



Reiki and Conflict Resolution

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Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. —RUMI

Although it is not common to associate the healing energy of Reiki with the theories of conflict resolution, we believe that they go together perfectly. In this article, we will introduce you to three popular models of conflict resolution and conscious communication. Reiki can support all of these techniques in a powerful way; however, we will focus on using Reiki as an integral part of a fourth method—one that the authors have developed.

Conflict is an inescapable part of our daily lives, resulting from living in a highly complex, competitive, and litigious society. Everywhere we turn, there is unsettling news at home and abroad, and that creates imbalance and stress in our personal lives as well. The tools of conflict resolution can offer concrete answers to many troubling issues and provide solutions that are badly needed in today's world.

Although there are many different approaches to conflict resolution, some produce a less equitable outcome than others. The traditional way of negotiating has taken the form of bargaining and is used in business/labor, divorce, political situations, and international relations. These methods typically result in a winner and a loser. They involve thinking in terms of "I vs. You" and "We vs. They." Other disempowering approaches include conquest, role dominance, finding a quick fix or band-aid, and avoidance.

Effective conflict resolution is a process of mediation or negotiation in which the needs and interests of both parties are acknowledged, and an attempt is made to find common ground on which to build a satisfactory outcome. This outcome ideally would meet the needs and interests of both parties. In addition, this process replaces an atmosphere of tension, mistrust, and

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The power of Reiki can bring greater clarity to any situation in which there is conflict. This can apply to anything from a minor squabble to dissent among nations. We also believe that true peace begins within the heart of each individual and that Reiki can help us reach that place within ourselves. When we are at peace within ourselves, we are able to have a positive impact on our families and friends, the places where we work, our communities, and the world.

At its best, conflict resolution embodies the elements of self-empowerment, clarity, balance, and harmony. Reiki also encompasses these qualities. When Reiki is added to the process of resolving conflict, it provides a calming and centering influence. It can also bring healing and can help foster a positive outcome.

judgment with one of mutual regard and understanding. Such approaches are called Win/Win models. Intrinsic to this way of approaching conflict resolution is the notion of a mutually beneficial outcome.

Win/Win models produce more sustainable and lasting solutions and also promote an equal sharing of power. It becomes possible to view conflict as an opportunity to actually improve relationships. Especially in recent years, many such models have been developed, with common elements running through all of them. We would like to give you a brief introduction to three of them that we have studied in depth and feel are particularly effective.

The Work of Roger Fisher and William Ury

Roger Fisher and William Ury formed the core of the Harvard Negotiation Project at Harvard Law School, which has been at the forefront of conflict resolution work since the 1970's. They were among the first to propose the concept of a Win/Win model in conflict resolution and have had a huge influence on much of the work that has come after them. Their ideas and prolific writings have spawned a network of groups and individuals who have revolutionized the ideas of conflict resolution and negotiation.

Fisher and Ury point out that most people try to resolve conflict with a style called "positional negotiation." Each party takes a side; they try to reach a compromise, and often neither side ends up happy. In contrast, Fisher and Ury believe in the idea of "principled negotiation," after which a "wise agreement" can be reached.

The results of such an agreement ensure that:

1. Both sides are satisfied.
2. Both have had their main needs met.
3. The effects are lasting.
4. The methods used have been fair.

The Work of Dudley Weeks

Dudley Weeks has developed a system of conflict resolution that focuses on resolving issues by building effective relationships between the parties involved. By applying his eight *Partnership LifeSkills™*, the needs, values, goals, and interests of each individual are acknowledged and then used as a basis for identifying shared needs and interests, and common goals. This gives "conflict partners" a vehicle for finding options that can lead to agreements that are mutually beneficial to each party. These skills are just as effective in resolving individual conflicts as they are in dealing with larger workplace or community issues and more serious global crises.

The Work of Marshall Rosenberg

The groundbreaking work of Marshall Rosenberg has been instrumental in changing the way thousands of people relate to each other, from individuals to teachers and students, prisoners, negotiators, and government leaders. It is a treat to be in Marshall's presence as he shares his total command of the principles of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) with wisdom, humor, and a deep spirituality.

Marshall's work is not so much a model of conflict resolution as an overall look at the way we communicate and how to improve it. NVC provides a framework within which we can learn about ourselves and relate better to all those around us. At its core it also teaches us to take responsibility for our own needs, values, and feelings. In doing so, we begin to recognize and understand those qualities in others. It is this type of conscious communication that, ultimately, can result in a more successful resolution of conflict.

The Four Main Components of NVC:

1. **Observations:** We become aware of how to observe without judgment and to understand that what we observe affects our well-being.
2. **Feelings:** We learn to express how we feel.
3. **Needs:** We recognize our needs, begin to express them, and then connect them to how we are feeling. The needs create the feelings.
4. **Requests:** We gain the ability to request concrete actions to enrich our lives.

A Collaborative Approach to Conflict Resolution

Based on our experience with the models described above, we have developed a system, which we call *A Collaborative Approach to Conflict Resolution*. The philosophy behind this method is to honor each person's needs, to allow everyone to retain his or her dignity, and to arrive at a joint solution that will ultimately benefit everyone.

