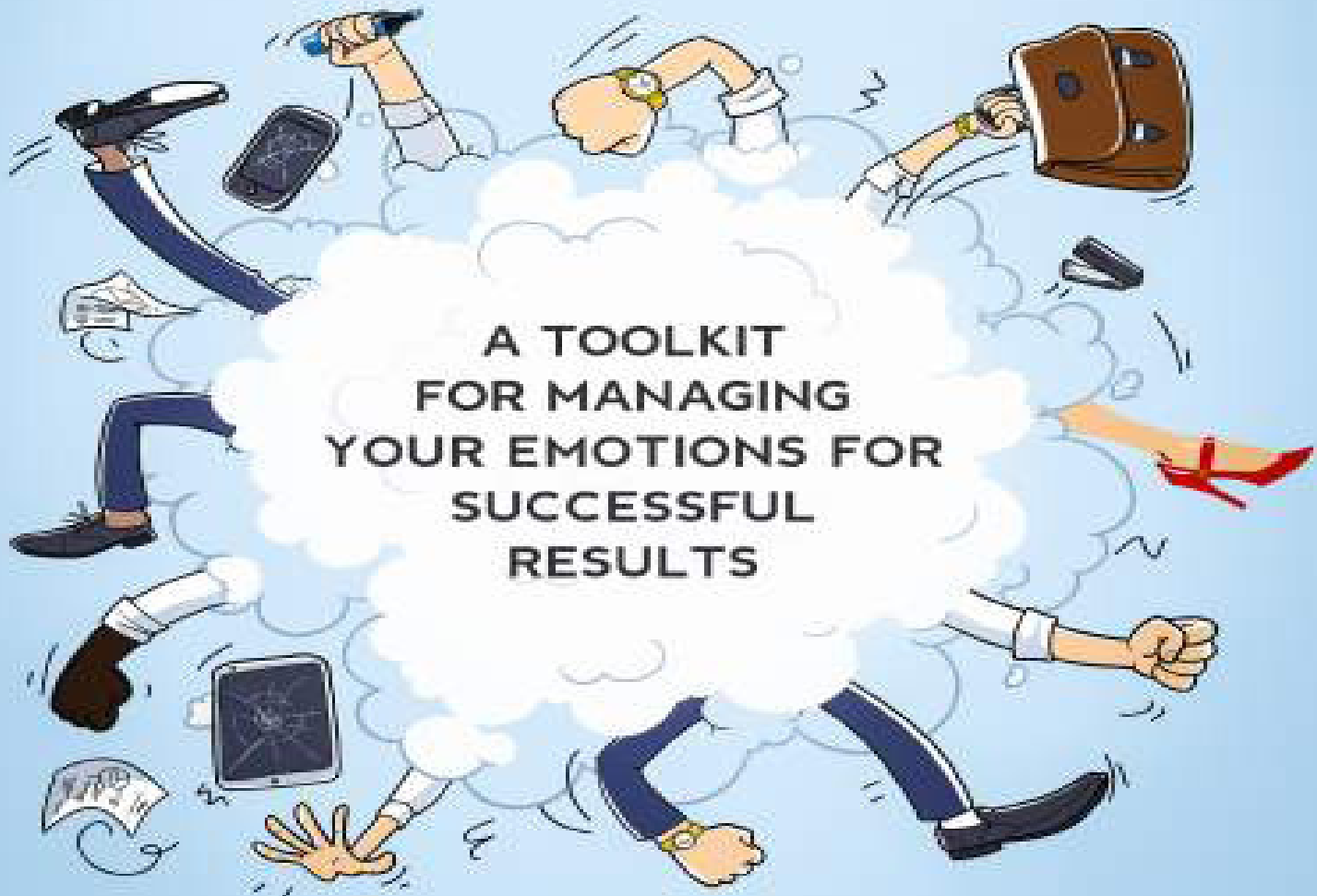


CONFLICT AT WORK



EXPERT IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
DR. M. PAULA DAOUST

CONFLICT AT WORK

A toolkit for managing your emotions for successful results.

