



# MAKING USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE FAITH COMMUNITIES

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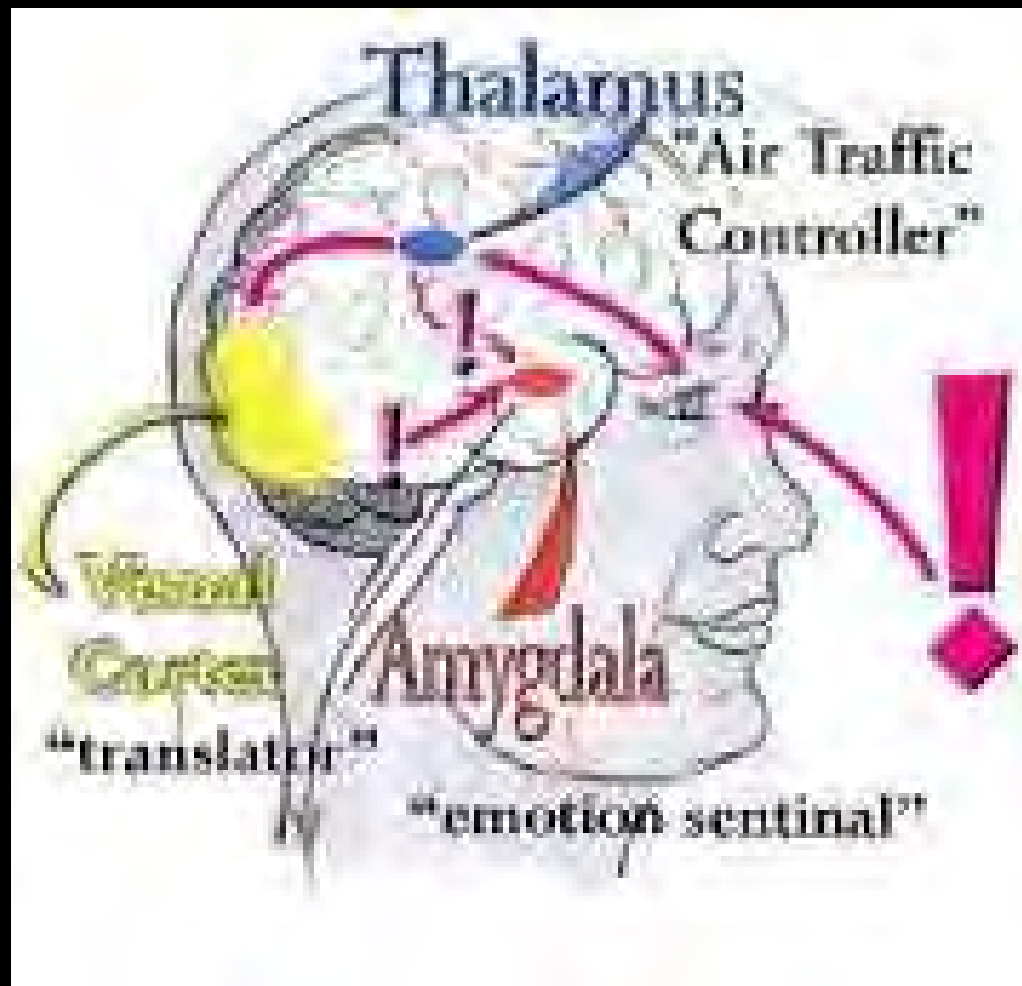
A few words about conflict:

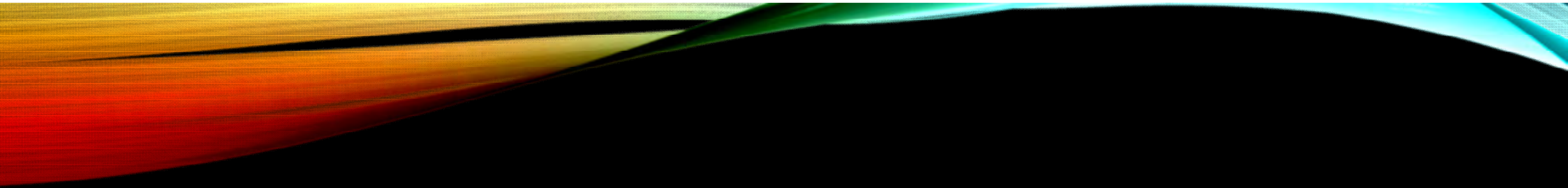
Who is susceptible to conflict?