Following is an abbreviated version of the seven steps in our approach. Using these concepts can change the way we communicate with each other and thereby positively effect how we lead our lives. As we create a peaceful environment, we become vehicles for positive change in our own lives and the lives of those around us.

1. **Prepare Yourself:** Before approaching any situation that involves conflict, it is important to be centered and clear.
2. **Look at the Situation:** Maintain your objectivity as you observe what is happening with yourself and other persons involved in the conflict. This will help you to see the possibility of arriving at a mutually beneficial outcome.
3. **Pinpoint Needs and Interests:** Expressing your unmet needs and learning about the needs of the other person(s) are an important element in resolving conflict. It can take great courage to make yourself vulnerable in this way. Sharing your needs often opens the door for the other person to share their needs with you.
4. **Get in Touch with Feelings and Create Empathy:** Recognizing your own feelings of fear, anger, hurt, and frustration is an essential aspect of the process. It is also important to acknowledge the other person's feelings with empathy and compassion.
5. **Identify Options:** As you work toward resolving the conflict, allow new insights to arise without judging them. Use brainstorming to uncover alternate solutions.
6. **Use Conscious Communication and Foster Cooperation:** You are now at a crucial point in the process, and it is important to be very conscious of your body language and how you convey your ideas to the other person. Avoid

using language that judges, criticizes, demands, threatens, or tries to make the other person feel guilty.

7. **Develop a Satisfying Agreement:** At this stage, the benefits of finding a solution and the value of learning to cooperate with each other will begin to be more clear to both you and the other person(s). Search for attainable goals and an effective plan of action to accomplish them.

Integrating Reiki with the Collaborative Approach to Conflict Resolution

This process can be used for every kind of conflict from a minor disagreement with a partner, to a court appearance, or to world situations over which you have no direct control.

1. Give yourself Reiki prior to meeting face to face with other persons involved. Or, better still; arrange to receive a treatment from another practitioner. This will help you to identify your own feelings and issues around the conflict, as well as to begin the healing process.
2. Send distant Reiki to yourself and all persons involved in the conflict, with the intention that the situation and each person involved be surrounded by and filled with light.
3. During the meeting, use Reiki on your solar plexus to connect to your inner strength. Hold the intention that you will remain calm, at peace, open and responsive to others' needs and views, and that you will be able to clearly articulate your own feelings and needs.
4. Use Reiki on your heart to build a bridge of understanding. Do this before and during any meeting that is to take place, with the intention that balance and harmony will prevail and that the situation will be resolved for the highest and best good of all.
5. Use *reiji-ho* to activate your Third Eye with the intention of "seeing" solutions to the conflict.
6. Ask for further guidance to help you choose words that will create understanding and harmony.
7. As you are working toward an agreement, fill your surrounding environment with Reiki light so that trust can begin to develop. Even after the meeting is over, continue to send distant Reiki to everyone involved, holding the intention of healing any residual issues and the desire for a smooth implementation of the agreed upon solution.

An Example of How This Approach Works

Sharon and Don had just gotten married, and he moved into the house where she had been living for several years. She worked during the day and he worked at night, so when she left in the morning, he was still asleep. Inevitably, when she got home from work, she found the bed unmade. After a time, this really bothered her. With her irritation building, she realized that something needed to be done and decided to try using good conflict resolution skills combined with Reiki.

Although this may appear to be a relatively minor issue, if it were not addressed at all, it could fester and eventually undermine the relationship. If it were handled poorly, the result could be escalating anger and discord. Conversely, if dealt with appropriately, a seed for establishing good communication within the relationship would be planted.

Before initiating her discussion with Don, Sharon took the time to prepare herself by gathering her thoughts while giving herself Reiki on her head and heart. This calmed her and softened her frustration and anger. Sharon was now ready to look at the situation more objectively and was able to see that Don was more than likely oblivious to her needs about having the bed made. With this insight, she sent distant Reiki to the entire situation with the intention that she and Don would work through the issue.

When she felt centered, Sharon approached Don and let him know that there was something they needed to talk about. Holding her hand over her solar plexus and asking for Reiki guidance, she began to tell him about her needs and feelings. She expressed that when she came home after a very hectic workday, she need-

ed a sense of peace and order. For Sharon, the unmade bed had become a symbol of chaos and disharmony. Her bedroom was no longer her sanctuary.

Don had no idea how Sharon had been feeling. Although he did not share that specific need, when he realized how much it meant to her, he acknowledged the importance of her feelings and needs. Since then, he has willingly made the bed each day.

Sharon and Don's story illustrates how empowering it can be to look at conflict in a more positive way. When you prepare yourself properly, make yourself vulnerable by expressing your true feelings and needs, and communicate consciously without judgment or anger, you can help create an outcome that not only resolves the situation, but also actually improves the dynamics of your relationships. Using Reiki as an integral part of conflict resolution brings healing, facilitates resolution, and helps the process to flow with ease and grace.

Learning conflict resolution skills and bringing the light and power of Reiki to them can help create a sense of peace and harmony within yourself and in all that surrounds you. As a result, you may find that you are more centered and calm during stressful times and that you are able to meet the challenges of life with more serenity and self-confidence. Because

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