

Reducing Conflict 2 Different Viewpoints

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



The topic of viewpoints is fascinating to me because most of the time once you have a clear viewpoint, you own that view of the issue and it is difficult to change it. If we see something as wrong, we will fiercely defend our position and rarely change our mind.

I discovered that trait in myself many years ago at work when my manager insisted that I enforce a policy that I thought was wrong. He forced me to fire two wonderful employees because of an administrative rule that after a person was a temporary worker for an arbitrary period of time, we needed to let the person go. I would have voted to be more flexible in that situation.

Entrenched feelings

Once your viewpoint is clear in your mind, you have lost your ability to see the issue objectively. You become the personification of your opinion or interpretation of the facts. Examples of polarized entrenched feelings are very common in political environments. It is almost childish how supposedly mature adults can argue for their parochial point of view to the point of having tantrums and calling each other names.

Family and work life

The same tendencies show up in family life quite regularly. One person believes the snow is white while the other person insists it is green. The famous philosopher, Earl Nightingale, distilled the wisdom of the ages into just six words that he called, "The strangest secret." "We become what we think about."

In any kind of organization, you can witness the same phenomenon almost daily. It is one of the most common forms of acrimony for any organization. The interesting thing about this problem is that it is very difficult to control. Once an opinion has been formed, it is very difficult to shift a person's viewpoint to actually believe it is wrong.

An exercise for enlightenment

One way to soften your own stubbornness at home or at work is to catch yourself in the act. Recognize when you have taken on a specific viewpoint and witness the lengths you go to in order to prove your point. Now, imagine reversing your stance. How would it feel? Probably at first it would feel awkward at best, but you are at least considering that there may be another valid point of view. That realization represents growth.

Free Bonus Video

Here is the link to a short video on Different Viewpoints:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlwHvfTDuKE>

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.

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