

Navigating Conflict is Inevitable

As much as we try to escape it, conflict is a part of life. It is connected to every journey we undertake and every relationship that we will have. The beautiful flipside is that we can actually profit from conflict if we utilize it as a resource to catapult us forward for personal, relational and corporate growth. I personally have learned so much from seasons of conflict because my decision was to become better instead of bitter and build positive memories out of negative circumstances.

The benefits of conflict are propelled through three basic understandings:

Conflict is inevitable. Every leader loves to have noble dreams that dance in their heads. It is rare, however, that those dreams comprehend the struggles that will accompany their fulfillment. The honeymoon stage of our dreams is beautiful but it is not the full reality of the process. Healthy leaders do not chase conflict and they refuse to be addicted to crisis but it is important to remove the element of surprise, knowing that conflict truly is inevitable.

Strategic responses are predetermined. Some practical conflicts can be pre-navigated by having prepared in advance. That is to say that research can be gathered and systems set in place for circumnavigating or working through a conflict. Learning from another person or organization's successes or failures is wisdom that should be employed in our preparation. Mentors, coaches and consultants are valuable resources in seasons of preparation. As Benjamin Franklin wisely said, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Equip yourself and others, recognizing that every conflict

involves people. Even though the source of conflict may not be initiated by a person, it always affects people. With that being said, results of success or failure hinge largely on individual responses. Healthy human response can make a mountain into a molehill, defusing the fear-based emotional reactions. On the other hand, unhealthy emotional responses will produce fear of failure, finger-pointing and demotivation, lowering the morale. We must recognize that interpersonal conflict will happen in every organization. As leaders, we must be prepared for our internal responses to that conflict.

Navigating these conflicts is the hardest thing we face but it also can be a catapult to internal and external success. Our healthy preparation and wisdom-based leadership will result in internal peace in the midst of chaos.

When your mind and emotions are prepared, you have a greater ability to face the inevitable with grace. Believe in yourself! Believe in your desire to build a beautiful dream and rally a team who carries your shared values. Treat others as you desire to be treated honoring their ideas, opinions and contributions.

Always think win-win and NEVER GIVE UP! {eo}

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