



Conflict Transformation

We Can't Get Along Without It!

Interactive Workshops for Churches, Councils, Communities, Retreats and Families

Offered by Pastor Elan Louise Hacker

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to one of my beloved professors from Wartburg Theological Seminary, Rev. Dr. Noma Cook Everist. Her teaching and books have helped me and countless others get our dreams, ideas and passions from out of our heads and into the world. Her enthusiasm, brilliance, passion, gentleness and generosity will always inspire me. Thank you!

Conflict Transformation
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Conflict Resolution
We Can't Get Along Without It!
Interactive training for working through conflicts and moving forward with
faith perspectives.

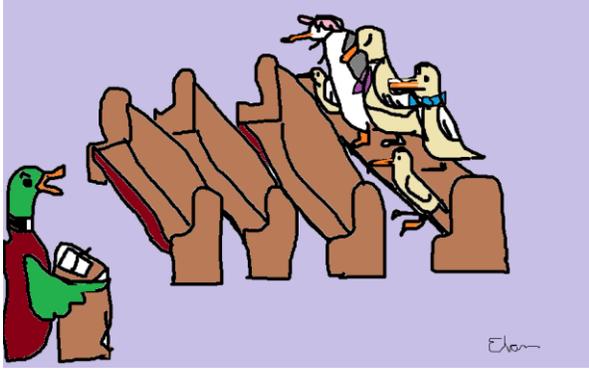
Conflict Transformations Intro: (5 min)

A large proportion of society believes in God and that God is present and working in and through creation and people, inspiring and enabling us to change the world. To work towards peace, to resolve conflict and for rivers of justice and mercy to flow in the land. It is probably safe to say that most of you gathered here today believe God, through Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit can and is working through each of us.... But we spend our days in Animal Village.

Animal Village

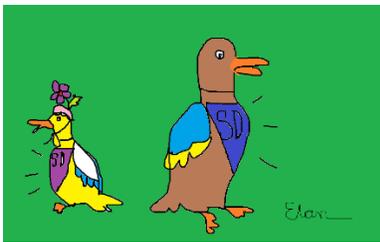
Let me introduce you to Animal Village. This is a place where ducks live, a lot of other animals live here too, but there are a lot of ducks. These ducks have a little church and faithfully go to church every Sunday. They love their preacher, and enjoy listening to the messages week after week. So like many of us, this Sunday morning they settled into their favorite pew, to worship and eagerly hear the word. Pastor Duck told them they could fly, they could do all things through Christ! The ducks were all thrilled to hear this good news, and were very excited! Quack! Praise the Lord! As they left the church they congratulated Pastor Duck on such an inspiring message. They even discussed it as they waddled out to the parking lots, got into their little duck cars, and drove home. ¹

¹ *Søren Kierkegaard*, the 19th century Danish religious philosopher, was the author of the original version of this story, modified many times, A similar adaptation of it is found in *Let Me Tell You a Story*, (pages 81-82) by Tony Campolo, copyright 2000, Tony Campolo, published by World Publishing, Nashville



I think this may be a Lutheran Church. (Actually, you could probably insert any denomination here...)

We are wired by God for hard stuff. We can deal with it, and share the skills for doing so with others. We just don't always believe it. One of the most important things I am praying you take home is the knowledge that you can...fly...let conflict open doors and give wings to incredible opportunities.



Trust the Holy Spirit to give guidance and courage.

Conflict resolution is not a technique to attempt to always get your way, if you don't already know this, let me break it to you: You will not always get your own way! You are not going to win every disagreement, nor should you. Conflict resolution is how we can begin to settle disagreements, resolve conflicts and press towards mutual goals in healthy ways that respectfully consider others' opinions. We can learn to do this in ways that the dignity and integrity of all are preserved, and perhaps strengthened.

When you look around your church and the world you see people here for a myriad of reasons, but one thing they are all hungry for is grace. The Gospel. Picture them with their hands cupped together to receive this grace, this life sustaining food: The love of Jesus offered to each other. You are here today, uniquely gathered by God for a purpose, as we share with each other ideas, all woven together by the Holy Spirit. Going forward, we will need to take the knowledge of the presence of God with us, the promise of Romans 8:28: All things work together for good for those who are called according to God's purpose. All things, even the conflicts you wrestle with at church, your jobs and in your homes.

Workshop 1

1. Decisions by group or by one? The Great Carpet Controversy (5 min)

What color is the carpet in your sanctuary? Picture yourself at a committee meeting to discuss this. What is most important? The church is divided over such things as colors that will not show dirt, carpet color that enhances the stained glass windows in the sanctuary, etc. How would you vote if you were on this committee?

- Not show dirt?
- Match Stained Glass windows?
- Not make Elan look like the carpet?
- Other?

Can you see any reason I might wish for a different carpet color?!!!!



Will you feel personally rejected if your choice wasn't chosen, and even if you wouldn't, do you know that some might?

A very respected elder of the church stood up and said, "I don't care what color the carpet is, as long as it's red!" Do you feel there was room for more discussion? Arguments abounded but when the carpet was installed it was red. Before this fearless spokesperson, by now quite elderly, died a pastor went up to her and asked, "Why did you want the carpet to be red? She snorted and slapped him on the arm, and said one word: "Wine!"²

²Pr. David Tonn, First English Church in Ortonville, MN, used with permission.



Has anyone ever checked to see if carpet comes in Mogen David Red?



For all of the Baptists out there: Welches Purple Grape!

To clarify, the group did wisely consider all suggestions, but after hearing the one elder's reason they voted unanimously to go with red. What if she had been excluded from the conversation because of her age or her gender? How can we make sure voices are heard and honored?

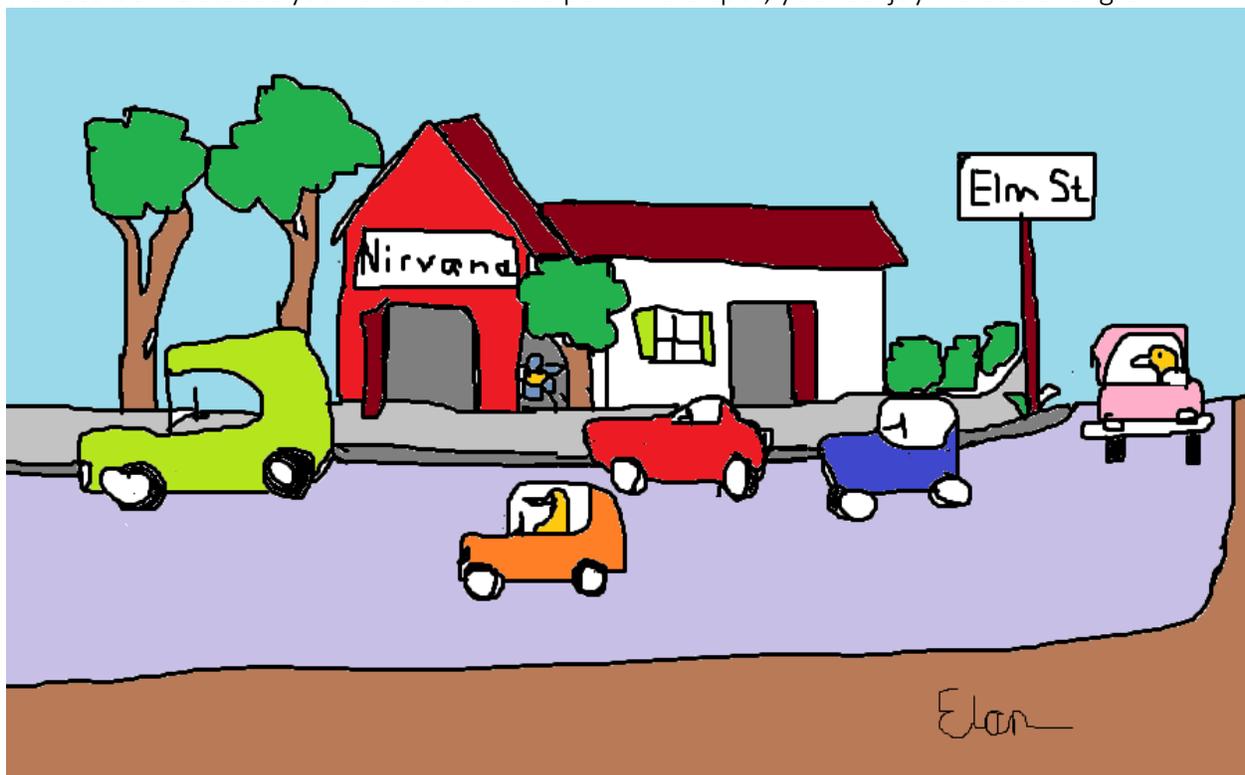
2. Conflict: Who needs it! (3 min)

By a show of hands how many of you see conflict as something to be avoided at all costs?

