

Direct Command Resolution Style (Government):- This type of resolution style occurs when a legitimate official or group of persons settle a conflict situation by the power and dominance stemming from State or ecclesial authority. It may be verbal or written. When using this method, care should be exercised as it may be counterproductive especially when the person or group of persons exerting the authority do so in a manner that may increase the conflict. This situation may arise when a command is given without any apparent consultation, concern or interest for the individuals involved in the conflict. The issue of the command may bring resolution or could heighten feelings of anger/rebellion which could lead to a more serious conflict situation in the future.

However, direct command method could be a very veritable and effective style of conflict resolution when the individual or group using it has the respect of those involved in the conflict situation. This happens when authority is exercised with an apparent concern for the individuals involved in the conflict. Through the use of this method, growing conflict between individuals can be brought to a swift and positive resolution. Such a resolution can lead to a sense of secure leadership bringing about a sense of strength within an organization and can ignite a post conflict peace-building.

Non-Governmental/Third Party Intervention:- Third party intervention takes place when a person or a group (especially NGOs or

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Professional) not favouring either side in the conflict is asked to make a decision that is acceptable to both parties. This style of conflict management is most effective when the third party is acceptable to the persons in the conflict; and when the third party has the wherewithal to rule on the issues, or is seen as knowledgeable, professional and competent in the area of the conflict.

Third party intervention is usually not successful when the person is seen as favouring one of the parties involved in the conflict. This method of conflict management also fails when the third party is incompetent due to lack of expertise in the matter under consideration, or is so biased that a decision is rendered in an unfair or unreasonable way.

Compromise or Negotiation Track- This is a track which is most familiar to persons in conflict situation. It is usually based on the principle of giving and getting. It is hoped that both parties will profit from the outcome of the conflict situation or at least the persons have a sense of a fair settlement. This style of conflict management is based on the assumed goodwill of the persons in conflict. It is assumed that neither party is totally locked into an adversary position. There is room for giving or adapting. Both parties are willing to negotiate either directly or through a third party. It is also assumed that the eventual compromise will result in a better state of affairs for both parties.

Thus, negotiation is a direct process of dialogue and discussion taking place between at least two parties who are faced with a conflict situation or a dispute. Both parties come to the realization that they have a problem, and both are aware that by talking to each other, they can find a solution to the problem. The benefits of compromised solution, is

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believed, outweigh the losses that might arise from refusal to negotiate. The goal of negotiation, according to Jeong (2000) is “to reach agreement through joint decision-making between parties.” (p. 108).

Compromise negotiations break down when one or both parties become set in what they are willing to give in order to resolve the conflict. They are no longer willing to negotiate. They state that they have come to the limits of what they are willing to give. They are no longer willing to negotiate. They then believe it is better to resolve the conflict by some other conflict management styles such as avoidance, direct command, arbitration, or adjudication, rather than by compromise.

Usually, when a compromise is successfully negotiated for both parties feel somewhat rewarded or satisfied. However, they may not feel completely satisfied, since they both had to give up part of their original ideas or positions/possession to get the other person to go along. Both participants invariably win and lose something they value as a process and contribution to peace-building.

Synergistic Style: - This is the joining action of people or organizations to increase each others effectiveness, and is perhaps the most successful type of conflict management. This style emphasizes on, and uses integration of values, needs and communicative collaboration. It encourages a mutual search for a creative alternative which resolves the conflict and is mutually rewarding to both individuals/parties involved in the conflict. It does not necessarily include the process of giving and getting as involved in compromise. It is rather based on the good faith that both parties sincerely desire a positive alternative to their present state of conflict.

Religion or Peacemaking through Faith in Action:- This track or method involves and deals with beliefs and peace oriented pronouncements, statutes and actions of spiritual and religious communities and societies. Best (2005) opines that “Pacifism, humanism, non-violence, brotherliness as promoted by dominant religions are in this track” (p. 113). Confrontations should be relatively rare occurrences in the lives of practitioners or adherents of religious beliefs. If we go around confronting too much and/or endlessly, then it is a sign of spiritual weakness and impatience. This is irreligious. Keep in mind always that it is a man’s glory to overlook transgression. Forgiveness is a religious virtue. There can be no resolution of the problem if there is no spirit of forgiveness in a relationship. If a matter or case is settled, then the case is closed and must stay closed. There is a parallel analogy in the way God forgives us. When we are forgiven, there is closure God never reproached anyone for past forgiven sins, and neither should we.

