

Not for distribution without explicit permission from authors

Conflict Competence in People Pleasing Work Cultures

Judy Oyedele & Sabine Marx

Greater Public | October 2024

BREVITY & WIT

Session 2

October 22, 2024



About Us



Judy Oyedele
She/her
Senior Consultant



Sabine Marx, Ph.D
She/her
Senior Consultant



About Brevity & Wit

- Operating since 2016
- Unique approach combines design thinking, behavior change science, and IDEA
- Clients span media, international NGOs, and professional services firms



Learning Objectives

- Understand how people-pleasing behaviors undermine an inclusive and equitable culture.
- Identify areas of control and influence in creating a conflict competent culture.
- Discover actionable steps to overcome people pleasing.



How would you rate your conflict competence?

1



I didn't know this was even a thing...

2



I've got room to improve

3



It's becoming more natural

4



I got this!

5



I could teach it!



Agenda

Session 1 – People Pleasing

Session 2 – Conflict Competence

Putting it all into practice

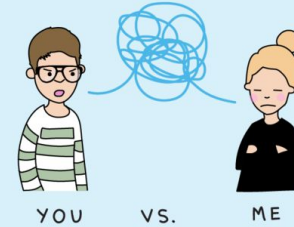
Q&A



Disclaimer. *If you are in an unsafe situation (physically unsafe) we don't ask you to abandon people pleasing behaviors. If you need help, we recommend reaching out to the National Domestic Violence Hotline <https://www.thehotline.org/>, call 1.800.799.SAFE (7233), or text "Start" to 88788. Also consider contacting your local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) office <https://www.eeoc.gov/>.*

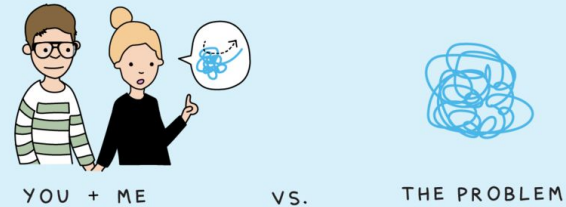
Conflict Competence

UNHEALTHY CONFLICT



YOU VS. ME

HEALTHY CONFLICT



YOU + ME VS. THE PROBLEM



Myths of Conflict Competence

- ✘ Conflict competence means seeking out conflict
- ✘ Only leaders need conflict competence
- ✘ Conflict competence is mostly a communication skill
- ✘ Conflict competence is only necessary when things are going wrong



Conflict Competence

“Conflict Competence is the ability to develop and use cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills that **enhance productive outcomes of conflict while reducing the likelihood of escalation or harm.**”

Center for Creative Leadership



Cognitive Skills

Self Awareness

- How do you currently view conflict?
- What triggers you when it comes to conflict?
- How you behaviorally respond when conflict occurs?
- What are your natural defensive behaviors?



Emotional Skills

Emotional regulation rather than suppression

- Slowing down so you can cool down
- Center yourself physically
- Name your emotions
- Express your emotions



Behavioral Skills

Increase Constructive Behaviors

- Listening to understand
- Perspective taking
- Expressing emotions
- Reaching out
- Reflective thinking
- Delaying responding
- Creating solutions

Reduce Destructive Behaviors

- Winning at all costs
- Displaying anger
- Demeaning others
- Retaliating
- Avoiding
- Yielding
- Hiding emotions
- Self criticism



How to Foster Conflict Competence in People-Pleasing Work Cultures?

