

WWW: WIN WIN IN THE WIND

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Abstract

People in any organization need to collaborate with their clients, suppliers, colleagues, boss and others. However, in many cases there is no harmony between the various players but conflicts and disagreements. In order to create or enhance a fruitful collaboration, there is first to deal with negotiation process and conflict resolution.

We are developing a negotiation tool called V-NeP (Virtual Negotiation Expert Program) that includes an expert system based on best practices, online moderators using a web conference, a knowledge management methodology and intelligent agents.

The negotiation process includes the following cyclic steps: define the issue, know yourself, know the other, know the environment, create a map of the situation, identify on the map the 'stuck-weak' points and the strong ones, solve the identified problems, go along the path in order to reach a win win situation .

The interaction between human beings dictates the need to reach the best practices of person to person communication. This is where spirituality comes about .

Spiritual attitudes and tools can contribute to every step of the negotiation process. We use those tools to understand a person's position, know the other, understand the situation between two or more people, clarify points about the environment, help identify the weak and the strong points and improve the process.

Using ancient knowledge from the East, we can connect the seven chakras to qualities that can be awakened along the past, present and future channels :

- 1st Center: Innocence, Modesty, Intelligence, Purity
- 2nd Center: Pure knowledge, Pure Attention, Creativity
- 3rd Center: Master principle, Contentment
- 4th Center: Faith, Fearless, Responsibility
- 5th Center: Self-respect, Communication, Collective, Respect toward others
- 6th Center: Perception, Forgiveness
- 7th Center: Union

Thanks to these spiritual tools, we are able to identify the locations where, on the one hand, the collaboration process does not flow and, on the other hand, where it freely flows. We are able to identify in each of those points the nature of the obstacle ,which chakra it is connected to and use this information to free the 'stuck' points.

In addition, for every person involved in the process, we can help identify the dynamic situation of their chakras, actually find the 'stuck' points and help release them. Working with an individual is part of a larger process called the spiritual path.

Throughout V-NeP, the following spiritual tools are being used :

- Web-based interactive questionnaire gathering information that helps to find the strengths and obstacles in the energy flow of the person and the environment .
- Meditation facilitator who is able to pinpoint the energy chart of the chakras for various situations and people .
- Use of other tools that help identify and release the situation of closed and opened chakras: Indian medicine cards, alternative medicine and techniques like Chinese medicine .

As a conclusion, the spiritual tools that we are using constitute an important part in the process to reach a win win negotiation. This approach is about enhancing the collaboration between people, their clients, suppliers as well in their own environment with their peers, senior management, line managers and with... themselves .

Introduction

Collaboration is the name of the game in every company and organization. Before even talking about collaboration there is a need to stop and study the other side of collaboration which is conflict resolution. The purpose of this paper is to briefly present a methodology for conflict resolution and collaboration that integrates management, spirituality and technology.

The negotiation tool V-NeP

We are developing a negotiation tool called V-NeP (Virtual Negotiation Expert Program) that includes an expert system based on best practices, online moderators using a web conference, a knowledge management methodology and intelligent agents. The input of V-NeP is a conflict situation, the output is a win-win solution .

V-NeP allows people to learn in an entertaining way through real time and a-synchronous computer simulations about the intricacies of international relations and conflict resolution. It enhances the participants' capacity to negotiate their own real life conflicts and those that their community is involved with. The 78-year experience of IWA (Institute of World Affairs) and its extended network of partners worldwide as well as leading management consultants help to build the expert system made of rules and best practices for conflict resolution, inter-cultural differences in political and management fields. The digital wise guide is a dynamic personalized interface providing information from various sources that is relevant for each player based on his profile, his language, background, dynamic context modified by the expert system. Each party also has the ability to organize, share and discuss the same 'package' of information. For each project involving conflict resolution, a virtual community is being set up using a web conference software and the help of professional online moderators from Rheingold Associates.

Please refer to www.orbina.com/tikun/vnep.html for a detailed description of the system.

The negotiation process

The negotiation process includes the following cyclic steps:

Define the issue, know yourself, know the other, know the environment, create a map of the situation, identify on the map the 'stuck-weak' points and the strong ones, solve the identified problems, go along the path in order to reach a win win situation .

Know yourself - The first step is to know what you want, identify your needs, expectations, and hopes. Define your position. Identify your weaknesses, and strengths. Be aware of where you put your energy.

Know the other -Gather information about the other, one needs to actually stand in the shoes of the others in order to know them. Know what the other party wants, identify the other's needs, expectations, and hopes. Know their position. Identify the other's weaknesses and strengths. Be aware of where the other puts his energy.

