Clarification: Clarify your intentions.**

¹⁵Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good – ¹⁶no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord (Phm 15-16).

- Clarify your feelings on the matter, along with your view of the situation.
- Narrow the focus to the key priorities.
- This is the moment where confusion must go away and understanding is reached.

5. **Decision: Ask for a decision and response.**

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me (Phm 17).

- Ask for forgiveness, peace, repentance, changed behavior, or whatever must happen to bring resolution.
- Ask the key question and then silently wait for their response. Require the other person to respond.
- If you do not require a clear response, the problem will be ongoing when you thought it was resolved. The other person will feel that you have only discussed the matter, but did not resolve it.

6. **Expectation: Share positive expectations of them.**

²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. ²²And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers (Phm 21,22).

- Pray together, asking God to restore, improve, and bless the relationship.
- Establish positive expectations of how they will think, act, and respond in the future.
- Rebuild trust and hope for a good relationship. [See Appendix 4B]

A Model of Good Conflict Resolution

One of the world's most famous conflict resolution success stories took place between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev. They followed the principles described in this lesson.

The nuclear arms race was posing a threat to human existence. The two leaders met in Iceland to conduct negotiations. Reagan was well-known for his endearing and affirming style that put even his opponents at ease. The two leaders walked the grounds and spent time getting to know each other personally. As they strolled, Reagan acknowledged that both countries had mistrusted each other and allowed the nuclear build up to get out of hand.

A key moment of clarification came when Reagan pointed out that human existence was at stake. He proceeded to firmly ask Gorbachev to make a decision to dismantle the Soviet nuclear arms build up and insisted that the U.S. would not curtail their satellite defense system. They did not make an agreement at that time, but committed to continue working on it.

Six years later, Reagan went to Berlin and declared, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall [the Berlin Wall]! In an historic response, Gorbachev led the Russians in disarmament and the tearing down of the Iron Curtain. He later stated that the key was that Reagan had treated him so well back in Iceland. The two leaders had become and remained friends for the rest of their lives.

Group Application

Answer the following questions based on your personal experience with handling conflict.

1. Your Perspective of Conflict.

Describe your previous perspective regarding conflict. Has it been healthy or unhealthy? Explain your answer.

2. Sources of Your Conflicts.

What have been the most common sources of your conflicts? Have you had more external or internal sources of conflict? Explain your answer. If you have now more clearly defined the sources, then how can you better prevent more conflict in the future?

3. The Process of Your Conflict Resolution.

Describe the process you typically used to resolve your conflicts. Based on what you have learned in this session, how can you improve that process?

Discussion Questions for Session 4

1. How have the leaders that you have served under and around handled conflict? Was it healthy or unhealthy? Explain your answer.
2. What are the most frequent sources of conflict that you see taking place in the church environment? In your work environment? In your home environment? Explain your answer.
3. Which parts of the conflict resolution process are strongest for you? Which parts are weakest? Explain your answer.

APPENDIX 4A

Deeper Sources of Internal Conflict

Internal sources of conflict are caused by unmet inner needs within people. These unmet needs cause unhealthy thinking and behavior that eventually create conflict with others.

Internal Sources of Conflict	
Based on Unmet Needs	
<u>Unhealthy Thinking</u>	<u>Unmet Need</u>
1. Feeling Inferior	– Sense of Worth
2. Feeling Insecure	– Sense of Belonging
3. Feeling Inadequate	– Sense of Competence
4. Feeling Illegitimate	– Sense of Purpose

1. **Feeling Inferior: Lacking a sense of worth.**

- Feeling inferior comes from not recognizing that Christ loved us and valued our individual worth so much that He gave His own life on our behalf.
- Feeling inferior causes people to shrink back, be complacent, and let others down, especially when needed most.

2. **Feeling Insecure: Lacking a sense of belonging.**

- Feeling insecure comes from not recognizing our sense of belonging in Christ, which guides where we fit in life and in relationship with others.
- Feeling insecure causes people to be impulsive, indecisive, frequently changing direction, and constantly seeking approval from others.

3. **Feeling Inadequate: Lacking a sense of competence.**

- Feeling inadequate comes from not acknowledging our complete dependence on Christ. We try to do things in our own strength, which ultimately causes failure.
- Feeling inadequate causes people to cover up their mistakes, be misleading, cause division, and refuse to receive any help.

4. **Feeling Illegitimate: Lacking a sense of purpose.**

- Feeling illegitimate comes from not recognizing our Christ-centered destiny, purpose, or eternal contribution.
- Feeling illegitimate causes people to complain, be unfulfilled, frustrated, dissatisfied and inconsistent in daily life.

Note: The answer for all four internal sources of conflict is to recognize who we are in Christ and let our true identity in Christ be expressed in our daily life.

APPENDIX 4B**Conflict Resolution Summary**

By Dr. Joseph Umidi

Conflict resolution is now the number one reason that pastors and church leaders leave the ministry. It is also a key reason why more than 100,000 churches will close within the next several years. To successfully manage and resolve conflict, it is important to understand several basic factors that can serve as guidelines.

1. Perception and Conflict.

Understand that conflict is not inherently bad and can ultimately resolve problematic issues.

- Conflict is inevitable because we are all imperfect and living in an imperfect world.
- Conflict itself is not sinful, but can often lead to growth, change, and new direction.
- Conflict is often the result of honest differences of opinion and changes affecting people's status.
- Biblically faced conflict will always attain God's divine blessing and providence.

2. Types of Conflict.

Determine which of these common categories seems to fit the conflict being experienced.

- Intrapersonal: conflict within the individual himself or herself (Psalm 32: David battles his sin).
- Interpersonal: conflict between individuals (Genesis 27: Jacob verses Esau).
- Intragroup: conflict within a group (Acts 21: Paul and the Caesarean believers).
- Intergroup: conflict between groups (1 Kings 18: People of God verses prophets of Baal).

3. Predictable Areas of Conflict.

Recognize that certain "hot topics" will frequently trigger conflict and must be handled sensitively.

- Cultural differences cultivate differing views of life and lifestyles.
- Generational differences have significant impact on personal values and perceptions.
- Leadership differences arise when teams see styles as "different" rather than "complimentary."
- Theological differences vary by denominational and traditional backgrounds.
- Personal preferences vary according to the individual's style of choice.
- Differing priorities reflect that everyone has an opinion that may differ from the next person.

4. Solving Conflict.

Adopt the following steps in order to help diffuse tense situations while working toward a resolution.

- Avoid unhealthy approaches and practices (emotionalism, anger, gossip, etc.).
- Give permission for others to work through their differences.
- Allow others to speak and share their concerns.
- Give protection for others as they work out differences. Be ready to act as a mediator not a judge.
- Empower the weaker individual to ensure that they are able to communicate effectively.
- Understand that conflict resolution takes time. Do not view it as an interruption.
- First agree on the issues or end results of what is to be accomplished.

— *Notes* —

SAMPLE