Dr. M. Paula Daoust
Conflictatworkbook.com



Conflict at Work: A toolkit for managing your emotions for successful results.

Dr. M. Paula Daoust

Copyright © 2020 Maplewheat Publishing

Cover design: Germancreative

Editor: Frieda Paton

Assistant Editors: Dorissa Daoust and Pamela Brisendine

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission from the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

First Printing: September 2020

ISBN-13: 978-1-7353697-0-9

Conflict at Work

Written by a leading expert in performance management
with over 40 years of experience



Dr. M. Paula Daoust has a doctorate in Behavior Psychology and is an expert in helping people find and maintain their peak performance. She is also a certified hypnotherapist and seamlessly blends these tools into her coaching to help people easily achieve lasting change. Over a period of 25 years, she has taught hundreds of master-level students how to be more persuasive and influential, and how to successfully manage conflict.

Dr. M. Paula Daoust is the expert other leaders look to for help in finding their peak performance. She has taught workshops and spoken at events all over North America on subjects such as conflict, change management, storytelling, influence and power, anxiety and stress at work and peak performance.

Do you want Dr. M. Paula Daoust to be the motivational speaker at your next event?

Call (785) 633-6078
or visit
BehaviorTransitions.com

Why Read This Book

I have coached hundreds of leaders at all levels of various organizations. Using validated and reliable assessment tools, I have found that 85% of these leaders struggle with conflict management. When conflict is not handled well, there are serious consequences for careers and organizations' bottom-line.

Most people are not good at a skill that is critical to their job! Even when they attend training, their skill does not improve. Why? Because conflict is an emotional experience and not a rational, logical event.

If your goal is to get better outcomes when dealing with conflict and you are like most people, you probably need some help in learning to manage your emotions. This book is packed full of tools that you can use today to make a difference in your career. Like a buffet, you can pick and choose the tools that feel most comfortable for you or will fit best with your situation. When you put together a plan that feels right for you, you will get those better outcomes you need and want.

Are you ready to differentiate yourself?

Do you want to be much better at something that matters to your work and to your life?

This book shows you how!

Conflict is an emotional event. Learn some simple tools that will guide your emotions so that you can get the results you need and want.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Whole-Brain Conflict Management
Chapter Two: Levels of Conflict
Chapter Three: Dealing with Conflict: Common Approaches

Preparing Your Emotions

Chapter Four: Conflict and Your Body
Chapter Five: Mindset and the Power of “I Am”

Planning Your Approach

Chapter 6: Kindness Wins!
Chapter 7: Decoding and Using Language Effectively
Chapter 8: Behavioral Science and Conflict
Chapter 9: Be Hypnotic!
Chapter 10: The Aiki Breakthrough Change Method
Chapter 11: The CLEAN/N Model

Executing the Plan

Chapter 12: Using the Tools
Chapter 13: Blindsided
Chapter 14: Making It Work

Notes

Intentionally left blank

1

Whole-Brain Conflict Management

Are you good at dealing with conflict? Or are you like most – damaging an important relationship while trying to address the issue, or maybe, giving in and not getting what you need or want? Either outcome is unacceptable. It doesn't have to be like that.

The problem is that very few of us have learned effective tools to escape this either/or situation. When faced with conflict, most of us are still using the same tools we used as children, just a little more sophisticated. We engage in any or many of the following: tantrums, avoidance, badgering, overwhelming the other person with justifications, whining, complaining, appealing to a third party, demanding, crying, and on and on. These tactics either don't work or they work only marginally.

Do you want to learn a new and more effective way of dealing with conflict? Conflict is always emotionally charged and effective conflict management must therefore address both our thinking and our feelings. A holistic approach, which includes the expected and usual cognitive skills but also adds tools from the sciences of behavior and hypnosis, is what is needed!