Know the environment -The environment constitutes an important part of the negotiation process. It is important to understand the environment where the various parties are working, find out if the environment influences negatively or positively the activities in that location.

For instance, one of the author of this paper participates to some conflict resolution seminars that are taking place in Delphi, Greece. Delphi is not only a beautiful place but it also holds a history rich of symbols of freedom and peace: any slave who reached Delphi became a free man .

The environment helps to create a hopeful and cooperative atmosphere.

Create a map of the situation -There is to create a map of different levels and areas of interaction between the collaborating/negotiating parties. The map should represent the full scale of the situation from an overall scan to a detailed study of the various issues involved. The map should include issues and key people in the different locations involved. The map is actually represented by a set of tables called situation tables.

Identify on the map the stuck points and the strong ones -There is to use the situation tables to identify points where there is no conflict and thus room for a fruitful collaboration, and points where there is a conflict. In those points, there is to identify the issues and people involved. Each table thus displays the situation of each party and we can also study the interactions between them .

Solve the identified problems -There is to address each point identified in the map as stuck points of the conflict, gather information about the situation, issues and people involved. There is to solve these issues by using techniques such as dialogue, introspection, transaction cost theory (1) where we study the level of natural and behavioral uncertainty, conventional methodologies such as organizational behavior and spiritual tools.

Go along the path to improve the process and reach a win win situation -The negotiation process is actually a spiral loop that goes through each step again and again until we reach a win win situation. This cyclic process could take some time and effort, one should not lose hope to come to a win win situation. In some cases, it is necessary to come to an intermediate solution where the party may not be fully satisfied. In this case a hopeful person will fully understand that this is a transitional situation on the way to a real win win solution.

Contribution of the spiritual tools to the negotiation process

Spiritual attitudes and tools can contribute to every step of the process. Spiritual tools and attitudes include introspection and awareness. Following are some examples to show the contribution of spirituality to conflict resolution.

The conventional negotiation process is in some situations short handed. Often in these cases, the spiritual attitude will help release the blocked situation. The following example shows such a situation:

Adam is the CEO of a large company and Ronald is the Chairman of the Board of Directors. The company is very successful financially but Adam has to face a difficult relationship with Ronald. Ronald frequently shouts at him, talking to him aggressively in a non-polite manner. However, Adam succeeds to survive and to function well: it looks as if he is not taking emotionally the shouting and focuses on the success of the company. He is some kind of a bumper in the conflict and thus there is actually a good atmosphere in the company. However, we can witness a phenomenon where there is much suffering and we can easily expect that Adam will at some point go through a nervous breakdown and Ronald is exposed to a heart attack. The questions are: how long can such a relationship last, and couldn't there be a better alternative? The conventional way of looking at this situation focuses on the business result which shows a healthy functioning company with a manager (Adam) that uses an attitude solution to a fruitful relationship. The spiritual attitude will analyze the relationship as unhealthy and will realize the hidden damages that this situation may bring. This spiritual analysis and intervention can help solve the problem and construct an overall new relationship pattern where aggressiveness may be replaced by harmony.

Chakras:

We are going through 7 steps using the model of the 7 chakras (centers of energy) that can be found in Indian antique scriptures as well as other spiritual sources such as the cabala .

Inside every human being there is a network of nerves and sensory organs that interprets the outside physical world. At the same time, within us resides a subtle system of channels (nadis) and centers of energy (chakras) which look after our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual being .

Each of the seven chakras has several spiritual qualities. These qualities are intact within us, and even though they might not always be manifested, they can never be destroyed. When all the chakras are clean and open we are very dynamic, creative, confident and at the same time very humble, loving and compassionate. In this mode a person is connected to his true self and is fully aware of the outside world. In this mode, a person can easily solve any conflicts and issues that may rise.

The following table describes for each chakra (center) the qualities are connected to it when the chakra is open, healthy and functioning. The right column shows the negative feelings, attitudes and/or behavior when the chakra is blocked, closed or damaged.

