

Conflict. It's something that is seen inherently negative by most people; the typical words associated with conflict are tension, fight, argument, anger, hate, fear, and uncomfortable. No one is happy to have conflict, yet it's something that employees spend 2.8 hours on each week dealing with according to a [2008 study](#). That's over 100 hours per year just working through conflict! We need a perspective shift so we can be more ready and willing to address conflict within our teams. While it has a bad reputation, conflict does have positives: it can lead to innovative solutions, deepen relationships, and create positive changes. **Moving through conflict is an opportunity to bring people together.**

As a supervisor, it's likely you have seen both effective and ineffective resolutions. It's important to know how to respond to it appropriately: according to this [2016 study](#), 70% of employees believe managing conflict is a critically important leadership skill. Trying to put off addressing conflict only fosters resentment, frustration, and escalation of the conflict. No team or office benefits from that. The goal of this newsletter is to help you become a stronger mediator within conflict resolution, helping to create stronger teams and to bring new ideas to your workplace.

Until next month!

Let us know what you think about the newsletter and what you'd like to see in the future!

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[Feedback Form](#)

## Performance Appraisals

### P&S Annual Performance Appraisal - Suggested Timeline

Date	Action
<b>March 11-29</b>	<b>Employees</b> initiate and complete optional Self-Appraisal. <b>Supervisors</b> initiate and draft Annual Performance Appraisal.
<b>March 29</b>	<b>Supervisors</b> review Employee's Self-Appraisal. <b>Can integrate comments into Employee's Performance Appraisal.</b>
<b>April 1</b>	<b>Supervisors</b> submit form into workflow to generate PDF to share with employees during performance appraisal meeting.
<b>April 1 - May 2</b>	<b>Supervisors</b> schedule and hold performance appraisal meeting with employees. Discuss appraisal and then submit for acknowledgement.
<b>By May 3</b>	<b>Employees</b> add final comments and acknowledge form. <b>Supervisors</b> add final acknowledgements submit form.
<b>May 6-10</b>	<b>Next-Level Supervisors</b> review and acknowledge form.
<b>May 17</b> <i>(Hard Deadline)</i>	<b>Final signatures MUST be receive for Performance Appraisal to be considered finalized.</b>

- [Performance Appraisal Form: User Guide](#)
- [Performance Appraisal Supervisor Training Video](#)
- [Performance Appraisal Form](#)
- [Performance Self-Appraisal Form](#)

**Additional Considerations:**  
All P&S Non-temporary staff hired before 2/1/2024 must receive an appraisal.

P&S staff leaving their role before 5/17/2024 aren't required to receive an appraisal.

Reach out to [hrs-support@uni.edu](mailto:hrs-support@uni.edu) for assistance in retrieving an employee's previous performance appraisal.

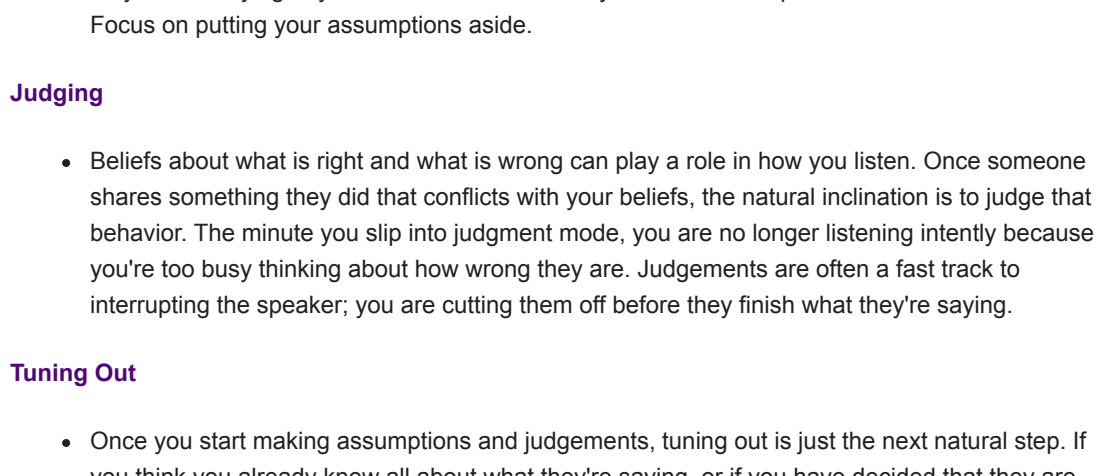
## Mediation

Change means movement. Movement means friction.  
Only in the frictionless vacuum of a nonexistent abstract world can movement or change occur without that abrasive friction of conflict. *Saul Alinsky*

When it comes to engaging in and resolving conflict, you may not know that it's not about reacting to it but rather implementing a process to deal with it. This involves delving into what is being said and why, which means exploring it with the people or person involved and then proceeding with steps that create conversation. When you are able to do this, you are less likely to be met with an explosion from yourself or the others involved.