My journey with conflict

Years ago, I learned through a painful and career-changing personal experience how critical effective conflict management is in the world of work. I was working as one of six behavior therapists in an organization that served people with developmental disabilities. As a team, we shared ideas, helped each other develop behavior plans for our clients and learned from each other. Since most of us had moved from other parts of the country to work at this organization we were outsiders, in a small town and our work relationships became our social support system as well.

Sherri, my best friend, was a gifted therapist and we spent hours after work talking about our cases and sharing our personal lives with each other. Sherri loved children and didn't have any of her own. She became a special aunt to my boys, attending their athletic and school events and babysitting so that I could have a quiet night with my husband. In return, I would take care of her pets when she went home to visit her parents.

One day, I was called into the superintendent's office and asked whether I would fill in for my direct supervisor who was taking a three month leave of absence. I had never supervised but I was up for the challenge and readily agreed. With no experience or training, I was now managing my friends. What could go wrong?

About two weeks into my new role, while having coffee with Sherri, she complained that the overlap between her role and that of two other therapists had caused confusion in a client's implementation plan. With my new authority, I thought I knew exactly what needed to be done. I quickly worked out a clarification of roles and detailed specific responsibilities for each member of the team. I proceeded to proudly unveil the new plan at the next team meeting.

I was stunned by the push-back and objections. Instead of the chorus of praise I had expected, I got an energetic round of "What?" "Why?" and "NO!" Has anything like that ever happened to you? To make matters worse, Sherri was

the most vocal of all in her protest! I felt betrayed – after all, the whole reason I had taken this action was to help her out.

My response was to fall back on my authority as their supervisor and to insist that this was the plan and they would just have to get used to it. I then retreated to my office and found every reason to stay there for days, avoiding all contact with my team. As you would expect, the situation did not settle down. With no opportunity to talk to me, the frustration festered. Because the group felt that they had no other recourse, they took their concerns to the superintendent.

After hearing them out, he could see the problems with the plan and overturned my decision – in retrospect, the plan wasn't really all that good. However, that was probably also not the greatest move on the superintendent's part because I lost credibility and leverage with the team. I served the balance of my time ineffectively hiding in my office and gratefully slipped back into my old role when our supervisor returned to work. But it was not my old job that I returned to, everything had changed. Trust and collegiality with the team had been destroyed and I was alienated from the group. A few months later, I found another job and left the organization.

But all was not lost. I had learned some very important things about myself and about leadership, albeit in a painful way. I had learned just how important good conflict management was for effective leadership. I also became aware of an immense gap in my own development and it became my mission to close that gap.

Good conflict management – more than cognitive tools

I read everything that I could find about conflict management and tried to practice what I had learned. I discovered that conflict management not only involved a specific set of cognitive skills but that it became much more powerful if you can manage your emotions as well. And this requires tools from behavioral science and what I now understand, hypnosis.

All this learning would be called on when I landed my dream job a few years

later. I was asked to build a leadership academy for the corporation from the ground up. With a group of critical stakeholders, we developed a list of competencies which future leaders would need if the organization was to be competitive in the market of the future. Managing conflict was obviously high on this list and I began assembling the best possible curriculum and action learning opportunities.

Fifteen years later, and over 20 cohorts of 15 participants each, I can proudly say that by all accounts, the leadership academy accomplished what it set out to do and continues to be tremendously successful. Both qualitative observations and quantitative data indicated that every cohort that has gone through the program had significantly improved their emotional intelligence. If you go to Google Scholar and search on the terms *emotional intelligence* (EQi) and leadership, you will find over five pages of references that correlates EQi and leadership. Assessing participants on their emotional intelligence was a reasonable indicator of leadership development because the research indicates that those individuals with high emotional intelligence are consistently evaluated by others as being leaders.

However, I became aware that the graduates were not using the conflict management skills they had learned. For me, this was an epic fail. What I had observed, repeatedly, was that managers who entered my program struggled with conflict management and, once they had completed the program, they still didn't handle conflict well.

Folks have trouble with difficult conversations, whether it is holding their direct reports accountable or talking to colleagues about sharing resources, collaboration, or their working relationship. Many people avoid these conversations. Or, when they do have them, they hold them poorly and this often makes matters worse. This same issue had derailed my career years earlier and was now threatening to derail these talented managers.