Percentage? Half? Over half, less than half?

What if I tell you learning to have conversations, discussing, having real dialog together over conflict can help you and your family, help your church grow in maturity and responsiveness, help your members and community become stronger, more resilient, healthier? There may come a day when you see conflict in a more positive light: Conflict transformation!

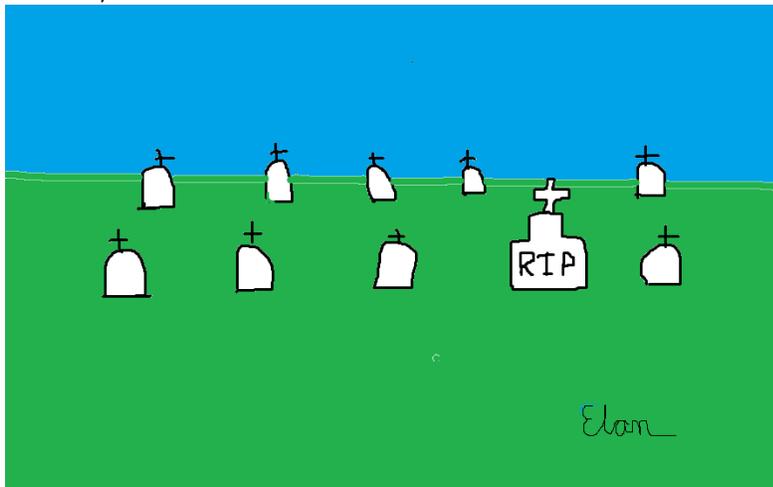
If you are driving and looking for a place to park and see a good space right in front of where you need to be but you need to parallel park to use it, are you going to try and parallel park, or, are you going to pass and go out of your way, (*WAY out of your way*), to find something else? Again, show of hands! If you are taught how to parallel park, those spaces suddenly look great! Instead of dread you get all excited! I can do this, and when you do, what once was something making you feel bad, (and a little stupid) suddenly becomes a blessing, a spot right in front of where you want to be! Because you have the skills to park in the spot, you feel joy instead of angst.



3. Conflict: What to do with it and how it can even be a good thing! (3 min)

Are you thinking, oh, come on, how can conflict be a good thing? Let me ask you a couple of questions. How many people have conflict in your homes? In your marriages? In your jobs, and in your churches? If we can learn how to communicate, how to listen to the voices of all involved, including the voice of the Holy Spirit, how to articulate our own viewpoints and deeply examine and appreciate the viewpoints of others to come to understanding, we can start walking towards compatibility, and growth.

Would you like to see a conflict free zone?



The neighbors here are very quiet!

How do you learn any new skill? Practice! By doing it again and again, tweaking it, working at it, until you are no longer afraid of it or intimidated by it. How on earth are we going to get to practice conflict resolution skills? What do we need? Yup! For this we are going to need some conflicts. Good news! Providentially... we will get some. My advice is to start where you are with whatever is going on and learn to deal with it early on, and the benefits of this are immeasurable. Here are just three, and you will be able to come up with others:

- You will be better prepared for the mega conflicts
- Mega conflicts may never happen because you and the people who you helped learn these skills are addressing situations in their infancy, before they escalate.
- In emergency situations you will be more capable of responding appropriately

Gear up your mind to go from dread to this: *Thank you God for this situation, this area will help us transform our selves and this creation, to grow stronger, be healthier, and give us the courage to...fly!*

4. Learning to Share Your Viewpoints (5 min)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret heffernan dare to disagree?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_dare_to_disagree?language=en)

(Ted allows you to show the talks in their entirety but does not want you to show portions. If you are using this in groups with time to do so, I highly recommend showing the clips, then having follow up discussions.) This one is right under 15 minutes

Dr. Alice Stewart, early doctor, researcher and woman, (three strikes against her) discovered the connection with women getting x-rays, correlating with a higher incidence of fetal death... not accepted for 25 years.... Learned to debate, to argue and handle conflict... it proved her theory. She had a very small, but diverse team, and on this team there was a man who after many years of working with Dr. Stewart described his job as using his keen sense of data and research to prove Dr. Stewart wrong. How many of you have an irregular person in your life? The one you describe as a thorn in your side, or the one whom you prayerfully contemplate sending brochures to from another church? We all love yes people on our boards, people who support and praise our every idea, but... we also need the fault finders. The ones creating mountains out of smooth desert plains. Instead of dreading them, or rejecting them out of hand, what happens when you welcome their input, even encourage it? (Using skills you will learn that will not let anyone hijack the entire discussion.)

Dr. Alice Stewart learned, through repetitive need to defend them, to be very comfortable articulating her research, and lending her expertise to others in need of defense. Her meticulous research ultimately led to the knowledge there is no such thing as a safe dose of radiation, which understandably fell into quick condemnation from the physicians using x rays and other nuclear usage supporters. Undergirding her ability to fearlessly face courtrooms full of objectors and big name companies and be cross examined by their lawyers was the sure knowledge that her data was absolutely correct. What was one reason she felt so secure she was correct? Because a brilliant statistician made it his job to ultimately prove her correct by testing the data to see if she was wrong. By looking for faults.³

If you are familiar with pre-marriage counseling, you already know the priority placed on teaching the couple skills for communicating their needs. As each person becomes stronger in their ability to express their selves and their own views, (being sensitive to each other's) the stronger their marriage is and the higher the likelihood of it lasting. I know Minnesota believes in it enough to offer a significant discount to couples who participate in this training. I think this should also be taught to parishioners, long married, or single, your church council members included.

³ The Woman Who Knew Too Much, Alice Stewart and the Secrets of Radiation, by Gayle Greene

Do we seriously want to have a group of people gathered, (as in a council) who are all yes men and women? If they are uncomfortable voicing their concerns in front of everyone, guess what? They still may (almost always!) miraculously find the courage to voice it elsewhere. Some boards assign a person to find fault in ideas, to look for holes in theories, to play devil's advocate. Can you think of the advantages of this?

In an atmosphere of silence, the possibility exists that some fantastic ideas never get shared because those with them either haven't been invited to share or are too intimidated to share. Start teaching the skills to share. According to Margaret Heffernan students seeking doctorates are asked to defend/debate 6 stances of their dissertations. She believes that everyone, not just Ph.D. students, should be taught this skill. I agree.

http://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_why_it_s_time_to_forget_the_pecking_order_a_t_work?language=en

Interactive: (5 min)

Defend This: Handout Fact or "Fiction" cards to each small group and the challenge is to have conversation about an item on the card, promoting, defending, or declining to agree and why. Make sure each person contributes to the conversation.

Alternative Interactive:



The Great Divide



Over Toilet Paper



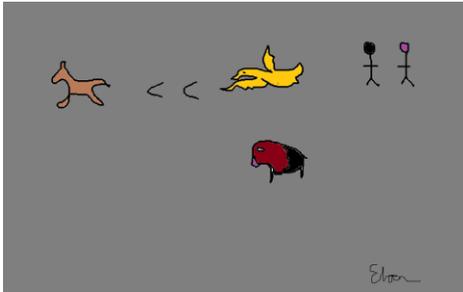
More specifically, under or over?

Defend the over or under preference! Or, come up with a better idea to finally solve it!