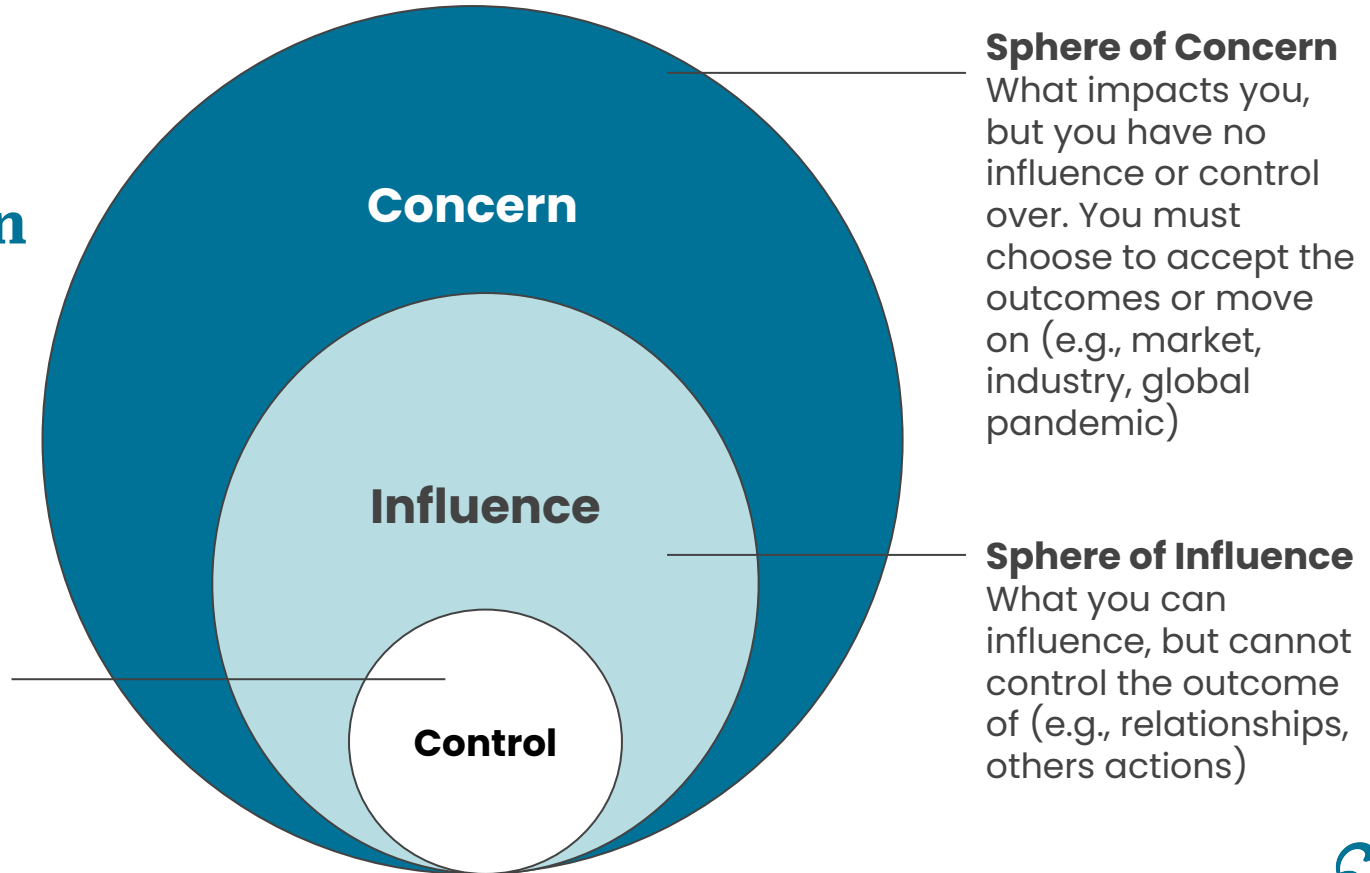


“Power is our capacity to impact and
influence our environment.”

Julie Diamond, Power: A User's Manual



Spheres of Control, Influence, and Concern



Reflection

What is within your sphere of control to create a more conflict competent workplace culture?



Spheres of Control

01

Individual

- Behavior
- Mindset
- Decisions



Individuals

- Build your self awareness
- Learn to regulate your emotions rather than suppress them
- Practice constructive behaviors around conflict



Spheres of Control

01

Individual

- Behavior
- Mindset
- Decisions

02

**Individual with
Positional Power**

- Model behaviors
- Set expectations
- Empower Others



Individuals with Positional Power

- Model constructive behaviors around conflict
- Address and welcome disagreement and difference



Conflict Competent Leaders...

