

## USG SGM ~ Managing Conflict ~ July, 2024

**Chalice Lighting** Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.

**Check In** *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

### Quotes for Inspiration

We can never make the world safe by fighting. Every nation must learn that the people of all nations are children of God, and must share the wealth of the world. You may say this is impracticable, far away, and can never be accomplished, but it is the work we are appointed to do. Sometime, somehow, somewhere we must teach this great lesson.

~Olympia Brown, Universalist Minister

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects. The goal is to identify and handle disputes in a fair and efficient way.

#### Conflict Management Styles

Competing - Fighting for and defending what one believes is right (Win/Lose)

Compromising - Giving in to find a middle ground that is acceptable to all (Lose/Lose)

Accommodating - Yielding to another's point of view (Lose/Win)

Avoiding - Delaying or avoiding conflict altogether (No contest)

Collaborating - Cooperating and listening to all sides to build mutually agreeable solutions (Win/Win)

~Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann 1974

Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict – alternatives to passive or aggressive responses, alternatives to violence.

~ Dorothy Thompson, American Journalist

We have practiced diplomacy since the very beginning of the nation. Sometimes it has not worked, and we've had to go to war. I always believe you should try to find peace and reconciliation before conflict. ~ Colin Powell, former US Secretary of State

It is the great sadness of our species that we have not found a way to eliminate the conflict and to eliminate violence as a device to resolve our conflicts throughout the entire history of the human race. ~ Neale Donald Walsch, American Author

Cooperation isn't the absence of conflict but a means of managing conflict.

~ Deborah Tannen, American Author

If you want to bring an end to long-standing conflict, you have to be prepared to compromise.

~ Aung San Suu Kyi, Burmese Activist

If you have a beautiful story, it has to have conflict. If you don't have conflict, it can't be a good story.

~ Donald Miller, American Author

For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, debate.  
~ Margaret Heffernan, American businesswoman

Difficulties are meant to rouse- not discourage. The human spirit grows strong by conflict.  
~ William Ellery Channing, Unitarian Minister

Conflict is the beginning of consciousness. ~ Mary Ester Harding, British Psychologist

I am in politics because of the conflict of good and evil, and I believe that in the end good will triumph. ~ Margaret Thatcher, former British Prime Minister

When you have conflict that means that there are truths that have to be addressed on both sides of the conflict. ~ Dolores Huerta, American Activist

Peace is not the absence of conflict but it is the ability of handle conflict by peaceful means. ~Ronald Reagan, Former US President Because people aren't perfect and relationships are messy, we all need to learn how to resolve conflicts. ~John Maxwell, American Author

If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.  
~ Lao-Tse, Taoist philosopher

## Questions

1. What feelings do you have when you think about conflict?
2. How do you typically deal with conflict? What is your most used "conflict management style"?
3. How do you use different conflict styles with different people or situations?
4. When have you had a conflict that resulted in a positive outcome? How did you contribute to the outcome?
5. Imagine a world with no conflict. How would life be?

**Sitting in Silence** *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

**Sharing/Deep Listening** *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

**Reflection and Gratitude** *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

**Extinguishing the Chalice** We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Adapted from the Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website. Originally written by Kris Seitz for the Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina, June 2022