We are to be imitators of God in this regard. In all we are enjoined in Hebrews 12:14 to always, “strive for peace with all men and for holiness without which no one will see the Lord”. Let us therefore pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding (Rom. 14:19), and always stress our common heritage and brotherhood in one God and Father. It makes for peace.

Suggestions

Before we can do the right thing in a confrontation or conflict situation, we must first be the right kind of people and should possess the

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right prerequisites. In the light of the above, we put the following suggestions for those on mediation.

1. **We cannot follow exactly same procedures for all situations:** You cannot use one method for every conflict. Though there are principles that are timeless and firm, yet, the application of these principles may be flexible. Some people by nature are more sensitive than others. You simply cannot speak to them with the same force as others. Be wise and be sensitive to the “matters of the moment”.
2. **Focus on Issues and Solutions:** Never confront someone or attempt settling a dispute if you are not genuinely interested in finding a solution. Do not say things in a conflict just for the sake of saying them. Do not vent! Be a true peacemaker and seek for peace as your primary goal.
3. **Ask Yourself “What are the real issues involved?”** This will give you focus to your discussion and prevent rabbit-trails in all directions. When discussing the differences between people or parties, try to think through the symptoms to locate the root cause. Try to narrow things down to one (or at most a few) related issues.
4. **Do not let your emotions run out of control:** Make sure the mind is in the driver’s seat: emotions have a habit of driving recklessly. Let your mind regulate the heat of your sentiments and the emotions of the moment like a thermostat regulates the temperature.
5. **Pre-decide Your rules of engagement:** The heat of argument is a poor time to think of proper boundaries. We would encourage those mediating in feuds to make up their minds on the types, methods or styles of conflict resolution or management they should adopt. The initiative should be taken ahead of the commencement of the proceedings. Don’t

bring up unrelated points of reference. Every conflict situation has its peculiarities and should be treated accordingly.

6. **Do not escalate matters:** The rule of thumb is to lower tensions (the conflict) to the lowest possible level. Keep calm, lower your voice, and reassure every one of your intentions and sincerity. Affirm common goals, be humble and work towards a realistic solution.
7. **How you phrase things is of utmost importance (Pro. 25:12):** Content alone is not enough. The packaging of the content is as important as the content itself. The way you word what you say is a contributing factor in succeeding or failing in conflict resolution. It matters not only what we say, but also how we word it. Proverbs 15:1 teaches that
 - A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
Always remember:
 - A soothing tongue is a tree of life (Prov. 15:4, and
 - Sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness (Prov. 16:21).
8. **Do not bring up past conflicts:** It is so important to have a sense of closure with past conflicts. So the mediator(s) should not encourage or allow the people to build up a supply of weapons to bludgeon someone with. For instance one can recall the past misgiving against him by saying – “this is like the time you did such and such a thing to me...”, “and I still cannot believe you did that thing” etc. God expects us to forgive others in the way that He forgives us – He does not require us to keep re-asking for forgiveness. People should not be allowed to bring up unrelated points of contention (Pro. 26:21).

Conclusion

This paper has tried to locate and discuss peaceful tools and methods available to the conflict transformation spectrum. Without pretensions, the paper does not in anyway claim to have exhaustively dealt with all the issues of methodology for conflict management. The paper merely presents the methods as symbolical procedures and approaches towards organized responses to conflict.

A common starting point for reconciliation and conflict management is the profound understanding of the basic concepts and terms that are tenable. They indeed point to some profitable areas and strategies for amateurs in the field of peace and conflict studies, to begin to explore more actively through empirical research, different methods so suggested in order to prove their acceptability and effectiveness or otherwise. In this way we can document the relative success and failure of different methods and styles across cultures.

The paper comes to the conclusion that amidst all the methods and points of approaches for conflict resolution and peace-building, that those on mediation must always be emphatic on the common humanity and brotherhood we have in God – the creator. This is very important and fundamental because, it is unlikely that people in a feud can appreciate someone they do not regard to have similar physical, religious, social and psychological affinities, and emotional needs with themselves. Everyone belongs to the commonwealth of God; so, people from different sides should learn to live together.

Storysharing i.e. listening to each other's personal life stories and experiences was identified as an important measure of finding common ground and challenging established views. One important pre-condition for

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storysharing is the agreement not to victimise or embarrass each other, but to interact as equals and care for each other. Peace building and conflict management is all involving. Different stakeholders and groups are involved including the individuals and/or parties in a feud. There is therefore, the need to look beyond government and State in the search for harmonious co-existence in the world

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