**The Salvation Army**
Jack McDowell School for Leadership Development
Evangeline Booth College, Atlanta, GA
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# Coaching Through Conflict

## Lesson 1: Addressing the Elephants in the Room

### The Big Idea:

"Creating an emotionally healthy culture and building a healthy team are among the primary tasks for every leader…and the task for Christian leaders is even more demanding because the kind of culture and teams we create are to be radically different than those of the world."

Peter Scazzero

When building emotionally healthy cultures, we will encounter conflict and differences. That is to be expected considering that the people on our teams are not the same and bring a myriad of experiences and opinions to work with them. As a leader, there will be times when you need to address difficult topics with a team member or the entire team. This is where coaching principles could be useful. Coaching allows leaders to come alongside their team to advance them personally and professionally. It also provides a safe environment to confront necessary issues and challenges in the workplace.

This lesson will examine the importance of leaders addressing critical issues and problematic behaviors of team members in a timely and direct manner.

♦ **Leader's Notes** ♦
**PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!**

### A Question to Consider:

**What are some of the benefits of addressing conflict and differences on your team in a direct and timely manner?**

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## Confrontation:

Confronting people and situations can be difficult but when done correctly and in a timely fashion, it can be immensely rewarding to everyone involved. Some people avoid conflict because they feel that it is negative. However, it does not have to be true. When leaders and their teams view conflict as an opportunity to grow, then the presenting challenge positions everyone to maximize positive outcomes of the problem at hand. To accomplish this, leaders should determine what strategies are best in handling conflicts appropriately. Conflicts can come in many different forms and as a result of various reasons. Therefore, understanding methods of addressing conflict before it arises will increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.

## Getting to the Root Cause:

In order to resolve conflict quickly, leaders must be able to determine what is the main cause of the conflict. Often times the source of the conflict is known by everyone on the team, yet it goes unaddressed. As a leader, it is your duty to maintain harmony and stability on your team by getting to the root causes of conflict on your time. In order to do this, leaders must have the courage and skill set to "address the elephant in the room." What is the elephant in the room? Scazzero describes it as "an obviously inappropriate or immature behavior that remains unacknowledged and or un-addressed." These ignored or unaddressed behaviors tend to roam freely in many churches, corps, organizations and teams.

This is problematic to the health of any team because these "elephants" do not magically disappear on their own. In fact, they thrive and survive off the silence and avoidance of issues. Confronting inappropriate behaviors from people on your team can be a daunting task yet it is necessary. When we say confrontation, we am not refer-ring to a screaming match laden with disrespect and threats. Confrontation from our perspective is talking to the person or people who are the source of conflict. This starts from expressing your thoughts about the words or actions that created conflict, listening to their perspective and then determining if a resolution of conflict is possi-ble.

## Maturity:

Direct confrontation in a way that is healthy and professional requires a great level of maturity, especially for those in high levels of leadership.  When a leader has unresolved issues in his or her inner life, it breeds an immaturity that translates into their leadership style at work. The reality is that if a leader operates from a place of immaturity in their own conflicts with family or otherwise, then they may struggle with handling conflict at work from a healthy and mature place as well. Leaders must keep this in mind as they deal with those on their teams. People bring unresolved challenges of all sorts with them to work, impacting the way in which they address conflict.

♦ *Leader's Notes* ♦

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## *A Thought to Ponder:*

Liane Davey, an expert in team dynamics says, "Conflict allows the team to come to terms with difficult situations, to synthesize diverse perspectives, and to make sure solutions are well thought out."

**A Thought: What are some practices or strategies that will create an positive work environment conducive to healthy conflict resolution?**

♦ *Leader's Notes* ♦

## *What Difference Would It Make:*

*6 factors leaders can consider in selecting a conflict resolution system that works for them:*

1. **Create a safe atmosphere**
2. **Create mutual understanding**
3. **Focus on individual and shared needs**
4. **Get to the root cause**
5. **Generate options**
6. **Build a solution**

## *Suggested Resource:*

## The Emotionally Healthy Leader

By Peter Scazzero

https://www.amazon.com/Emotionally-Healthy-Leader-Transforming-Transform/dp/0310494575/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1517941725&sr=8-1&keywords=emotionally+healthy+leadership