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HBR Guide To Dealing With Conflict (HBR Guide Series)

SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE GUIDE

HBR Guide to

Dealing with Conflict

Understand the players
Manage your emotions
Move on

By Amy Gallo

Harvard Business Review Press
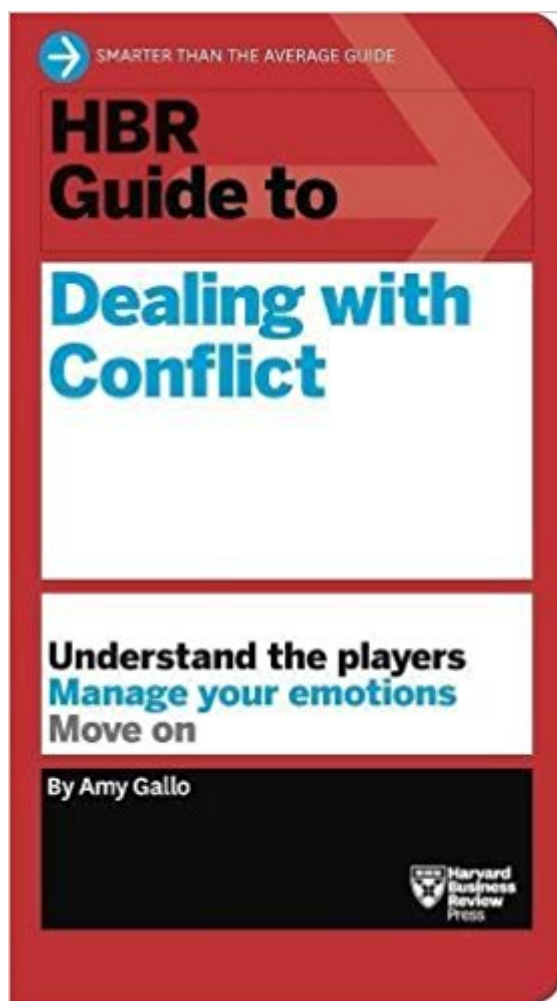
Synopsis

While some of us enjoy a lively debate with colleagues and others prefer to suppress our feelings over disagreements, we all struggle with conflict at work. Every day we navigate an office full of competing interests, clashing personalities, limited time and resources, and fragile egos. Sure, we share the same overarching goals as our colleagues, but we don't always agree on how to achieve them. We work differently. We rub each other the wrong way. We jockey for position.How can you deal with conflict at work in a way that is both professional and productiveÃ¢â ¬â ¢where it improves both your work and your relationships? You start by understanding whether you generally seek or avoid conflict, identifying the most frequent reasons for disagreement, and knowing what approaches work for what scenarios. Then, if you decide to address a particular conflict, you use that information to plan and conduct a productive conversation. The HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict will give you the advice you need to:Understand the most common sources of conflictExplore your options for addressing a disagreementRecognize whether youÃ¢â ¬â ¢and your counterpartÃ¢â ¬â ¢typically seek or avoid conflictPrepare for and engage in a difficult conversationManage your and your counterpart's emotionsDevelop a resolution togetherKnow when to walk awayArm yourself with the advice you need to succeed on the job, with the most trusted brand in business. Packed with how-to essentials from leading experts, the HBR Guides provide smart answers to your most pressing work challenges.

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Customer Reviews

Amy Gallo is a contributing editor at Harvard Business Review, where she covers a range of topics including managing yourself, leading people, and building a career. As a speaker and workshop facilitator, Amy has helped dozens of organizations deal with conflict more effectively and navigate complicated workplace dynamics. Previously Amy was a management consultant at Katzenbach Partners, a strategy and organization consulting firm based in New York. She is a graduate of Yale University and has a master's in public policy from Brown University.Author social media/website info: hbr.org/search?term=amy+gallo; twitter.com/amyegallo; linkedin.com/in/amy-gallo-31b9932

OK, spends too may chapters describing conflict and not enough on dealing with it.

So far so good. Information is always good and useful. I am a big fan of HBR I have used their tactics in different situations.

Very practical info

I was fortunate enough to listen to a podcast/interview with this author and then decided to purchase her book. I found it extremely well thought out and well written. First, the introduction gives the reader a clear view of what will be covered--no time or words wasted. Toward the end of the intro is a table of the possible types of conflict, options for handling each, and reaction tendencies. The table serves to define terms and provides direction--all in about a Ãƒâ Ã Â page. The rest of the intro includes a list of 8 approaches to beginning the conversation to resolve the conflict. That sort of condensed introductory info makes the following content easy to remember and then put into practice. The text itself is a reflection and continuation of the author's ability to keep the material well organized and simple to grasp. This makes the book a functional, down-to-earth reference. Since purchasing this, I have since discovered it is also available as part of a set that includes "tools and powerpoint." However, I do not see that on the site, though I believe there is way to request it through the Assistant browser extension. One final word: as a suggestion to the reader, keep in mind this approach to solving conflict works with ALL relationships, not just professional ones. This would definitely be effective for personal relationships too.