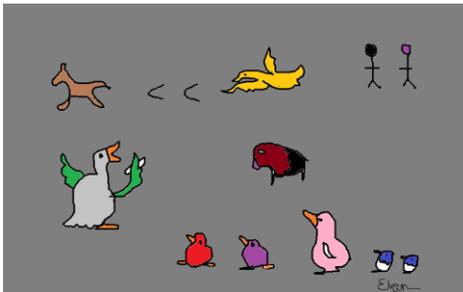
5. Table Talk (World Café) (20 min)

Is conversation around dinner tables still something we should try to do as a family? (Studies have overwhelmingly proven its benefits.) The World Café model is one way to facilitate this happening in groups and I would like to provide a small introduction to the premise, so you will feel comfortable going back home and utilizing it in your context. The World Café model is a useful way to generate conversation and develop ideas and strategies. It also gives everyone at the table a chance to talk.

In a nut shell, the world café model is a method that can be used to foster conversations between a wide spectrum of people, comfortable conversations, on a specific topic or problem (challenge) that travels from table to table. Each table is covered with a white plastic tablecloth and provided with colored markers, allowing each person to leave doodles, thoughts and comments for the next group to add to, or in a sense, follow the trail. Modern version (perhaps!) of the early cave drawings!



Wonder what was happening here?



Prior to flannel graphs and PowerPoints and World Café!

A designated time is set for initial conversation (and subsequent ones) and all but one occupant of each table rotates to another table, (not sitting with their original table partners.) The person remaining is the keeper of the conversations, sharing (quickly) what went before, and ideas offered, then the conversation resumes (around the original topic) with each new person adding their thoughts and doodles, sharing about the conversations they learned from the last table where they were seated. I am using the book World Café as my source. For me, one of the delights of the World Café model is even when people are of diverse viewpoints, they are having conversation with each other and not only considering, but also re-sharing views/perspectives/ideas that differ from their own. The doodles become touch stones and sparks for more conversation

For our discussion topic use open ended conversations leaning towards Both/And, not Either/Or. Frame the discussion topic in a positive way. (For example if your topic question is Why don't people see their lives as ministry? Reframe the topic to "How can we help people see their lives as ministry? Choose one of these topics, or come up with your own for group conversation. Don't have too broad of a playing field for a topic, try to hold it to something people can successfully (begin) to address in a small time allotment.

- How can we help those in our area?
- What are some ways to help people see their "secular" life as a ministry?
- What might we do to improve the current welfare system?
- How can we help diverse people gather to share ideas?
- ?
- ?



World Café setting

Items needed:

- Plastic tablecloths
- Colored markers
- Round tables (or card tables, or use ends of rectangular tables)
- Little vase with flower
- People (or ducks)
- A concern
- A timer

Hackathon: this is when groups or corporations do this only more aggressively and for a longer time span (it is like World Café, only on steroids) (In the book *Beyond Measure*, by Margaret Hoffman)

Groups of people, first individually then in teams work on creating ideas or solutions. If you want to try it in your context get lots of sticky notes to write down ideas, then you could organize them on a large flat surface, (wall, black or white board, large table top.)

Workshop 2

Intro (5 min)



Talking pieces for circle conversations.

1. Circle Conversations (12 min)

In Circle a Circle Conversation or Circle Sentencing, each group has a talking piece, (in other cultures a talking stick.) A facilitator explains the ground rules in advance, then gently, but consistently enforces them. The talking piece is passed from one person to the other, always to the left never to the right, and only the person holding the talking piece may talk. This helps in a number of ways:

- Eliminates people talking over the top of each other.
- It gives each person in the group the opportunity to speak, and, yes, they can certainly choose not to speak. In some instances, perhaps they will just hold the talking piece quietly, allowing the others time to process what has just been said.
- It eliminates those who jump in and detour or hijack the conversations from doing so, and instead of only thinking about what they are going to say next, it gives them the chance to deeply listen to what is being said.

Interactive:

Have people sit around in a circle and give them talking pieces. (In your context you can choose a talking piece that has significance for your group or family or the topic) Have each group (or all of the groups) focus on one topic. Remind everyone of the rules: Honor and respect, confidentiality, talking piece goes to the left (clockwise), only the person holding the piece may talk. It is OK to pass, or use your time to just hold it and pray silently... If you are using it for training, as we are, then afterwards do a recap, if you are using it to actually resolve a particular situation, remind the group that trust and confidentiality are a must. This is all holy ground.

2. Deep Listening (3 min)

This is an example of the changes you can make by **deep** listening:

I am always excited when I find out something that is working and can be replicated to work in other places and formats. This past spring I was at a conference taught through the Gunderson Foundation and in connection with the Jacob Wetterling Foundation. This is where I learned of the advances made in helping to prevent child abuse, all the way from parents to the children learning skills and language to prevent occurrences, through helping those that have been traumatized to live healthier and more fulfilling lives. One of the studies I learned about is called the ACE, (Adverse Childhood Experience) Research. This research gives a scale to adverse events in a child's life they may have been exposed to in 10 different areas. Each area gets a score of 1, and then is added up at the end. They found that those with a higher ACE overall score and by higher I mean 2 or above, had far more difficulties in many areas, personal, social, health and even a shorter life expectancy, in some cases as much as twenty years shorter life spans than for those with no ACE. Something that I found really hopeful is when the people with the high ACE scores are interviewed by a trained professional and go over these adverse childhood experiences, afterwards many of the areas they were having problems in showed immediate and long term improvement. Overall they began to cope better with life. This in scientific terms is hopeful; in the terms of a previously abused person who has lived with the results of these adverse experiences and witnesses the perpetuating cycle of abuse, this finding isn't just hopeful, it is downright FANTASTIC.

So what huge medical advance and deep psychological technology do the professionals attribute this to? Their belief is by simply giving these people the opportunity to share in a medically comprehensive way, (deeply listening) helped them to see the correlation between what happened to them in their childhood and how it affects their physical and mental health the rest of their life, gave them the chance to share their darkest secrets with another person and to still be accepted. To be heard, to have the correlations explained may be life changing.

This was included to demonstrate the importance and power of deep listening, I am not suggesting you immediately go out and encourage people to share their deep secrets! There is specialized training for implementing this, and it is available and I hope it becomes even more available! I have links at the end of the workshop if you are interested in learning more.

Interactive: (10 min)

Scillia Elworthy Nominated for the Nobel Peace prize 4 times (I'm going to read from *Beyond Measure*, by Margaret Heffernan)

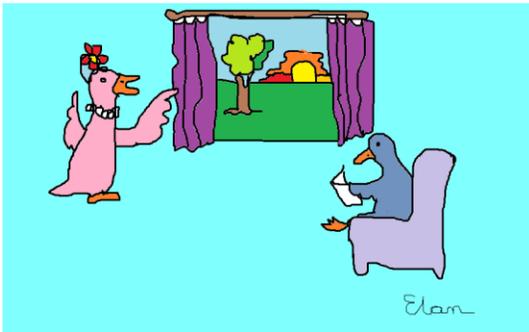
Pair off into twos. Person one asks a nontrivial question:

- What would you do if you could do anything you wanted?
- What is your biggest joy in life?
- How are you really?

Person two shares intently on this topic for three minutes, how they feel, what their hopes/fears are. Person one listens. With their whole body, both maintain constant eye contact, offering no facial expression that will alter or guide the other person's sharing. Now reverse. In the book she recommends five minutes each and doing two questions per partner, for a total of 20 minutes. We are limited here for time, but if taught in your context you should try this. I also highly recommend watching her excellent Ted Talk: Fighting With Non Violence (How to deal with bullies without becoming a thug yourself)

https://www.ted.com/talks/scilla_elworthy_fighting_with_non_violence (15 minutes 40 seconds)

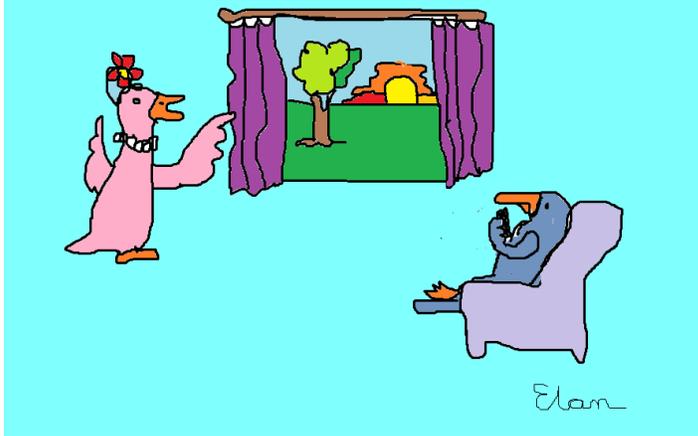
3. Kindness and Generosity (5 min)



Can this relationship be saved?

