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# "Navigating Conflict on Agile Teams: Why 'Resolving' Conflict Won't Work" by Lyssa Adkins

## Premise

Navigating Conflict on Agile Teams: Why “Resolving” Conflict Won't Work by Lyssa Adkins.

On great agile teams, conflict is constant and welcomed by all as a catapult to higher performance. It is about human beings working together, day after day, in the maelstrom of constant collaboration and change. <http://starwest.techwell.com>

In this turbulence, how can teams chart a course through conflict and turn it into a force for greatness? Lyssa Adkins reveals a conflict model that helps you do just that, walking you through five levels of conflict from “Problem to Solve” to “World War,” with each step finely tuned to view conflict in a deeply human and humane way.

## Presenters

Less Adkins

## Learning / Actions

- Read - <https://www.stickyminds.com/better-software-magazine/navigating-conflict>
- Read - [Positivity](#) - Barbara Fredrickson

## Materials

Video [Navigating Conflict on Agile Teams: Why "Resolving" Conflict Won't Work](#)

### References

- [StickyMinds.com/NavigatingConflict](https://www.stickyminds.com/NavigatingConflict)

# Notes

We've been playing chess in corporate boards room, team rooms - power plays, cunning strategy

Human relationships are the goo over the agile manifesto, but also the glue Human relationships needed to make it work

Plus we produce products that don't have a singular outcome. People in a creative endeavor, who have to rely on each other to get something done and there is no right answer, that is a recipe for human conflict

What can we do?

Seek to understand before reacting.

We bring our hopes, our values our dreams to endeavor.

Escalation path of conflict:

- Level 1: We have a problem to solve. Engages in conflict openly and constructively. More fact based. Hear things like "we have been here before" or "huh, I don't think you are hearing what I am saying." Level of self management involved. This is the level of constructive disagreement, and this is actually good. We want teams to live here.
- Level 2: Disagreement. Self protection is as important as the problem. People playing things close to their chest assuming they will have to compromise. Good idea for buying a car; not so good for creating a product together. People start to blame. Start to protect themselves. Distancing themselves. Listen to what has not is not being said.
- Level 3: Contest. Distorted language emerges and real issues get lost. We all love contest and we will see that. We over generalize. We assume what others are thinking ("I know they are doing this because ..."). We start feeling good about ourselves ("I always compromise for the good of the team"). Real issue doesn't matter any more.
- Level 4: Crusade. Language becomes ideological and causes are born. Entrapped in the ideas. Create factions. Language rife with ideology and principle and that "the other side will never change" and "we need people to do it this way." Righteous attitude.
- Level 5: World war. Full on combat. Think "War Games" - WOPER (War Operations Research). Not enough that one side wins. Other side also has to lose. This where you see people trying to trip each other up, make them look bad. Private chat - resigned "its just my way or the high way". All you can do is separate the combatants at this level.

Teams need to recognize the the level at and work to de-escalate to level one.

Hard to tell what level you are at as really bad conflict is often with no one talking - crickets. So silent can cut with a knife. Can feel it. Almost ready to blow.

What do you do?

Use the model. And help them to de-escalate. Make sure every one on the team. Add question to the health check - "How are we doing with conflict" And you be the model.

A lot of conflict is simply unresolvable.

Problems (have a solution) versus difficulties (things we just live with)

Dr John Gottman What makes good marriages work? About 69% is simply unresolvable.

Applies to teams Healthy teams are intimate. Want it to be these. Agile done well produces this

How deal with Build collaboration muscle of your teams

Deal with team's ADD Feelings - need to talk about them

Top 10 feeling people deal with:

1. Anger
2. Fear
3. Disgust
4. Sadness
5. Contempt
6. Embarrassment
7. Guilt
8. Surprise
9. Enjoyment
10. Awe

John Gottmann - in order to deal with the unresolvable conflict around us, we need to increase the positivity. Only two of these top 10 feelings are life affirming. Need 5X compliments to negativity.

Doesn't have to be big. Simple. But genuine.

Marcela Lasada - High performing teams - 5.6 : 1 versus low performing teams positivity to negativity ratio.

For individual ratio is 3:1 positive self talk.

For teams. What have I done recently. Have I said 5:1 positive things to one person. Never too late to start.

The biggest disease we suffer from today is ADD. Awe Difficency Disorder. Felt awe in life, let alone in team room.

Awe profound sense of something powerful accompanied by feeling diminished self. Have to recognize it in our own lives and learn how share it with others.

[Webinar](#), [conflict](#), [teams](#), [Learning](#), [Video](#)

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