Center	Qualities	Negative feelings, attitudes and behaviors
1	<p><u>Innocence</u>: you see the world with new eyes as much as the eyes of a child in order to consider the situation at hand.</p> <p><u>Modesty</u>: there is no need to impress people around you. If you do bring something good then people will know about it and will spread it quickly through the Internet .</p> <p><u>Intelligence</u>: according to Sufi poet Rumi, "this second knowledge is a fountainhead from within you moving out." (3)</p> <p><u>Purity</u></p>	<p><u>Fear</u> is there, survivor behaviors are coming up. Survivors will do anything in order to reach their goal including lying, being aggressive, hurting and even killing. The survivor will have difficulties to trust the other party and will usually prefer to act aggressively in order to stay in control of the situation.</p> <p>A win lose situation is usually what happens in this case.</p>
2	<p><u>Pure knowledge</u>: usually, the information is inside you thus the importance of knowing yourself. This is the first step of the negotiation process as explained above.</p> <p><u>Pure Attention</u>: the ability to be here and now without being distracted .</p> <p><u>Creativity</u> flows from within connected to the universal knowledge.</p>	<p><u>False knowledge</u>: it may come from misunderstandings, reading rumors, learning from false sources of information.</p> <p><u>Bad attention</u>: the inability to concentrate and be distracted by any outside event.</p> <p><u>Lack of creativity</u>: it is a crucial problem especially when facing a conflict and there is a need to find 'creative' alternatives.</p>
3	<p><u>Master principle</u>: in a sense, you are your own master. When connected to your inner truth, you may find the best attitudes for acting in any situation.</p> <p><u>Contentment</u>: the ability to be satisfied with the present situation.</p>	<p><u>Dependency</u>: external influences. Rigid hierarchies, conditioning and conventional ways to work are indeed an obstacle to be your own master</p> <p><u>Perfectionism</u>: when going into extremes, perfectionism expresses a lack of contentment of the present situation.</p>
4	<p><u>Faith</u>: if a person does have faith in himself, one can feel the spirit of it, the compassion .</p> <p><u>Fearless</u>: fears disappear and instead actions are made out of love .</p> <p><u>Responsibility</u>: the person trusts that others will do their work so he does not take too much responsibility and on the other hand he is ready to take any required responsibility.</p>	<p><u>Lack of faith</u>: no faith in yourself, in the others. Instead of compassion and faith, there is a tendency to skepticism, lack of trust toward oneself.</p> <p><u>Fears</u>: the heart is full of fears blocking actions</p> <p><u>Lack of responsibility or over-responsibility</u>: no faith in oneself or in the other.</p>
5	<p><u>Self-respect</u>: the ability to see oneself in the true light and to love oneself. There is no guilt nor remorse.</p> <p><u>Communication</u>: the ability to communicate with the others in a positive and effective way</p> <p><u>Collective</u>: being part of the collective.</p> <p><u>Respect toward others</u>: the ability to consider each & everyone at the same level.</p>	<p><u>Lack of self-respect</u>: feeling guilty</p> <p><u>Bad communication with others</u>: people may speak ironically, with sarcasm, shout.</p>
6	<p><u>Perception</u>: one talks about the vision, the ability to perceive the world.</p> <p><u>Forgiveness</u>: the ability to forgive oneself as well as the others.</p>	<p><u>Lack of perception</u>: If a manager has a big ego, if he is too much in the past, this will compromise his ability to perceive the situation.</p> <p><u>Inability to forgive</u>: if the person cannot forgive past actions, the negotiation process is blocked or slowed down.</p> <p><u>Too much thinking</u> is actually a problem: we go back to the various kinds of intelligence of Rumi (3).</p>
7	<p><u>Union</u>: When this center is opened as well as the 6 others, this is the state of union with yourself and with the universe..</p>	<p>Lack of union with yourself and with the universe.</p>

Please see (2), (4), (5) for a more detailed description of the qualities and negative attitudes of chakras.

The idea is to have an energy chart of the chakras of each party and actually create some matrix mapping the situation and the combination between the parties. We create a couple of tables with the situation of each of the chakra at a specific time. For each chakra, there is to check the left and right aspect of it whether it is Strong or Weak or N/A (Not Applicable). If each side of the chakra is weak then the center will be weak. Similarly, if each side is strong, then the center will be strong.

Example: conflict between marketing and R&D managers

There are numerous examples that we have seen where there are on going conflicts, lack of collaboration or poor collaboration between marketing/sales and R&D. Let's take the situation of a Hi Tech company providing customized services to its clients. The competition is getting tougher everyday and the marketing department is worried about its own situation as well as of the company's. They reached a situation where they promise to potential clients all kinds of features that cannot be made, especially not within a given budget and time limit. On the other hand, the software engineers have a tendency to be highly perfectionist making the products more complicated than they ought to be and they are very slow. We can see that the conflict can be solved by working on the first chakra and the heart chakra of the marketing people and on the second and third chakra of the engineers.

Spiritual attitudes and tools in the negotiation process:

Thanks to spiritual tools such as chakras, we are able to identify the locations where, on the one hand, the collaboration process does not flow and, on the other hand, where it freely flows. We are able to identify in each of those points the nature of the obstacle, which chakra it is connected to and use this information to release the 'stuck' points.

In addition, for every person involved in the process, we can help identify the dynamic situation of their chakras, actually find the 'stuck' points and help release them. Working with an individual is part of a larger process called the spiritual path.