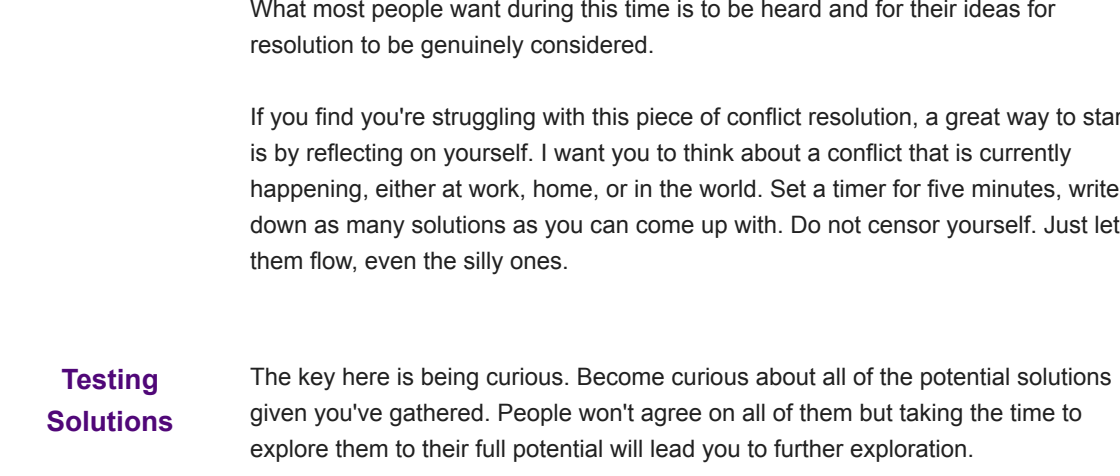
- Step 1: Choosing to Engage**  
Most people want to hide from or ignore conflict when it arises. This only leads to the likelihood of increased tension, misunderstanding, and escalation of the conflict. As a leader, it's important for you to engage in the conflict, whether it's between you and someone else or between people on your team.
- Step 2: Listen More Than You Speak**  
Using deep listening skills not only encourages the other person to speak more but also allows you to understand the conflict situation better. Gathering as much information as possible before you talk helps to direct your response to what is important and what can lead to a resolution later on.

- Step 3: Clarify and Respond**  
Making sure that you have understood the details clears the way to respond assertively and accurately. Using questions, acknowledging and managing feelings and then stating thoughts and possible solutions keeps the conversation progressing.
- Step 4: Move Towards a Resolution**  
By following the prior steps, you ensure that all issues have been discussed, clarified, and are understood. It allows the possibility for a solution to actually put this conflict to rest. This can only happen after the key points are validated and everyone's perspective is recognized.



### Common Mistakes When Listening During Mediation

- Making Assumptions**
  - When someone is talking, it's very easy to listen and then start connecting what they are experiencing to something you already experienced. From there, it is a quick leap to assuming that, not only do you know what they are thinking and feeling, but that you also know what is the best solution for them.
  - Assumptions take you off track from hearing what the other person is saying. Think back to the last time you listened to someone. Recall some of the assumptions you made about the situation they were relating to you. Think about how many of those assumptions turned out to be incorrect. Focus on putting your assumptions aside.
- Judging**
  - Beliefs about what is right and what is wrong can play a role in how you listen. Once someone shares something they did that conflicts with your beliefs, the natural inclination is to judge that behavior. The minute you slip into judgment mode, you are no longer listening intently because you're too busy thinking about how wrong they are. Judgements are often a fast track to interrupting the speaker; you are cutting them off before they finish what they're saying.
- Tuning Out**
  - Once you start making assumptions and judgements, tuning out is just the next natural step. If you think you already know all about what they're saying, or if you have decided that they are wrong, then tuning out only makes sense. But staying focused on what they're saying is the only way you can begin to understand their situation and how it's unique to them.
  - Next time you catch yourself having a hard time listening to someone, ask yourself: "What assumptions am I making?" and "Do I have any judgements about them or their behavior?" Pull yourself back in and focus on the content. You may hear something new and interesting.



### Moving to Resolution

**Brainstorming Solutions**  
Brainstorming is all about bringing different ideas to the table for consideration no matter how you feel about them. This is essential to coming up with a great solution when you or someone you manage is facing a conflict.