In the painting Mrs. Duck is pointing out a beautiful sunset to Mr. Duck. Will he respond to her offer of connection? Will Mr. Duck grunt acknowledgement and keep reading without even lifting his eyes from his page?

Wait! Let me update this a bit!



How we respond to each other even in situations like this tells a lot about the successful or unsuccessful outcome of our relationship.

(Read from the book Blink on study) Deep listening is a gift of untold value, the ability to be heard, and to listen to each other is something well worth practicing and cultivating. I hear you. This is how I understand what I am hearing. You are accepted. This is a study done about what two traits contribute most to lasting relationships. Spoiler alert, **kindness and generosity**. They are offering it as what is needed in marriages, I contend it is what is needed all around the world, in all relationships, couples, parent, child, etc. I highly recommend reading this, incorporating it your life and sharing in your own context.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/lasting-relationships-rely-on-2-traits-2014-11>

Interactive: (12 min)

How can you and your group grow as better listeners? I once heard someone say, “You don’t have to find ways to communicate you are listening and paying attention if you really are listening and paying attention!” (I remember that because I was listening and paying attention!) We also need to learn how to rephrase our end of the conversation to not be self-focused: me, me, me, I, I, I. In my world I would love to share Toby Keith’s song, therefore I am including it just for your personal edification, use at your own risk!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlExLB86Do0>

Learning to rephrase “you” statements, such as, “You are such a slob, I hate it when you leave your laundry on the floor!” Into, “It makes me feel stressed when I see clothes on the floor.” One is going to result in hurt feelings, one statement opens the door for more conversation. Let’s go with it! Improv time! Can I have a couple of volunteers?

Setting the stage: Newly married couple, both have jobs, one likes to keep it tidy, and one, not so much. (Possibly never attended Amy Larson’s great workshop on dealing with clutter!)

Problem: Visible Problem: Dirty Laundry on the Floor. Invisible problem? Lack of respect, uncaring, over worked.... ?

Improv I

“You Slob”

Outcome/solution:

Improv II

“This makes me feel”

Outcome/solution:

4. Nurturing Relationships (Creating healthy Conflict Transformation) (2 min)

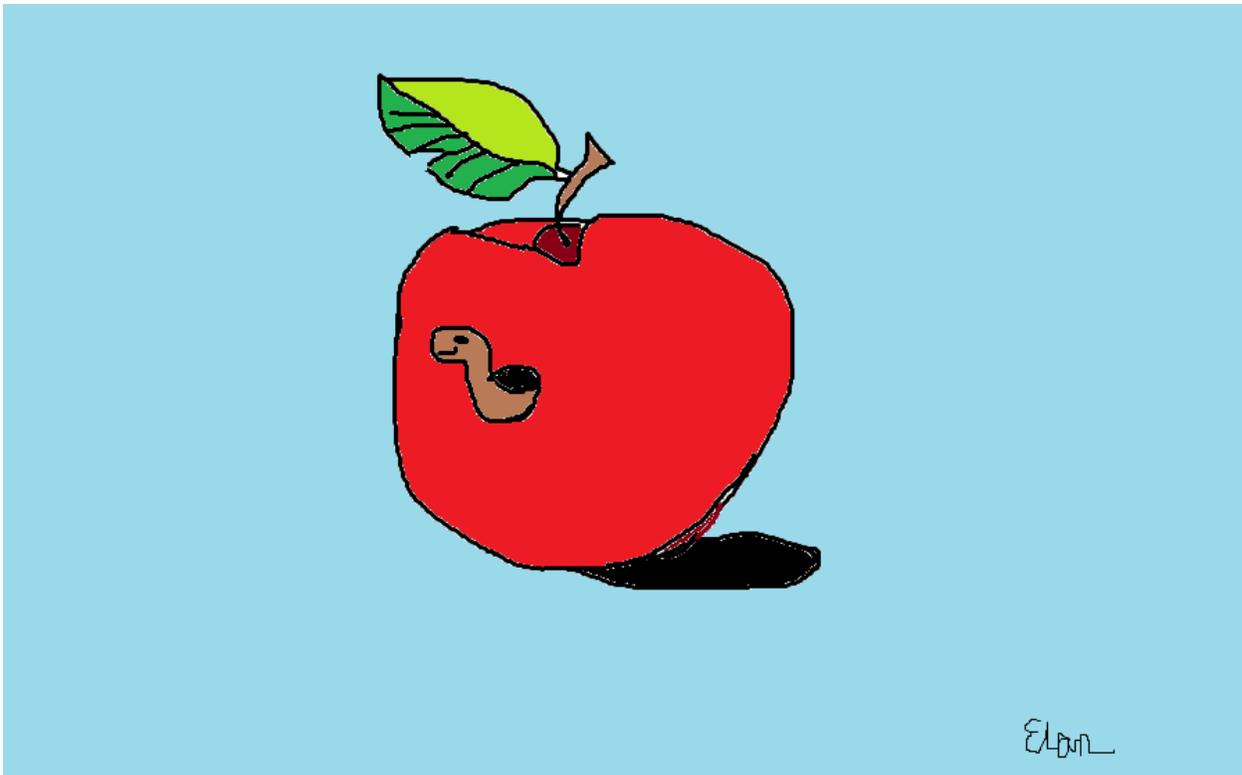
Fika

The Swedish office habit, fika (Feee KA!) is a great example of nurturing. It is a time, usually twice a day when coworkers gather together to relax and talk about whatever is uppermost on their minds. An opportunity to connect and build relationships, an opportunity to be savored, not rushed through. It is taken together, not alone at a desk, or in hallways, but as a group. Not in groups sorted by classifications but all departments together from CEO to janitorial. Productivity goes up and social capital is built. Why should this matter to us? Swedish work places are rated as being the lowest stressful in the world. I think we have a word for fika in our language: fellowship, (Faa-low-shee-up) Somehow it has fallen by the wayside, but we could start to work on resurrecting it!

5. Social Capital (2 min)

Having a space for people to feel comfortable is very important. You might have a few good conversations in a hall way or a doorway but for everyone to be able to listen deeply and share in any meaningful way will be given a better opportunity for reoccurring in a comfortable space. Accessible to all, welcoming hospitality by all, even the chance to break bread together; eating or drinking together helps break down barriers and can help establish rapport.

Social capital, is a phrase that was new to me, and it merits serious study, and effort on our part to establish it. Social capital is what happens when we spend enough time together to build trust, respect and care for each other. When a group has it you can have debates, discussions, disagreements, honestly and openly on a level and depth you cannot reach without social capital, because time has been invested building connections and trust. People won't open up, won't share what they are really thinking or concerned about in ways that facilitate progress and sharing of vital information, without it.



“The Parable of the Apple” (4 min)

There once was an important meeting and the presenters were trying to make some excellent points. Ideas that were good and nutritious for everyone. To this meeting they brought snacks; one a not so healthy choice, but tasty pie bar. This was cut up and offered on a large platter. They also brought a very nutritious, offering: apples. Whole red apples. These were set casually on the table (still in the same bag they were purchased in), but conveniently opened so everyone could help themselves. While several did help themselves to the pie bars, only one person took an apple and this they set down on a napkin in front of them, but did not eat. Why? Uncertain possibilities: Had it been washed? Was it their fear of making loud crunching noises or juice dripping down their face? Was there not enough social capital in the small group to risk eating a whole apple in front of everyone else? Who knows? Maybe they just planned on eating it on the way home from the meeting.