Most of the volumes in the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å"HBR Guide to...ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• and ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å"HBR 10 Must ReadsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• series consist of about ten separate HBR

articles. This volume is an exception. Amy Gallo and 37 "guest experts" she cites explain how to prevent disagreements from becoming nasty arguments at work and elsewhere. In the Preface, Harvard Business School professor Anita Hill suggests that "conflict at work is going to happen, no matter what you do [or don't do]. And it should. It can be good for you, your team, and your organization. But how you deal with it can make the difference between a negative interaction and a productive one...Without 'creative abrasion' you won't have a robust marketplace of ideas. The most effective people are those who can disagree constructively, not destructively, and keep difficult conversations substantive, not personal."How to cope with conflict at work and elsewhere? Here are some of Gallo's practical suggestions:"First, you need to know the various sources of conflict…There are four main types: relationship (a personal disagreement), task (disagreement over what the goal is), process (disagreement over the means or process of achieving the goal), and status (disagreement over your standing in the group)."•"The second piece of information is to understand your options." In general, there are four from which to choose when confronting the conflict: do nothing (more common than you may think), address the conflict indirectly, address the conflict directly (the focus of this book), and finally, your last resort, is to exit the relationship."The third and final aspect to having a more productive conflict is to know what people's natural tendencies are when it comes to conflict." Avoiders tend to shy away or even hide from disagreements; Seekers are more eager to engage in conflict when it arises (or even find ways to create it).Gallo thoroughly explains how to make these assessments in the first three chapters.Also of special interest to me is the material that focuses on passive aggression. How to cope with it at work and elsewhere?"It is not uncommon for colleagues to make a passive-aggressive remark once in a while over a particularly sensitive issue or when they're not sure how to directly address an issue. But persistent passive-aggressive behavior that manifests itself in a variety of situations is a different ball game. These individuals can be self-centered at best and narcissistic at worst, says Annie McKee. 'These are people who will do almost anything to get what they need including lie.' But it may nit be all her fault, either. In many organizations, direct, overt disagreement is now allowed, so 'some people have been trained to be passive-aggressive by their cultures,' she explains."Passive-aggressive people are not necessarily more engaged in conflict

than most, but theyÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢re doing it in a way thatÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢s tough to deal with. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢s not as clean as the indirect approach described in chapter 2, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã ËœœYour Options for Handling Conflict,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢ because they are not being honest about their intentions. ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã ËœœFighting with these people is like shadowboxing,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢ says McKee. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢s best to do nothing and work around them or to distance yourself (exit), if possible.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã Â• Gallo then offers additional suggestions about other especially difficult conflicts (Pages 127-130).These are her concluding thoughts:ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã Å"Knowing how to manage conflict at work wonÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢t make it go away, but it will make dealing with any disagreements easier and less stressful. Whether youÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢re experiencing with your direct report or your boss ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â•or someone outside your business ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â•you now have the tools to assess the situation and choose an approach that works for you. As these scenarios [in the final chapter] show, directly addressing the conflict is just one alternative. You also need to know when to walk away or get out of the relationship altogether. But if you choose to sit down with your counterpart, youÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢re now better equipped to prepare for and engage in a difficult conversation, manage your and your counterpartÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã â„¢s emotions, and develop a resolution together.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â¬Ã Â•I presume to add another point: only in the healthiest relationships and, indeed, only in the healthiest organizations, are principled dissent and constructive disagreement (creative abrasion) most likely to thrive.

In this beautifully packaged, easy-to-read guidebook to handling conflict, Amy Gallo makes the most difficult of conversations workable, perhaps even comfortable. Packed with good practical advice, Gallo has relied on both a corps of experts plus her own experience in writing dozens of articles for the Harvard Business Review. Gallo covers everything that any reader who has to deal with conflict (all of us!) needs to know and do. She even deftly covers rare situations like how to handle a transaction when your counterpart is suffering from a mental illness. Checklists, tables, charts and brief summaries make Gallo's wise insights even more usable.

The HBR Guide to Dealing with Conflict by Amy Gallo contains wise, actionable, and inspiring advice. Gallo empowers us to approach conflict in a positive way and provides practical tools that can prepare for difficult conversations, help you to manage your emotions as well as those of others, enable you to develop resolutions together, and indicate when you need to simply walk away. An excellent resource. Highly recommended!

Clear, concise, brilliant. I deal with conflict everyday and it is surprising how few resources there are that are practical and doable. Thank you, Amy Gallo for making this an easy read while giving me so much to think about and apply. It all makes so much sense when someone lays it in and give you fantastic tools. The results are in and I can't thank you enough. We are a happy department again...this month! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!

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