

CAREER HEALTH

Resolving Conflicts

By Gary McClain, Ph.D. and Deborah S. Romaine

The workplace forces people into relationships with each other that otherwise might not exist, and while they often get along just fine, sometimes there are problems. It's important for you, the manager, to always have your finger on the pulse of your team so you'll immediately know when things are out of sorts. Once a situation escalates, it can be too late to salvage the group, at least in terms of restoring it to its previous level of collaboration and productivity.

Depending on the nature of the problem, you might meet first with the entire team or with members individually. Take action as soon as you figure out what's going on. Don't wait for the right time – the right time is now. Intervene with individuals who seem to be having personal or individual performance problems. It's usually also a good idea to meet with the group to talk about the problem in general – its nature, how it's being addressed, when you expect to see things change, what changes you expect to see, and what role, if any, other group members have in resolving it. Avoid naming individuals unless there is no other way to talk about the situation. If you must use names, be sure to focus on behaviors and events, not the people.

It's not enough to peek in at your employees a few times during the day to see if things look all right. You need to consistently monitor both output and attitudes. If there are problems with either, deal with the situation right away. Such interventions are not always comfortable, but they are essential.

Put on your parent, mediator, and cheer-

leader hats – it's time to become a multiple personality. You need to take decisive action and at the same time help group members see each other's perspectives. Sometimes the involved member will have to transfer to another department or leave the company entirely. You might need to introduce a new communications process to force employees in complementary but competitive positions to communicate more effectively. The team might need to establish a new approval process to ensure that members know about, and have the opportunity to discuss, product or service promises before anyone makes them. And when the problem is system-based, you must be willing to stick your neck out by advocating for employees. These responses build teams and create loyalty, among group members as well as toward you (and sometimes even the company). Who wouldn't want to go the extra mile for a manager who at least tries to go the extra mile for them?

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Coffee is the #1 Source of Antioxidants

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- Black tea
- Bananas
- Dried beans
- Corn
- Red wine
- Beer (lager style)
- Apples
- Tomatoes
- Potatoes

Researchers say both caffeinated and decaf versions of coffee appear to provide similar amounts of antioxidants. But they say these results shouldn't be interpreted as an excuse to increase your daily java dose for your health's sake.

For example, Vinson says antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables offer much more in terms of total nutrition due to their higher content of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. He says dates, cranberries, and red grapes contain the highest concentration of antioxidants per serving size of all fruits, but people don't consume nearly as much of these fruits as they do coffee.

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-Helen Keller

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PHYSICAL HEALTH

Coffee is the #1 Source of Antioxidants

By Jennifer Warner

People get more antioxidants from coffee than any other food or beverage.

Your morning cup of coffee may provide more than just a caffeine jolt -- it could be your most valuable source of disease-fighting antioxidants.

A new study shows coffee is the #1 source of antioxidants in the human diet.

“People get more of their antioxidants from coffee than any other dietary source. Nothing else comes close,” says researcher Joe Vinson, PhD, a chemistry professor at the University of Scranton, in a news release.

Antioxidants are found naturally in many foods and beverages and are thought to provide health benefits in preventing diseases such as heart disease and cancer by fighting cellular damage caused by free radicals in the body. Free radicals are damaging substances that are produced through normal bodily processes.

Coffee Provides More Antioxidants Than Fruit?

Fruits and vegetables are hailed as the richest sources of antioxidants, but this study shows that coffee is the main source from which most people get their antioxidants.

Vinson says high antioxidant levels in foods and beverages don't always translate into high antioxidant levels in the body. He says the potential health benefits of antioxidants depend largely on how they are absorbed and used by the body, and that's a process that is still poorly understood by researchers.

Researchers calculated the top sources of antioxidants based on the average consumption of 100 foods and beverages containing the compounds.

The results showed that based on both antioxidant content per serving size and frequency of consumption, coffee came out on top, topping other popular sources of antioxidants, such as tea, chocolate, and fruit.

Where People Get Their Antioxidants

After coffee, the study showed the other top 10 sources of antioxidants in the human diet were:

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RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

A Short Guide to Difficult Conversations

By Balanceatwork.com

Are you avoiding a conversation you know you must have? Quite often it's because you don't know where to start. Here's a checklist of things to consider as you approach that conversation you've been avoiding.

1. Talk to yourself first

- What do you hope to achieve by having this conversation?
- What would be your ideal outcome?
- Can you adjust your attitude to expecting a positive outcome?
- What emotions are you feeling about this situation?
- Will you be able to keep those emotions under control?
- What assumptions have you made about the person and/or the situation?
- Do they know there's a problem?
- Is there anything else you need to know before you start this conversation?
- Should you speak to someone else first, or get help?

2. Write an agenda for the conversation

- This may be just for your own reference. Look at the points in the next section for ideas on what to include.
- Remind yourself to stay centered and focused with your full attention on the discussion.

