

Managing Conflict within Your Team

Conflict within a team is both inevitable and healthy, if managed properly. However, if left unresolved, conflict can deteriorate an organization from the inside out. It leads to increased absenteeism, turnover, and even law suits. On the other hand, an organization that leans into the discomfort of conflict, looks it in the eyes and is willing to take it head on will grow and learn. People serving in the latter organization develop a stronger bond built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect. While employees of the former are doing all they can to make it from one day to the next.

In her book, *“Dare to Lead,”* Brené Brown makes the phrase, “let’s rumble” a common part of business vernacular.

“A rumble is a discussion, conversation, or meeting defined by a commitment to lean into vulnerability, to stay curious and generous, to stick with the messy middle of problem identification and solving, to take a break and circle back when necessary, to be fearless in owning our parts, and, as psychologist Harriet Lerner teaches, to listen with the same passion with which we want to be heard.” - Brené Brown

Quite often, employees and their supervisors tend to ignore and avoid conflict. They tip-toe around it as if facing it is somehow worse than ignoring it. These environments are often characterized by gossip, cynicism, exhaustion, and eventually – inefficacy and burnout. By the time employees or their supervisors reach this final stage they feel completely powerless to solve the problem. Supervisors will often see the early signs of conflict such as snide remarks, passive-aggressive behavior, disrespectful language, and unwillingness to work together.

A team that is willing to rumble with candor and respect at the earliest signs of conflict can avoid the friction they would experience by letting it go until it’s too late. The supervisor plays a critical role in managing conflict throughout the organization, both inside and outside their immediate span of control. A leader who is willing to lean into the discomfort of managing conflict now will set conditions for an effective, and efficient workplace built on mutual trust and respect.

In this 75-minute workshop we’re going to quickly review the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode and waste no time putting the theory to practice and getting to concepts of Brené Brown’s “let’s rumble.”

In small groups we’ll work with fellow supervisors to develop a plan of action to confront conflict in your organization head on to bring your team back to task as effectively and efficiently as ever.