One person in the group not only wanted to eat the apple, but wanted to make sure everyone else would have the opportunity to try it as well, so she got up, washed their hands and grabbed an apple. After searching unsuccessfully (and possibly noisily) for a knife to cut it up with, she settled on a butter knife which would get the job done, but not as handily. If it looked like everyone was enjoying the first apple there was a contingency plan to cut up and pass more apples. The first apple was cut up, cored, cut into manageable slices, placed on a clean plate and passed around. The distasteful bits were removed, and the pieces could now be eaten daintily, without fear of juice running down their faces.

The apple was now being eaten, but hit a road block about half way around the table. The presenters were very focused on explaining the merits of the goal. How it would benefit everyone, offering fiber and vitamins, sustainability for the long range, how it far surpassed the empty calories of what had been eaten before. Someone in the group pointed out that their idea, while sterling and fantastic, needed to be offered in a more palatable manner, at least until everyone had an opportunity to try it and see the benefits for themselves.... Alas, the point was missed and the apples never moved on and turned brown in front of the presenters. Who, fortunately have a great sense of humor and can laugh at stuff like this and realize... we aren't talking about apples. (On a bright note, one of the presenters ate the sliced apple on the way to the next gathering...)



Not working out just right....

Be sensitive to hierarchy. Your role as leader includes being aware of who is not contributing and find ways for them to share their insights, or teaching others how to encourage those gathered to share, you might find a way for everyone to eat your apples! Look for ways to move towards real dialog.

Suggestion:

- Always be looking for opportunities to build Social Capital
- Small – Medium size Group, have a Circle Conversation (using an apple as a talking piece!)
- Assign one person in a discussion to play devil's advocate
- Either assign, or be the person who encourages others to share thoughts
- Large group, World Café Model
- Hackathon!

6. Where two or more are gathered together... (3 min)

Any group that is exclusive to gender, race, age, etc. will be poorer for lacking those whose opinions and experiences are missing from the table. Even if you are diverse, you have to make space for people to speak and be heard. The more diverse we can be, the richer the conversations and ideas, and solutions will be. Pay attention to the size of the group and make sure it is accessible to all.



This is a good start...



This is better!

Workshop 3

Intro (4 min)

1. Dissecting (Defining) a conflict: (2 min)

The importance of taking a good hard look at what has happened, or is in the process of happening, is vital. Gathering facts does not have to resemble a witch hunt or an intent to find a scapegoat. Sometimes when we break down the problem we start to see ways to handle the smaller sections, eventually developing a way to resolve, understanding and managing the whole, which before may have been conceived as insurmountable.

- It gets everyone on the same page.
- Conversations offering different views are now brought together into one room
- Big problem broken down to smaller segments, easier to chew, digest, contemplate...

Just asking the questions and gathering the facts, not to assign blame but in an earnest attempt to find solutions, also helps the group do something very important: Deescalate. When we can make the space to ask the important questions, it provides the opportunity to move from the knee jerk/ fight or flight reaction into the calmer rational long range survival mode of dealing with, learning from, and growing from whatever it is. Both to resolve an issue or to take steps to develop needed strengths.



This is what we want to avoid for everyone.

Interactive: (15 min)

Dissecting a conflict

In a diverse group, where many do not know each other, an actual conflict may be used, with guidelines: no names, nothing too painful or personal. In your congregation or community, I suggest you choose a hypothetical conflict (that truly is hypothetical, not just a clever disguise of an ongoing issue), as a teaching tool. Naturally, if you are gathered to discuss a real situation that is what you should be dissecting, in which case, always honor confidentiality.

White board:

1. Would anyone here feel comfortable writing some things down on the board?
2. Would anyone like to share a conflict scenario?

Then we begin breaking down the event, what went wrong, who responded, what was the outcome of this response, where is the general area of contention: can it be used for good, how can we make sure it never happens again? (And on and on, for 3-5 minutes)

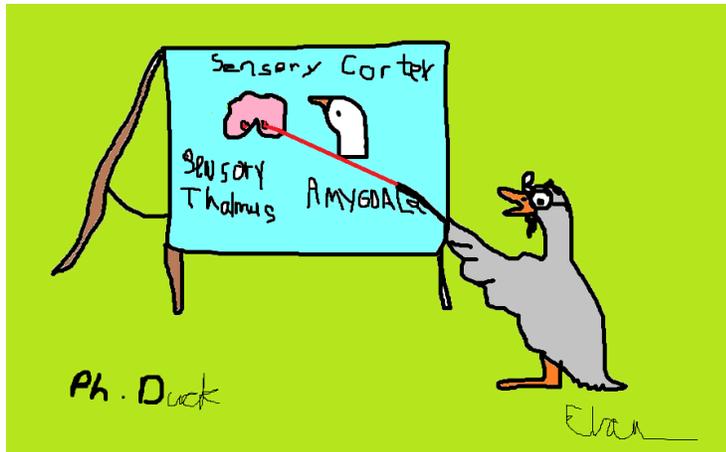
2. Conflict: Not just Fight or Flight (10 min)



I would like you to think about how conflict makes you feel. Just picture yourself from a distance, I don't want you to actually feel these feelings, just imagine them. Can you imagine your hands getting sweaty or your face flushing? Can you imagine your heart beating faster and your blood pressure climbing? Remember don't recreate these feelings, just remember them, or imagine them. Now let's talk about them. It is important for you to recognize them. There is an incredible talk on ted.com by Kelly McGonagall, if you are going to teach on this at home, I recommend you show her Ted talk at one of your sessions in its entirety. (Ted lets you do this, but only if you show the whole thing.), and this one is so good, I was very tempted to do it here,

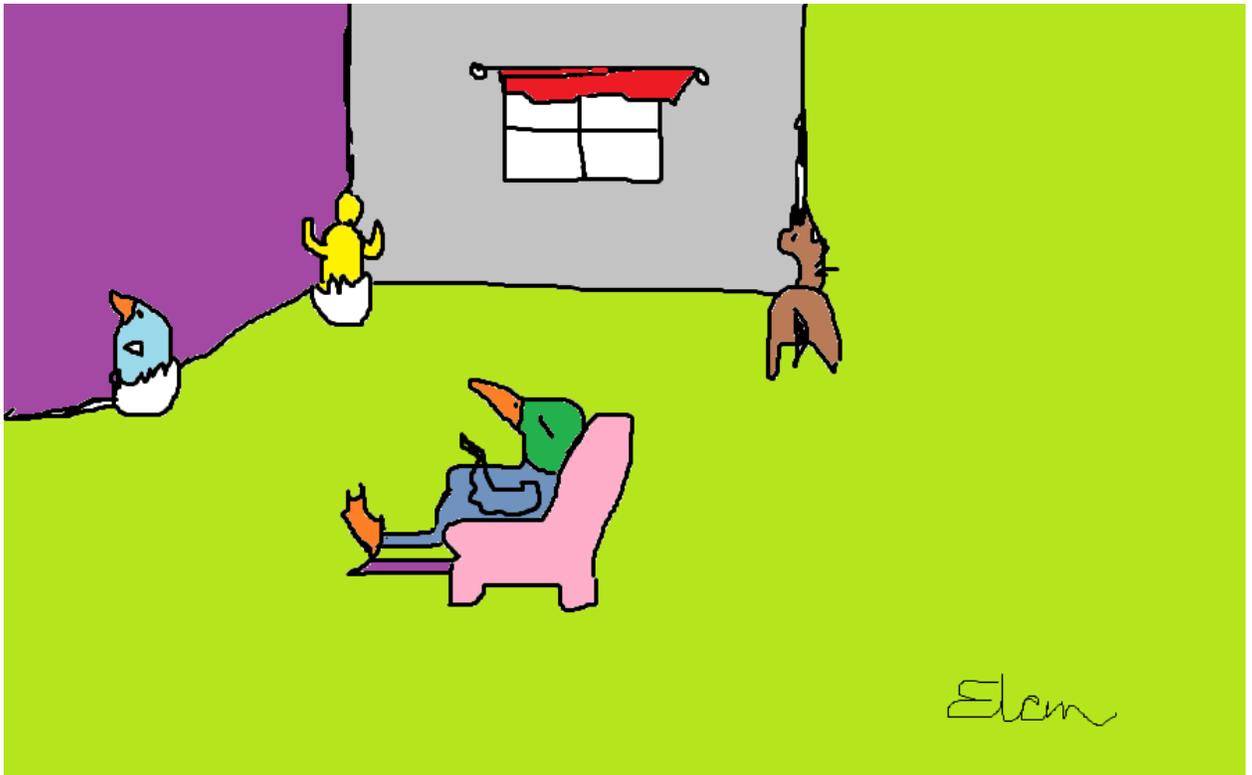
but we don't have the time. In it she beautifully explains how every one of these symptoms we experience during stress, are actually our bodies' wonderful way of preparing us to deal with what is coming. The physical reactions you hate and wish you never experience give you the physical ability to tackle what is in front of us. Please watch it even if it is just for yourself and your family or friends. You will come away, recognizing how these symptoms are allies, a boost, a hand up from your body. (this one is right at 15 minutes)