What most people want during this time is to be heard and for their ideas for resolution to be genuinely considered.

If you find you're struggling with this piece of conflict resolution, a great way to start is by reflecting on yourself. I want you to think about a conflict that is currently happening, either at work, home, or in the world. Set a timer for five minutes, write down as many solutions as you can come up with. Do not censor yourself. Just let them flow, even the silly ones.

**Testing Solutions**  
The key here is being curious. Become curious about all of the potential solutions given you've gathered. People won't agree on all of them but taking the time to explore them to their full potential will lead you to further exploration.

Curiosity and openness to different perspectives are essential to taking seriously and testing potential solutions. Figure out if they'll be any good for this situation.

To test an idea, you need to get to know its strengths and its limitations. The best way to do that is, by no surprise, getting curious, getting curious.

**Getting to Agreement**  
The first strategy is to honor the moment. This strategy is all about setting a tone of calm and openness for anyone involved in the conflict.

The next strategy is to find common ground. If you're finding it hard to know how to start building agreement, it helps to begin by identifying places where you already see eye-to-eye or where you may have a shared interest.

Another strategy is to work out the kinks. This strategy is helpful when your proposed solution may need a little more give and take from both people in order to be effective.

Finally, it can be helpful to have some phrases on hand to help you get it to an agreement. Using these will help you smoothly transition a conflict from an explosion to a resolution.

**Closing Out the Conversation**  
This is the time when you do your best to ensure that this is resolved and that future conflicts between you will be handled effectively.

First, start by acknowledging the accomplishments you've made in this process. Talking out a conflict in an effective way takes time and hard work. Keeping the agreements made will also take a continued effort. Acknowledging what it took can help everyone involved gain a stronger commitment to sticking to the agreements made.

Next, summarize your agreements. This is the place where people get nervous, not wanting to rehash the discussion to prevent further arguments. The truth is, if you already put in the effort to really talk things through instead of giving in to just get it over with, summarizing the agreements just reminds everyone of the importance of the solution at hand. Everyone just knows that this was no walk in the park and hearing the agreements again reminds them of how far they've come in this conflict.

Finally, extend an open door invitation. It doesn't end here. It's important to remember that you are not just resolving conflict, you are building and strengthening relationships.

## Additional Resources for Conflict Mediation

**Articles**  
[Conflict Resolution in the Workplace for Managers / Indeed](#)  
This guide effectively walks through the process for conflict resolution and addresses many FAQs to the process. This is a great place to start if you are unfamiliar with conflict resolution or find yourself avoiding the process all together.

[Want Collaboration?: Accept and Actively Manage Conflict / HBR](#)  
Moving from a conflict avoider to someone who openly accepts it is challenging. However, the reality is that we can refine our own ideas and become stronger individuals inside and outside of the workplace. Focus on the collaborative aspects of conflict.

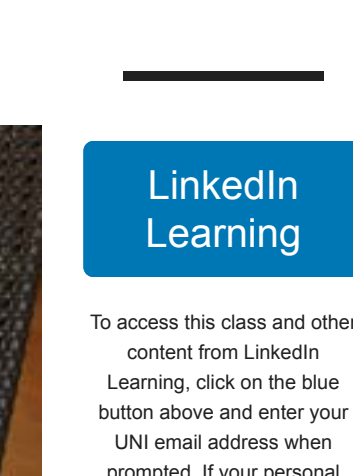
[How to Handle Employee Conflict on Your Team / SHRM](#)  
As a supervisor, you are expected to assist with conflict arising on your team. It doesn't necessarily mean walking your employees through the resolution process; at times it's coaching your staff on how to take action independently.

[Mastering the Art of Forgiveness: The Key to Conflict Resolution / Forbes](#)  
Resolution without forgiveness is a failure. It will result in ongoing challenges and another conflict will inevitably resurface unless there is closure in the process. Learn more about how to provide others grace and forgiveness.

- Videos**
- [Finding Confidence in Conflict \(11:26\)](#)  
Conflict is an opportunity to restore and strengthen valuable relationships or identify malignant relationships and remove with minimal damage. To understand which is which, we need to use compassionate curiosity to learn more about others' perspective in a caring way grounded in empathy and respect.
  - [How Not to Fail People \(8:00\)](#)  
Navigating conflict resolution as a process is a fine line. You may recognize what the issue is but, if you only address what the person is doing wrong, they will get discouraged. By utilizing affecting coaching, you help your employees grow to be their best while also nipping conflict in the bud.
  - [How to Be Less Emotionally Reactive \(11:33\)](#)  
Black-and-white thinking is when you take a situation and think about it in an extreme way, you push out all the nuance and turn it into something as intense as possible. You can usually recognize it when you use words like "Always, Never, Perfect, Terrible." In order to assist with conflict, we need to shift from dichotomous thinking.