Some case studies of usage of spiritual tools in an organizational situation:

An example of such an attitude comes from Microsoft and its first chakra damaged.

About 10-15 years ago, Microsoft was a very chauvinist company and there were posters of violence scenes, pornography hanging on many walls of the offices. Microsoft was in a state of survival: there were fears and lies everywhere even though this was and still is the first software company in the world. It also meant that people did not dare to talk about their mistakes. As a result of it, the company was launching low quality products with many bugs. A female marketing manager entered the company and started to ask politely to remove the posters of nudity and violence that were hurting her. The result of it was that the atmosphere improved, as well as the relationship toward women. Actually at about the same time, Bill Gates got married.

This example shows a situation where the first chakra was damaged- lack of innocence and purity. As a result, because of the first chakra being closed, the company was in a state of survival. The action of removing the posters helped the people in the company to be closer to innocence and purity and helped open the first chakra. People stopped dealing with survival issues and could develop new improved relationships. Note that Microsoft has still a long way to go...

Over and under responsibility, two examples of problems with the heart chakra.

James is a coordinator who does everything on his own fearing that the others will not do the work. It is very important for him that a person should keep his promises. He is very busy and does all the work, even the work that his peers should do. There are also situations where conflicts rise since he is taking upon himself projects where he is not competent. This is not a balanced situation.

On the other hand, at a large Telecommunication company in Israel, there was the opposite problem. Several years ago there were multiple meetings among managers and no one dared to take the responsibility to solve the problems.

The two examples show a situation of a blocked heart chakra, lack of faith and a problem of over and under taking responsibility. The optimal situation of a clean heart chakra is if the person has faith in himself and towards others. He will take responsibility for the tasks he is responsible for and will let the others do what they ought to do.

An example of using spiritual tools in the negotiation process:

Let's take the situation of 2 people: Art and Beth are managing together an Institute. Art and Beth reached a crisis where both of them wanted to separate and close the non-for-profit Institute.

Art damaged the Institute and was deeply hurt from what Beth did

Beth had a lack of will and lack of spiritual growth.

At the end of our intervention, they reached a situation where they collaborate in harmony, each one grows separately and the Institute continues to grow while Beth has stopped hurting Art .

Description of the collaborative process:

- We worked with Art using the tools of 'Three in One Concept', Indian medicine cards and chakras and changed the person's behavior to stop damaging the organization .
- We worked with Beth using the tools of 'Three in One Concept', Indian medicine cards and chakras and find the way to personally grow within the Institute
- We worked with Art / Beth to learn and fully understand the position (strengths and weaknesses) of Beth / Art .
- While working with Art and Beth, the nature of the environment was cleared up and what was good for the Institute came up. The environment includes obviously other people as well as other parties interacting with the Institute .
- A series of meetings was set between Art and Beth where they learnt how to behave constructively with each other. They learnt what to do for the growth of the Institute. This process was incremental and involved the participation of the moderator .

More details about the spiritual tools

There are a number of tools at our disposal and here is a preliminary list:

Web-based interactive questionnaire

A questionnaire made of simulations and situations where the answers give a current image of the energy situation of the person. The questionnaire is based on a number of criteria taken from the enneagram, MBTI (typology of Jung), qualities and negative attitudes of each chakra, tendency for past, present and future and more. The questionnaire was designed several years ago in the Silicon Valley by a team of researchers in the framework of a start-up. It has been used successfully on a number of executive managers.

Meditation facilitator

Nature of the facilitator: the facilitator needs to be without any ego and people cannot humiliate him nor make him angry. Meditation allows to reduce the ego, the stress, thoughts from the past or the future and simply be here and now. No imagination is involved but only the present.

During regular negotiation processes, ice-breaking activities are being organized in order to ... "break the ice", get to know one another. We have seen that activities such as meditations, Chi Gong exercises were actually well received. They allowed to release the energy and helped each person to connect to oneself as well as with the others during certain exercises (pushing hands).

Various other tools: Indian medicine cards, alternative medicine, Chinese philosophy, elements from human behavior studies. A basic rule is to ask the party to introspect, learn to know oneself, identify the problem and solve it internally. Once the problem is solved internally, this influences the behavior of the other party .

It may look strange to use tools such as Indian medicine card in a business environment. However, we have seen some good acceptance: the cards allow to put 'on the table' the situation of the person as it is, his emotions, issues and they can be used as triggers for releasing some conflicts.

As a conclusion, the spiritual tools that we are using constitute an important part in the process to reach a win win negotiation. This approach is about enhancing the collaboration between people, their clients, suppliers as well in their own environment with their peers, senior management, line managers and with... themselves .

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