https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend



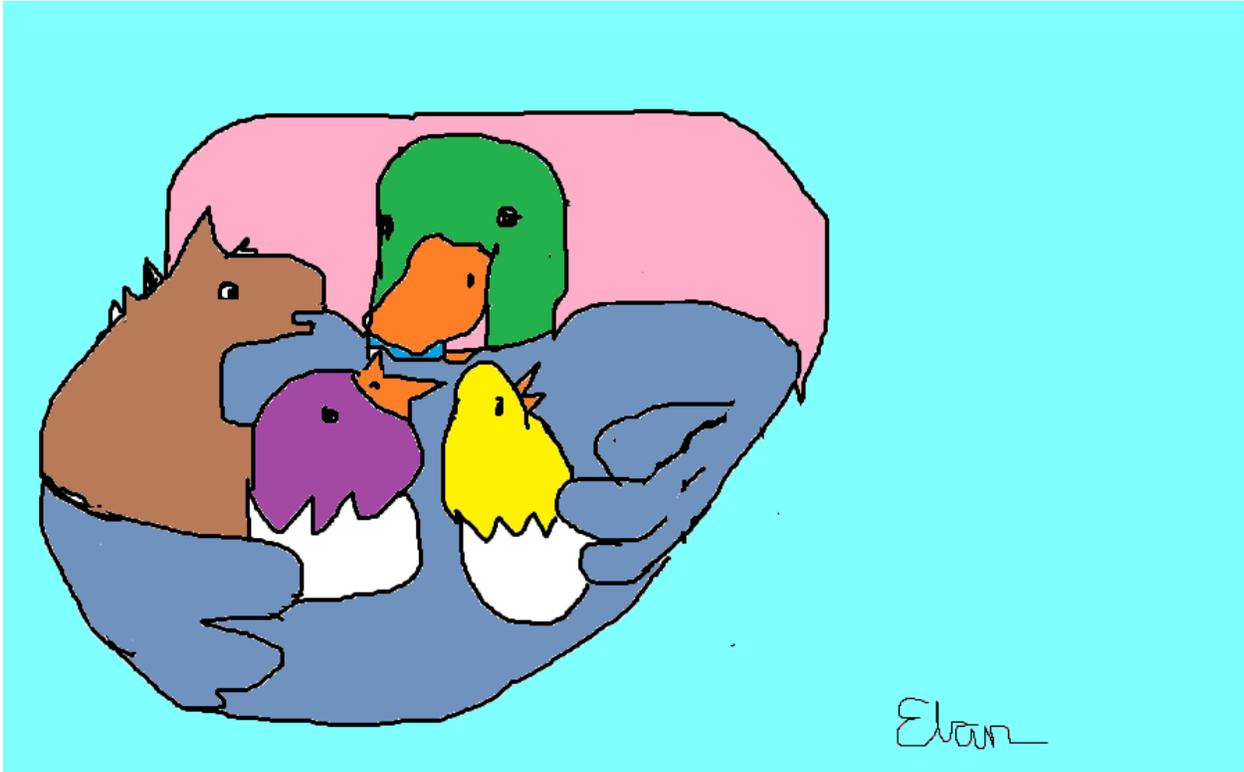
Can anyone pronounce these correctly?
(Me neither!)
(Ahh-mig da-la)

Time Out

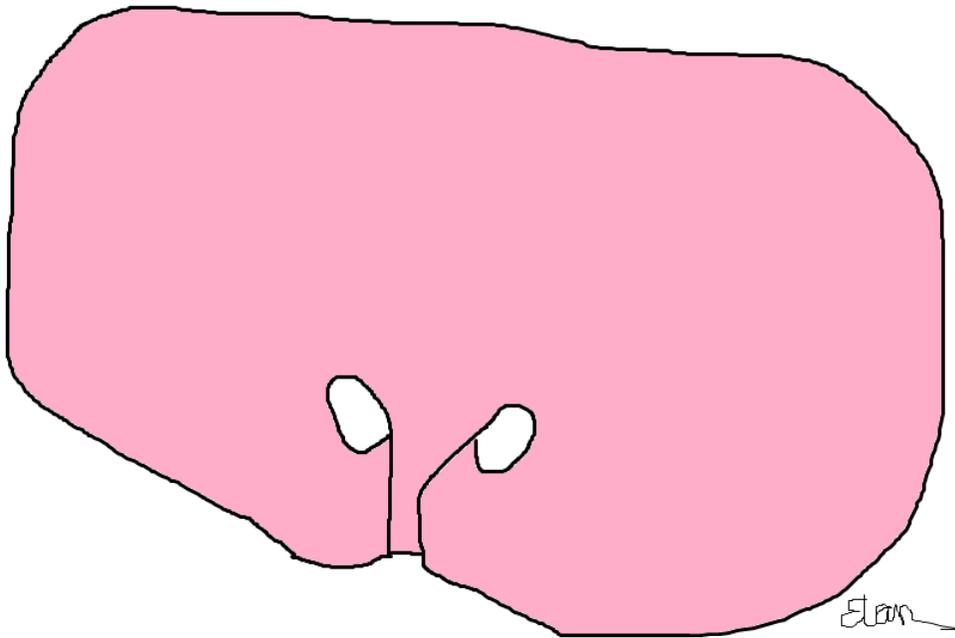


3. Conflict Transformation/Resolution Skills: (4 min)

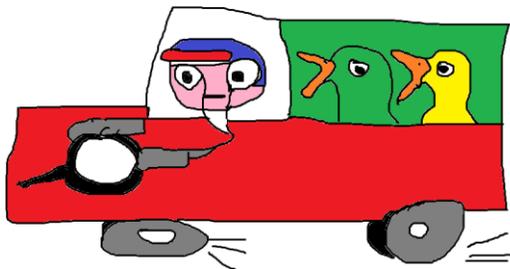
Interaction versus reaction. Rethink what has happened. There are studies that offer different approaches to this involving meaningful dialog. In your home what is a time out? A lot of times it is a way to send our children off alone. There may just be a better way! Something called **“Time In.”** Instead of sending your child off alone to contemplate the error of their ways, you go along. Perhaps you cradle them or hold their hand and gently talk about how the situation made them feel, the family feel. Discuss the emotions they are feeling, guide the conversation to dialog about what possible outcomes there are for the current situation and what alternatives may be more viable. After you have helped guide the child into this more contemplative area of their brain, (and perhaps yours too!) then you can figure out how long of a separation from the group is appropriate. These times of quiet are important for adults too! Then make a plan and figure out together under what conditions fellowship will be resumed.