**WE ALL ARE**

Of the 16 identified personality types indicated by Myers Briggs Test only 16% of population are truly at ease in conflict situations.

Frankly we are wired for conflict.



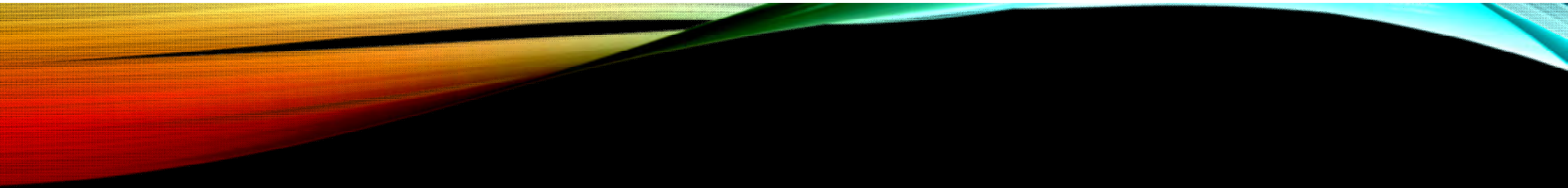


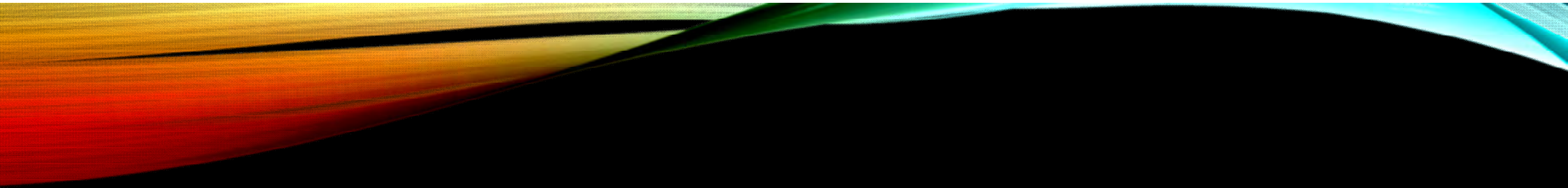
We have all had the experience of doing something in the heat of the moment that we regretted later. Our reaction flew out of the gate before we could catch it. It's like our rational mind stopped and what came out not only surprised us but everyone else around. You end up saying "How could I do that, what could I have possibly been thinking?" Well in reality you weren't thinking you were overwhelmed with an emotional reaction. **You were hijacked.**

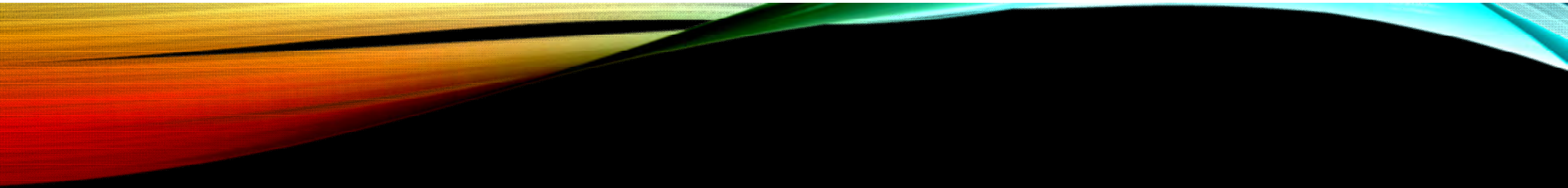


## HOW DO WE AVOID BEING HIJACKED?

- Pause
- Put on Hold
- Save as draft

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- All great organizations, the ones that remain healthy and last over time require productive conflict.
  - Now more than at any other time are faith communities more at risk.
  - In large measure this is because faith communities have been so resistant to change.

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- Productive conflict is not harmful or destructive but is achieved through the airing of ideological differences
  - When members do not openly debate and voice disagreements they often turn to **back-channel attacks** which are far nastier and more harmful than any heated argument over issues.



Conflict is inevitable and  
necessary...however, the **harm**  
associated with conflict is avoidable





Faith Communities hold values consistent with restorative practices and yet they have not instilled them into the fabric of their being.