3. Choose an appropriate time and place

- Ensure no interruptions or distractions (switch mobiles off).

- Privacy is also important.

4. Prepare and practice

- If possible, practice with someone else. At the very least run through the conversation – and the likely responses of the other person – in your head.
- Be prepared for a range of possible reactions including tears, anger, blaming and silence.

“Sometimes you have to do what you don't like to get where you want to be.”

-Tori Amos

- Now you're ready for the meeting, so let's look at what's needed for it to run smoothly.

Clarity of purpose: Know why you're having this conversation and what outcome you wish to achieve.

Curiosity and a willingness to listen to everything the other person has to say. You don't know their perspective on the issue and this is your chance to find out. This may require you to put your ego to one side and really listen to what they have to say, without interrupting and disputing their views. Be aware of what their non-verbal communication is telling you, too.

Acknowledge the other person's viewpoint. You can show you understand what they're saying by restating it back to them. To acknowledge doesn't mean you agree.

Take your turn to express your perspective, so that your position on the issue is clear. While it is good to put words to your emotions (for example, “I feel angry that we're in this situation”), avoid acting in an emotional or angry way.

Work together on a solution. You may already have an ideal solution in mind, but it's worth asking first what the other person would suggest. Keep an open mind and if you feel you're being led off-track, go back to the beginning.

Agree and document what will happen next. This will include any changes to behavior, processes or performance. It's also important to agree on when and how you will monitor the changes.

Above all, stay centered, stick to your purpose, and be willing to consider alternative outcomes.

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INNER HEALTH

Life Metaphors: the Powerful Force Overlooked by Modern Psychology

By Mike Bundrant

Imagine that you have a bird's eye view of two people's lives, John and James. Both John and James experience the challenges and opportunities that come with family and relationships, work and community. They each have their share of success and failure. Neither John nor James is immune to the difficulties of life and each has a similar capacity for happiness.

There is, however, one critical difference between John and James and that is their life metaphor. We all have a metaphor for life and this deeply held, unconscious belief determines how we experience everything that happens within and around us. A life metaphor is a lens through which we view the world. It is perhaps the most powerful determinant of happiness and fulfillment or stress, depression and anxiety. Your identity and personality are organized around your life metaphor! This ranks as perhaps the most significant phenomenon that has been overlooked by modern psychology.

Let's look at John and James's life metaphors.

John's metaphor is that *life is a battle* and within this metaphor only the strong survive. As John strategizes how to gain more territory and seize more control in his life and career, he also teaches his children how to win their own battles in school and little league sports. For John, it's about winning, losing, and conquering the opposing forces in life.

James, on the other hand, has a very different metaphor for life. For James, *life is a classroom* or learning opportunity. With this metaphor filtering his outlook, James

seeks to find the value in every experience - good or bad - and apply it to his life. James approaches his career, family, and community expecting to learn something new every day.

Can you imagine how differently John and James would handle themselves in common situations? How would each of them respond differently when their child scores low on a test or gets bullied at school? How would they approach a new career opportunity or the loss of a job? What would it be like to be married to John or James or be in a personal relationship with them?

“Life consists not in holding good cards but in playing those you hold well.”

-Josh Billings

And these are just two possible life metaphors. To some, life is a test. To others, it's an adventure. To some it's a game. And the list goes on. The most incredible thing about life metaphors is that most of us don't choose our own! We don't understand how deeply we are affected by these metaphors that define the very meaning of life. It's amazing.

What is life to you - a journey, a gift, a party, a burden, an obedience school, a dream or even a nightmare? Is life a puzzle or a mystery? Is it an empty void or a black hole of meaninglessness?

Here's the most important question of all: Are you happy with the results that your view of life is producing? Are you

fulfilled and inwardly satisfied with life regardless of what is happening around you? If not, the most powerful change you can make is an inner change - change the lens through which you view the world and your entire life changes in one sweep.

Imagine what would happen in John's life if his metaphor changed from *life is a battle* to *life is a symphony*. Rather than planning to overcome his enemies, John would be striving for more harmonious arrangements! Think about it, a simple change in metaphor can reorganize your entire life and give it radical new meaning.

I invite you to identify, understand, and evaluate your own life metaphor. Simply understanding it gives you uncommon insight and self-awareness. And, if you are in need of a change - if you find life to be too difficult, stressful or scary - then adopting a new metaphor will dramatically alter your experience. I know because I've done it myself and have helped thousands of people do the same.

The American Indian mystic and writer Black Elk said the following: *“It is in the darkness of their own eyes that men get lost.”*

For me, Black Elk is talking about our life metaphor, the most hidden and powerful perspective that we have. If you are lost, unfulfilled, stressed or confused in any area of your life, or if you want to become more motivated and productive, the very best course of action is to change the eyes with which you see.

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