- ✓ Understand the dynamics of conflict
- ✓ Are aware of their strengths and developmental opportunities for handling conflict
- ✓ Model and foster in others constructive behaviors around conflict while reducing destructive behaviors
- ✓ Encourage the development of a conflict competent organization through systems and culture.



Spheres of Control

01

Individual

- Behavior
- Mindset
- Decisions

02

**Individual with
Positional Power**

- Model behaviors
- Set expectations
- Empower Others

03

**Team or
Organization**

- Meetings & Rituals
- Collaboration Practices
- Policies & Processes



Teams and Organizations

- Establish norms that support a high trust environment
- Be proactive - Discuss how you will address conflict *before* conflict occurs
- Resolve (and pre-empt) unhealthy conflict via synchronous, live communication
- Hold leaders accountable to being conflict competent and support them in building the skill

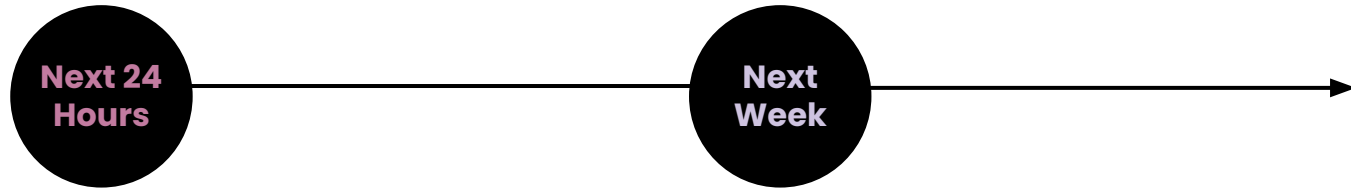


Now What?

What to do about it



Minimize People Pleasing Behaviors



Notice Your Body

- What does it feel like when you are about to say yes?
- Notice how you start to justify the behavior
- Are you saying yes for the right reasons? Are you in choice? What is your why?
- Ask: What will please *ME*?

Practice One “No”

- Identify an “easy” situation, say no, notice what happens.
- What does it feel like right away, later?
- Celebrate small wins.
- Start a log: how often do you agree when you want to disagree?



Maximize Conflict Competence Behaviors

1

Build Your Self-Awareness

Reflect – How do you currently view conflict? Triggers around conflict? Behavioral response?

Ask – Behavioral observations from 2-3 trusted colleagues.

2

Practice Emotional Regulation

Recognize – Notice triggers, physical sensations in the body.

Slow down, cool down – Pause, breathe.

Express the emotion – Journaling, talk to an accountability buddy, (and involved parties).



Keep the Momentum Going

BREVITY & WIT

Conflict Competence in People Pleasing Work Cultures

Judy Oyedele & Sabine Marx | PMDMC 2024

Actionable Steps to Disrupt People Pleasing

Step #1. Feel Into Your Body

What does it feel like when you are about to say yes?

- What sensations do you notice in your body?
- What feelings do arise (e.g., helplessness, overwhelm, guilt)?

Notice how you start to justify the behavior
(e.g., *I want people to be able to count on me*).

Are you saying yes for the right reasons?

- Are you in choice?
- What is your why?

Step #2. Practice One “No”

Identify an “easy” situation (e.g., returning a specialty coffee if your barista didn’t get it right or declining an invitation to an unimportant event).

Say no, and notice what happens.

What does it feel like right away, later?

Celebrate your little wins.

Start a log: how often do you agree when you want to disagree?

brevityandwit.com

1



Reflection

- What is *your* key takeaway from today?
- What is one action that you commit to?



Questions?

Sabine Marx

Senior Consultant

sabine@brevityandwit.com

Judy Oyedele

Senior Consultant

judy@brevityandwit.com



Thank you!

Stay in touch by signing up for our
newsletter at www.brevityandwit.com

   @brevityandwit

BREVITY  WIT