

### Conflict & Negotiation

In this Integrative Journal (number 3), I am going to focus on two different scenarios. The first is an experience from Scouting, that is being an adult leader in the Boy Scouts. The second relates to a problem that I faced in business. Both have good examples of conflict and negotiation. Both have cheerful endings and draw upon the material we are studying in this section.

When my son moved from our Cub Scout Pack to our Boy Scout Troop, we learned about the transition from adult-led to boy-led. We were involved in Scouting before Boy Scouts included girls outside of Venturing units. Boy-led means that the boys are responsible for running the program with specific guidance from the adult leadership. Unfortunately, our Troop didn't fully embrace this method of Scouting. It was adult-led. Worse yet, it was closed to new ideas and outside influence. As the new training chair for the Troop, I started with the mandatory adult training to get us all on the same page. My inspirational appeal was met with a great deal of resistance. The Scoutmaster shared his thoughts, "I've been in Scouts for 40 years; there's nothing you can tell me that I don't know." and "Training is a waste of time." This closed way of thinking was pervasive amongst the other adult leaders in the Troop. How I wish I'd known about negotiation Jujitsu. Having had little success in the adult ranks, I turned my efforts toward the youth. The council, who we'd mostly ignored in the past, offered National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) every summer. Reaching out beyond our Troop (boundary spanning), I spoke with several folks in the Scouting community. After learning more about NYLT, I decided to focus on getting our youth to this advanced training. I redirected away from the initial conflict

with the adults to focus on the youth. While not entirely intentional, I unwittingly leveraged coalition tactics by empowering the youth to challenge the adults. Our newly trained youth came back with new tools, big ideas, and a burning desire to lead their Troop with less adult interference. Some of the adults took notice of the change in the youth and attended Wood Badge leadership training. Wood Badge is the adult equivalent of NYLT. The entire endeavor ended up being more successful than I could have hoped.

Figuring out how to pay for NYLT was one of the biggest challenges. It costs as much as summer camp, and like summer camp, it requires a week of camp for the Scout. For many parents, this was like paying for two summer camps and may not be affordable. The adult leaders in the Troop didn't see the value of this youth training. They made no effort to promote it. To make matters worse, they talked badly about the NYLT program. They accused the NYLT youth of being loud, boisterous, and disrespectful. None of that talk helped our case. For the record, they sing loudly and have opinions of their own. The truth is, they know how to lead themselves, and they are respectful. I knew NYLT to be a good program, worthy of funding. In my previous years at the Cub Scout Pack, I'd grown our donations collection fundraiser from \$500 to \$2500. Since I had helped create this success and still had friends in the Pack, I proposed a team effort (boundary spanning – focusing on interests). I asked the Cub Scouts to accept help from the Boy Scouts for a \$500 revenue share. Our Boy Scouts got credit for required community service hours. The Cub Scouts got big Scouts to lift heavier donations into the trucks, which had been a problem in previous years. The Troop got the funding to send two Scouts to Big Horn.

When I started as a Scout leader, I sought to wring as much as we could out of the program. I knew this was a great program with expansive resources. We had exclusive access to camps in the mountains, training in woodcraft, campcraft, and scoutcraft. Scoutcraft focuses on

leadership training for the youth and is where I focused my time and effort. Sure, it was a little selfishly motivated for the benefit of my son. However, I didn't stop there. I dragged along everyone that I could on our awesome journey. We ended up with a group of leadership trained youth that has gone on to do some great things. These Scouts are on trajectories for success, and I can only hope that I made a positive difference.

I recently created a solution for a client who required SFTP and FAX as data ingestion methods. These are not common methods, and our current delivery team does not support them. From experience, I know that bending this team in unnatural ways does not end well. We risk costly custom solutions that may not be deliverable. The traditional internal position asserts that we should build things and have control over them. I suggested that we buy an existing solution to mitigate risk, increase speed to delivery, and reduce cost. As a follower, this was not entirely my decision to make. I could easily be overruled since my power was limited to expert control. I built a comparison of both build and buy scenarios and made my pitch using rational persuasion.

Building and presenting two business cases, I had a good story to tell. I thought about presenting a third or fourth but didn't have the time. I left it open-ended by saying, "I see two ways to go: Traditional (we build) and SaaS (we buy), maybe a couple of other alternatives beyond this, and we're always open to good ideas." I then asked the questions; Do we have the appetite to build these services and maintain them? Do we have the skills, or do we wish to develop them? Does it fit into our roadmap, our strategy? I knew that the answers to all these questions would most likely be "no." I juxtaposed these no questions with a few yes questions. Does it make sense to engage a partner who has experience delivering these services in this type of environment? Would we benefit from mitigating the risk by partnering with a service provider

who can take on accreditation responsibilities? Is our proposed pricing more predictable if we buy FAX and SFTP services from a provider specializing in these transports?

I've proven my ability to balance our clients' needs and our company's needs while contemplating a longer-term vision. With this established, my leadership allows me the latitude to solve these kinds of puzzles with a degree of freedom. Faced with client requirements that I knew the team could not deliver, I reacted by presenting two distinct scenarios. Empowered, I engaged and made connections with both new and established partners, and focused on outcomes instead of positions.

My conflict and negotiation experiences are an organic blending of what I've learned from work, Boy Scouts, and my studies. FHSU's Organizational Leadership program is a logical destination on this path as I continue to learn even more about leadership. I've already been able to apply lessons from FHSU into my personal and business scenarios with good results.