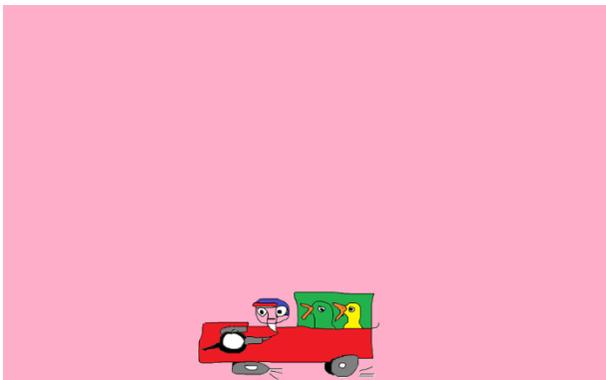
Some will say they don't have time to do this, it is a lot easier to just send the child to their rooms, or corners, or avoid your spouse, friend coworker, what have you. And I will say, yes. It takes effort. The possible rewards are raising generations that can have meaningful dialog, and are willing to seek it out instead of shutting each other off, people who learn from an early age to empathize. Could sending our children off as punishment be resulting in teenagers refusing to talk, loved ones offering cold shoulders and slamming doors? "I don't want to talk about it!" Groups refusing to consider each other's values and viewpoints? It is worth contemplating, isn't it? The main idea behind these workshops is that we need a return to dialog, a resurgence of fellowship. A way to honor each other with kindness and shared values.



This is your brain and the two white spots represent your Amygdala



This is Amygdala driving the bus



See all of the pink? The rest of your brain.

When we begin feeling those fight or flight symptoms, don't be afraid of them, or dread them, recognize them for what they are; our bodies' age old method (primitive/or reptilian brain) to protect us. Then as soon as possible find/make breathing space to move from this quick response zone, controlled by the Amygdala into a different mental area. This is the value of a well done and intentional "time in." Or benefits of a purposeful breathing space of a "time out." It gives the wonderful area in our brain that considers and weighs issues with the space and time to come up with sustainable solutions. Good for children, couples, churches and beyond! Teaching each other how to recognize when and why Amygdala is driving the bus is something we all need to know!

In emergencies, Amygdala may be the perfect one to drive the bus, but as soon as you can, pull over and let the rest of your wonderful, calm, reasoning, objective brain have the driver's seat. (If there is time I can tell about our drive through St Louis. 4 min)



4. Avoiding avoidance (4 min)

Choosing what to avoid and what to engage in is very important. You need to discern what is worth stepping into and what is worth stepping over. (Useful knowledge if you are walking anywhere in Animal Village...or across my lawn) There are somethings that truly need to be stepped over, watched and given a chance to resolve on their own. Otherwise you will build a reputation for being nitpicky, or overbearing or micromanaging. Ignoring important issues creates an ever rising tide of damage...Imagine a leaky roof, the more buckets you put out, the worse the potential for damage rises... from a patch job, to a new roof, to needing to address mold and new carpet issues... Yet, some people, in an effort to keep the peace at any price, end up paying a huge price, and having no real peace. (For a family or any group.)

- Sweep it under the rug.
- Ignoring it.
- Hope it will go away.
- Walking to the other side of the street to avoid someone you disagree with.
- Throw more money at it.
- Fire everyone who disagrees with you.
- Refusing to speak to someone you are upset with.
- What else?

How many of you think these are good strategies? If this is your go to plan you may already be very aware of the potential it has to destroy a family and a marriage, not to mention a career or a church. So, how do we avoid avoidance?

- Learn methods of healthy dialog
- Be willing to engage in conversation
- Not be afraid of conflict, see it as opportunity for growth
- Do not see the other as an adversary, see each other as a fellow human (or duck)
- Listen deeply
- Welcome those offering opposing viewpoints
- ?

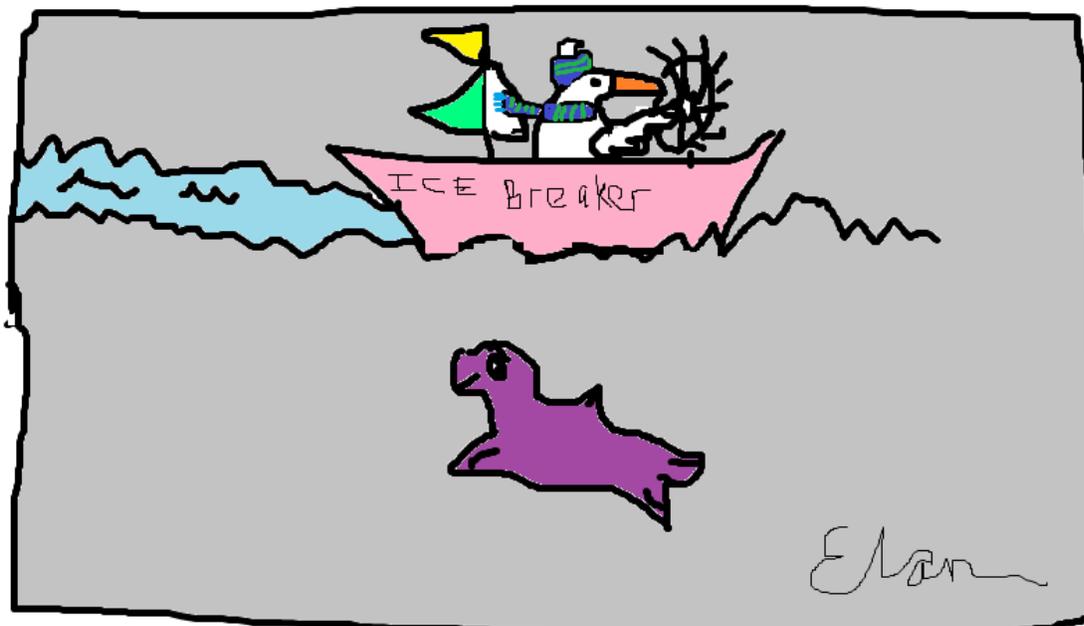
Understand the destructive cost of avoidance. When an issue is allowed to progress unchecked it grows things that are not conducive to health. Anxiety, never being addressed does not have the opportunity to move us from flight or fight into growth and contemplation, so it grows and is easily spread, and in this environment it takes less and less to create new anxieties, areas of doubt and general mistrust. On the other hand, addressing the situation, after you are conscious of being in the calmer sensory area of your brain, the Sensory Cortex, creates an area of healthy growth and skills for handling future conflicts. An environment of trust, knowing there is nothing lurking in closets.

How do we clean out the closets? Sharing about things that have gone wrong in the past. Self-transparency is a good method. Your willingness to go first, to go deeper, may make it easier for the rest of the group to also begin to share openly on a more meaningful level. Before you can do this you need to create an environment of trust and build up some social capital. If you are stepping into a situation where trust has been eroded, then begin by defining and building trust again. You can do this by demonstrating that the opinions of others are valued and honored. Deliberately create a safe place for them to share and if needed, help them learn skills to share.

5. Conflict resolution Skills: Can We Talk? (4 min)

Deep listening, helping people “**Speak Themselves Present**” (facilitating individual self-assurance and continued involvement/engagement) Imagine a group of people who are united for a common cause or on opposite sides of multiple fences. It is important at the very outset to find ways for each member to speak themselves present. This might be done in any number of ways, and the earlier it is done the better. In any group, yes, even in a group of pastors there are those that hold back, listening and taking it all in. There are those that are more vocal and tend to dominate the discussions. (Hello, my name is Elan Hacker) Many of those who never contribute verbally in some form, also may never take ownership of the process or the project. Icebreakers can help with this.

Do you know where the phrase, “Ice Breaker” came from?



Brave early duck ice breaking

The ships with reinforced steel hulls broke through the ice to open the hard frozen waterways, to allow other ships to get through. We stoic Midwesterners are sometimes referred to as “The Frozen Chosen,” It may take more than a good ship with a reinforced steel hull to help us bust through our ice!

In social gatherings it refers to getting the conversation started, through party games, or gentle topics: (How’s the weather? Who do you think will win the game tonight?) This is a way to subconsciously warm up to each other, establish equal ground. Now we use it as the whole conversation and usually do it while we are walking away from each other, not as a way to gather. Think about the last time someone said, “How are you today?” Did you stop and share back and forth about how each of you really are? Every situation is not going to be congruent to an in depth conversation, much less meaningful dialog, but finding ways to include it is important. We are becoming polarized on so many issues, it is imperative that we begin again, starting from common beliefs, and build from there. Rediscover the lost art of dialog.