# A VISION FOR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH...

- Having a lively interesting common life
- A place where the ideas of all participants are drawn out and use
- A place where problems are quickly resolved because there are open and honest conversations
- Politics and personal attacks are absent
- Critically important topics are often put on the table for discussion



## ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN MAKING GOOD USE OF CONFLICT

- Mine for (dig deep to unearth) conflict by inviting persons with perceived different points of view to share their thoughts
- Encourage conflict to surface
- Support all persons and value all positions even if you disagree
- Appoint a neutral moderator to lead the conversation
- Model appropriate conflict behavior without SCABS (shaming, criticizing, attacking, blaming, or sarcasm)
- Thank each person for their input



## BRAINSTORMING

How do we make good use of conflict?




# WAYS OF DEALING WITH CONFLICT AFTER THE FACT

## Restorative Conversations



## WE GO F.A.R.

1. You will be asked to speak to the **Facts** – what has happened?
2. You will share how this has **affected** you? – How have you been harmed?
3. You will seek to **repair** the harm? – What is needed to make you whole?



# LARGE GROUP RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS...

- With large groups conversations take place in stages over a period of time.
- Given the nature of the process they will always feel worse before they feel better.
- It is important to gain commitment to the full process.



# PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

- These conversations are confidential
- These conversations are voluntary
- Potential remedies are proposed through a brainstorming process
- Decisions are made by consensus of the participants – nothing is imposed on anyone





Establish agreed upon guidelines

Have all participants sign signifying  
their acceptance



# GUIDELINES FOR THE CONVERSATION

- We will take time to become settled in God's presence separating ourselves from electronic or other distractions
- We will speak to others with respect
- We will listen to others and not formulate a response while someone is speaking and to help this to happen we will pause between speakers
- We will speak directly to those persons in the room by name rather than about them
- We will ask for clarification rather than make assumptions



## GUIDELINES (CONTINUED)

- We will speak our own truth, speaking for ourselves and not on behalf of others
- We will not challenge, blame or shame others
- We will not interrupt others
- We will refrain from speaking twice until everyone has had a time to speak one time
- We will not break covenants or promises made by sharing confidential conversations
- During this time of conversation we will refrain from communicating our concerns through informal or formal channels but instead will bring them to these sessions.

# ROLE OF THE FACILITATORS

- Facilitators provide support to all participants assuring that all remain “safe”
- Facilitators are “in charge” of the **process** but have no stake or claim on a **“product”**
- Facilitators monitor the conversation to assure that the agreed upon guidelines are honored
- Facilitators may ask guiding questions but will not interject content into the conversation
- Facilitators may create a pause or terminate the conversation if they determine that persons are being harmed



## DEFINING SUBJECT OF THIS CONVERSATION: AN EXAMPLE

- The focus of this conversation is the pastor/congregation relationship at XXX Faith Community. Statements of fact will include actions of the pastor, actions of church leadership and actions of individual church members (if those persons are in attendance) and how these actions have affected or harmed those who are a part of the conversation.
- Other concerns may be important to discuss but will not be a part of this particular conversation.



Preventing harm when in the  
midst of conflict...



Encouraging direct communication of concerns:

“Let me help you talk to the person directly? I will go with you.”



When debate is getting heated:

“I suggest we take a moment and remember who we are and why we are here.”

“Let’s pause for a moment of prayer this as we all care about this and each other.”





When accusations or assumptions are made?

“I hear an assumption in what you have said, can you put that into a question?”



When raising a concern with someone  
without judgment:

“This is what I observed happening?  
What’s up with that?”



## WITH SOCIAL MEDIA OR EMAIL CONVERSATIONS

The moment there is a hint of confrontation or elevated emotion stop writing and get in touch in person face to face or by telephone. Especially avoid **“reply all”** when relaying concerns.

# WAYS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE THE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Train a leaders to serve as facilitators.

Train Faith Community President/  
Moderator/Leader to be a Chief  
Restorative Practioner (CRP)



# TRAINING RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Train Pastors/Rabbis/Imams/etc. in using strategies which help them be “non-anxious” in the face of conflict.



## MOVE TOWARD RESTORATIVE FAITH COMMUNITIES

Create an annual behavioral covenant based on restorative practices and create a liturgy around its creation. Have an annual signing of the covenant.



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