What was frustrating to see was that, during classroom evaluation after the training, these managers could demonstrate that they had mastered the basic skills of holding a healthy, productive conversation. However, the cognitive

skills didn't seem to carry over into their real work. When it really mattered, they reverted to avoiding the situation, command and control, or triangulation by appealing to someone, usually their supervisor, to intervene.

After thinking about it for a long time, I realized what the problem was that I was relying too heavily on logical, rational conflict management tools whereas conflict is most often laden with emotions.

Why effective conflict management matters

Both careers and organizations die when conflict festers. If it is not dealt with effectively: decisions are made based on incomplete information;

- competition between individuals and departments grow;
- departmental goals are met at the cost of undermining organizational goals;
- talented leaders leave the organization; and,
- over time, the organizational culture becomes increasingly toxic.

This is unacceptable. I want so much more for my organization and I am sure you, too, want better for your organization. At the very least, wouldn't you like to work in a place that helped you to grow and provided you with the kind of working environment that you could look forward to going to, most days?, Do you, like me, want to respect the folks you work with and be respected by them? Would you like to feel confident that when you raise a concern in your organization you can talk through alternatives with others so that today's decisions do not become tomorrow's problems? Would you like to make a difference for yourself, your direct reports, your colleagues, your organization, and for the people your organization serves.

What's stopping you?

I believe that healthy work environments and quality decision-making are possible, but not with our limited approach to conflict management. While cognitive skills help, we must also address the emotional side of conflict if we are really

going to make a difference in our outcomes.

Somehow, we need to tame our emotions so that we can use the cognitive skills we have acquired. Without learning how to manage the emotional side of conflict, all our efforts are doomed to mediocre results at best or, more often, to failure. That is the adventure we are about to take; discovering how we can include all parts of the brain, both the emotional and the rational sides, when dealing with conflict.

I'm a little greedy and I hope you are as well! I want to have my cake and eat it too. I want to come through conflict with a good result **and** sustain or enrich my relationship with the other person. In other words, I don't want my outcomes to come at the cost of damaging a relationship that I might need or want in the future. Nor do I want to put all my emphasis on maintaining a relationship while giving up on getting a good outcome.

If you combine the cognitive steps that have already been well documented in the literature, the basic "how to's" of conflict management, with behavioral science and hypnosis, you **can** have your cake and eat it too! You can solve problems in ways that they stay solved and don't become bigger problems tomorrow. You can build your network of support and you can transform adversaries into teammates!

The secret to good conflict management

As a behavioral psychologist and a certified hypnotherapist, I know firsthand that we are not nearly as rational and logical in our actions as we would like to think. Google it and you will find a plethora of articles stating that a mere 5% of our decisions are made with the prefrontal cortex, the seat of our logical, rational thinking. The rest is controlled by our emotional, or limbic, system.