Interactive: (4 min)

- What are some of the common culprits of dialog destruction in the world today?
- What are some solutions?

6. Stalemate (5 min)

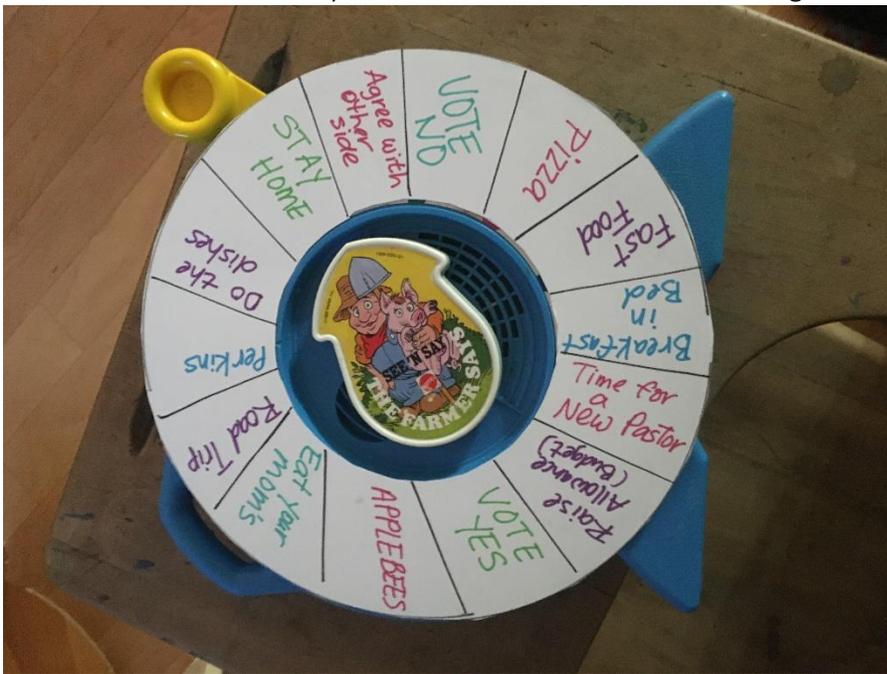
- Mini hackathon
- Trained mediator
- The Stalemate Buster

What happens when any group of people can’t come to a common consensus of what to do next? From couples who can’t agree, to groups that are becoming polarized. One recommendation is to have **a mini hackathon**: Each person quickly writing down multiple ideas (on sticky notes) from the fun and outrageous to the serious and even previously rejected ideas. All of it. Put the ideas on an area big enough to see them all, organize a bit by topics. Then go over them one by one, giving each one serious and objective consideration. Reject some, put some aside to ponder then pick your top favorites to explore further and actually try. Agree on a time to meet again to look at the situation, noting progress or regression, successes or failures. This process may be repeated as needed until a successful outcome is reached. (keep all of the sticky notes to track history) Even the most outlandish ideas have merit, if only as a way to get the conversations and creative juices flowing!

If the group cannot communicate with each other, and everyone is letting Amygdala drive the decision making conversational bus, it is time to **invite in a trained mediator**. A calm, neutral person who can guide the group back into Sensory Cortex land.

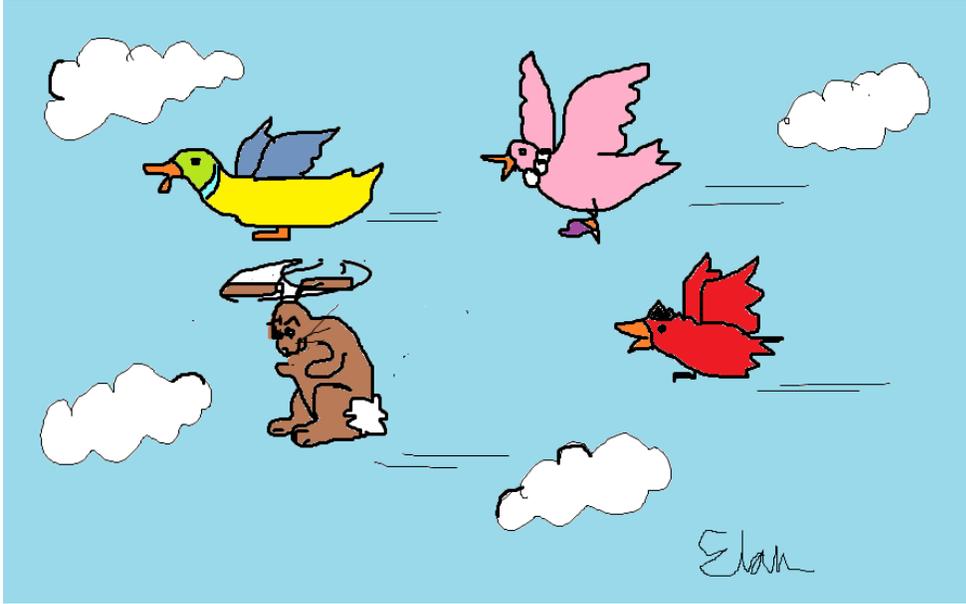
By all means consult experts, and keep in mind, there is a wide pool of people who may have found wonderful solutions to this very situation, in a different genre. Prior to and following surgery doctors use a check list, the original idea from aviation's preflight lists. (Reading from *Beyond Measure*, by Margaret Heffernan) Be willing and open to hearing all voices. The one coming up with the perfect answer may surprise you!

If all else fails it is time to pull out **The Stalemate Buster**. You can get your own from eBay for around \$20.00 including shipping. A successful trip to a garage sale or good will store might net you one for less. I think every couple, church and group should have one. Put it on your annual budget as soon as possible. I'm thinking about getting one for all of our government policy makers. How else would you settle stalemates in Animal Village?



(If there is time I can share my Big Honking Deck Story.) (4 min)

Would you like some time to ask questions and we will see if the group can help answer?



Wait! Rabbits can't fly! Or can they?

Links to books used:

[Let me Tell You a Story by Tony Campolo](#)

[Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times by Peter Steinke](#)

[Blink The Power of Thinking Without Thinking, by Malcolm Gladwell](#)

[Everybody Matters, by Bob Chapman and Raj Sisodia](#)

[The Church as Learning Community by Norma Cook Everist](#)

[Church Conflict, by Norma Cook Everist](#)

[The World Cafe, Juanita Brown with David Isaacs](#)

[The Power of Habit, by Charles Duhigg](#)

[Sticky Leaders, by Larry Osborne](#)

[Turning to One Another, by Margaret J. Wheatley](#)

[Beyond Measure, by Margaret Heffernan](#)

[The Woman Who Knew Too Much, by Gayle Greene](#)

Links for helping protect children and ACE Study:

The following sites are recommendations from Pete Singer who is a Clinical Supervisor and Therapist at Family Innovations. I got to meet him at the Gunderson Chaplains for Children offered in Duluth last spring.

circleofsecurity.net

Website for the circle of security training. This is a very effective attachment-based parenting approach. The focus is parenting with young children, though it can be adapted for older children. You can sign up for an extensive training here and become a registered parent educator. You do not need to be a therapist or mental health professional.

cehd.umn.edu/fsos/projects/ambit/

This is a project at the University of Minnesota that provides training and resources on childhood trauma. They can consult and help find trauma-informed therapists. Some of the resources are for the general population, and some are for mental health providers.

<https://tfcbt.musc.edu>

This provides a video training on the basics of Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, one of the best interventions for children who have experienced trauma. They ask you to state that you are a mental health professional or in training to become one.

nctsn.org

This site has an immense library of resources to help people understand and respond to child trauma. It is useful for anyone working with kids and families.

careinactionmn.org

This is the website for the organization I started that works with the faith community to help kids and families impacted by child maltreatment.

For more information about this and training opportunities you may contact Pete Singer at 651-747-6370, or email him at info@careinactionmn.org.