**Read Recommendation**  
*Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* by Sheila Heen & Bruce Patton

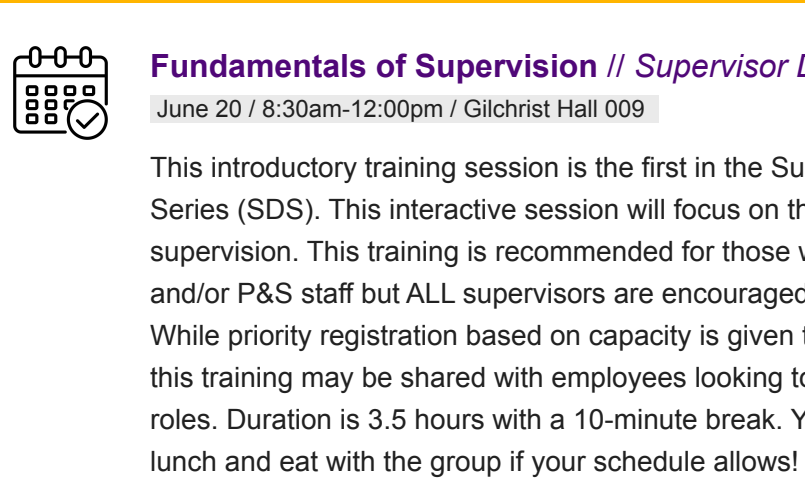
We attempt or avoid difficult conversations every day-whether dealing with an underperforming employee, disagreeing with a spouse, or negotiating with a client. From the Harvard Negotiation Project, the organization that brought you *Getting to Yes*, *Difficult Conversations* provides a step-by-step approach to having those tough conversations with less stress and more success. You'll learn how to: decipher the underlying structure of every difficult conversation, start a conversation without defensiveness, listen for the meaning of what is not said, stay balanced in the face of attacks and accusations, and move from emotion to productive problem solving.



**Notable Quotable:** "Often we go through an entire conversation – or indeed an entire relationship – without ever realizing that each of us is paying attention to different things, that our views are based on different information."

Available at [Cedar Falls Public Library](#).

**LinkedIn Learning: Class Highlight**  
Conflict Resolution for Beginners / Lynne Hurdle



**LinkedIn Learning**

To access this class and other content from LinkedIn Learning, click on the blue button above and enter your UNI email address when prompted. If your personal email address populates, please ensure you click on the "change" link first to update your email address. Once entered, click on "Continue to the University of Northern Iowa LinkedIn Learning account" to access content.

How often have you heard someone say that they hate conflict? Or, how often have you avoided conflict yourself? While it may seem good enough to just smooth out or gloss over conflicts, in the workplace, avoiding conflict can easily escalate into bigger and bigger problems. In this course, conflict resolution strategist Lynne Maureen Hurdle gets you started on solving conflict avoidance problems. She shows why facing disputes head-on is so important and helps you understand why you may have negative associations with conflict. Lynne also gives some concrete strategies to become a better listener and communicator, and how to accomplish that essential task of reaching a resolution. After this course, you'll be prepared to keep conflict from derailing your projects or disrupting your team dynamics in the future.

## Upcoming Learning & Development

**Fundamentals of Supervision // Supervisor Development Series**  
June 20 / 8:30am-12:00pm / Gilchrist Hall 009  
This introductory 2.0 training session is the first in the Supervisor Development Series (SDS). This interactive session will focus on the fundamentals of supervision. This training is recommended for those who supervise merit and/or P&S staff but ALL supervisors are encouraged and welcome to attend. While priority registration based on capacity is given to current supervisors, this training may be shared with employees looking to promote into leadership roles. Duration is 3.5 hours with a 10-minute break. You can also bring your lunch and eat with the group if your schedule allows!

[Register Here](#)

**FMLA & ADA Supervisor Responsibilities // Online Learning**  
This session provides supervisors with high-level information about how to identify a potential leave or accommodation request from an employee, and clarifies a supervisor's role in complying with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This training takes approximately 45-minutes and will save your progress if you are unable to finish in one sitting.

[Access Here](#)

**Our Vision**  
All employees will be positively engaged in achieving their greatest potential while contributing to the success of the university.

**Our Mission**  
Human Resource Services fosters an environment of integrity and collaboration through innovative solutions and communications contributing to the successful recruitment, development, and retention of university employees.