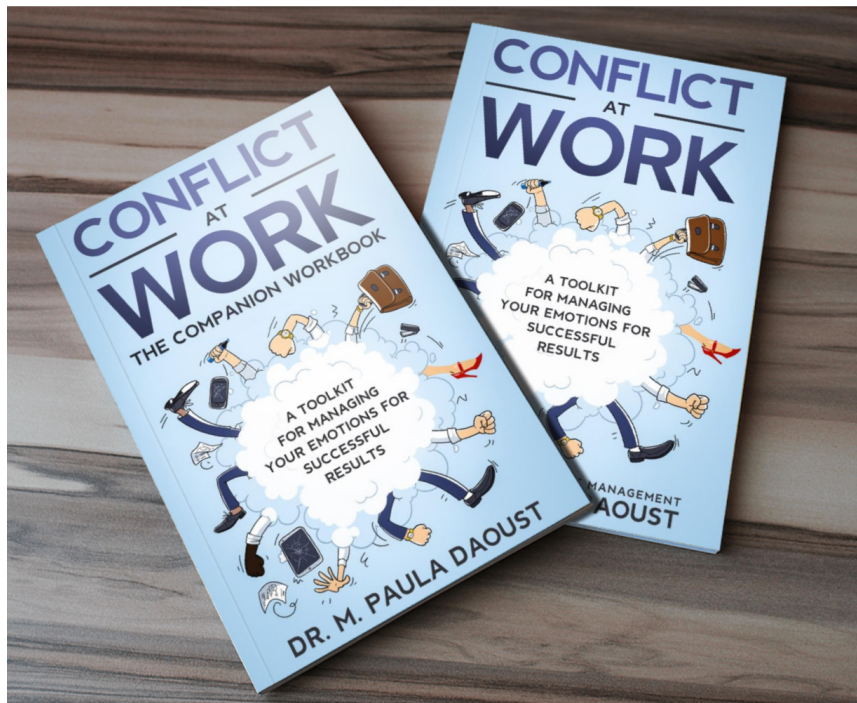
I'm not sure how the experts arrived at this estimate but, with what I know about heuristics, which are our mental decision-making shortcuts, filters and automatic behavior (a.k.a. habits), I am pretty sure that the estimate is not far from the truth. It's no wonder that my graduates were not using the skills they

learned in the classroom when faced with a real conflict and all the emotions associated with it. We can do better, much better!

So, what is the secret to successful conflict management? This adventure we are about to start is an adventure worth taking. In the coming chapters we will explore specific tools that will allow you to manage conflict effectively! These tools include both the expected cognitive tools and the less traditional tools from behavioral science and hypnosis. These additional tools, which recruit your emotional brain, will provide you with a powerful, whole-brain approach.

Leaders who effectively resolve conflict and remove barriers, will energize and inspire action. They solve problems and get things done! With improved conflict management skills, you can achieve better health and relationships, and improve your ability to achieve meaningful outcomes. Your work will have greater purpose and you will feel more in control of every aspect of your life. A successful and less stressed work experience is there for the taking!

**Conflict at Work and Conflict at Work the Companion Workbook
are available on Amazon!**



Do you have a group that would like to develop better cooperation and collaboration?

Dr. Daoust can design a keynote presentation, workshop, or seminar series to specifically meet your needs. With over 20 years of experience in instructional design, she can create a learning experience that gets the results you need and want.

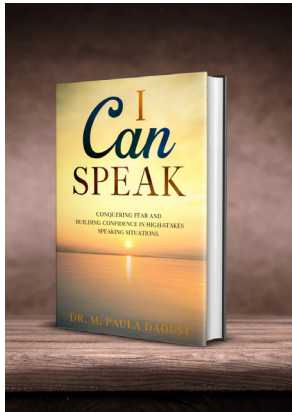
Contact Dr. Daoust at

DrPaula@behaviortransitions.com

785-633-6078

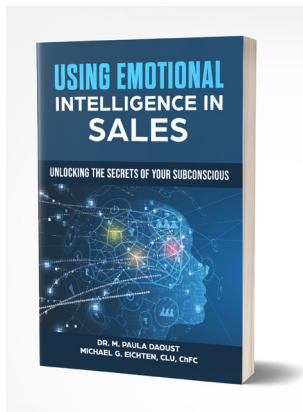


Other Books by Dr. Daoust



Whether it's a formal presentation, sharing ideas in a team meeting, talking with someone in authority a job interview, or giving a toast at a wedding, we all have to deal with a high-stakes speaking situation from time to time. It is a challenge to show up with our best self when we need it the most.

What difference would it make to your career if you could show up with your best performance when you need it the most? This book is chock full of practical, easy tools to get you there!



Would you like selling to be as natural as having a conversation with a friend?

We all sell, whether its products or services or proposing ideas, selling is an integral to all parts of business. When you put the science of emotional intelligence to work, selling becomes easy and success becomes automatic. This book will not only give you the tools, but it will help you understand why the tools are effective. Buy the book and start seeing the difference in both your career and your personal life!