



# *Nancy Hightshoe Seminars*

## **LifeSkills**

**By Nancy Hightshoe**

### ***Secrets for Managing Conflict***

Keep this Finnish proverb in mind:

#### **Closeness without conflict exists only in the cemetery.**

Learning to manage conflict is a critical *LifeSkill* not only in business, but also in our personal lives and in potentially dangerous situations. Many individuals avoid conflict until they become angry and hostile (rarely an effective long-term strategy) or hit back through passive-aggressive behaviors (again ineffective). What both these reactions have in common is that nobody gets his/her needs met.

In business, smart, committed, creative individuals will have legitimate differences of opinion about how an organization or a project should proceed. How much more successful and pleasant to work with would your team be if members negotiated their conflicts more successfully?

For some companies, Customer Service is an oxymoron. What if your team members were better able to manage conflict - able to harness the power of all these secrets and meet the needs of customers while working within the parameters of the company? Imagine what an impact that could have on both morale and loyal, returning customers!

In our personal lives, wonderful, loving people have different beliefs about raising children, saving or spending money, the point of vacations and so on. How much more Joy and Delight could be brought into families if everyone from youngsters to Mom and Dad (and extended family) could talk out issues and look for the wisest options?

Tying personal safety to business, Workplace Violence has been classified as an epidemic by the Center For Disease Control. Most of those one million plus physical assaults a year, some resulting in homicide, could be smoothed over if employees were better able to manage conflict?



*"The Lady Was A Cop"*

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Nancy Hightshoe is an accomplished speaker, coach and consultant. She is an expert in:

- Professional and Personal Effectiveness
- Safety, Security and Survival.

#### **Nancy's Background:**

- Business and Life Strategies Coach
- Police Officer, Detective and Entrepreneur

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Notice this LifeSkills is titled Conflict Management, not Conflict Resolution. Of course, resolving the conflict would be the optimum result and, frequently, you will reach whole-hearted agreement with buy-in from all parties. However, people have very different belief systems and no amount of talking, wheedling, persuading and so on will change their minds - or yours!

***In this issue of LifeSkills, I am sharing some of the important secrets that wise, successful, people-savvy individuals know and use.***

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To effectively negotiate that minefield called Conflict, here are some suggestions:

***First Secret: Take nothing personally.***

If you have not read THE FOUR AGREEMENTS by Miguel Ruiz, I urge you to do so. His wise advice will serve you well not just in conflicts, but also in all the other areas of your life. As you read Secret #4, refer back to the idea of take nothing personally.

***Second Secret: Respect the other person. No make-wrongs.***

A make-wrong occurs when we judge the other person rather than focusing on his/her actions or ideas. In the make-wrong situation, our emotions get hooked and we are ready to do battle for our righteous cause. This becomes a win at any cost battle and tends to escalate until, frequently, the initial issue is completely forgotten.

When I was a street cop, I was often invited to family disturbances on my beat. As the outside observer listening to what was supposed to be the reason for the fight, I was usually baffled trying to figure out how anyone could argue over those issues. (My personal favorite being the man who was angry because his wife went to church too often. Go figure!)

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- Has spoken throughout the United States and in 17 foreign countries
  - On-camera expert for St. Louis NBC affiliate
  - Represented a Fortune 100 corporation as their media spokesperson
  - Master's Degree in Human Relations and in The Administration of Justice; Bachelor's Degree in Psychology
  - Designed one of the first Personal Assault Investigative Units in the country
  - Cleared 85% of her felony assault crimes cases (national average is 49%)
  - Recognized POST-certified continuing education instructor (Police Officers Standards and Training)
  - Named to the *World Who's Who of Women*
- Nancy's Commitment and Philosophy**
- My background in personal courage
- both as a police detective and entrepreneur
- is reflected in all my presentations.

Clearly these arguments were over who was right and who was wrong which leads to the

***Third Secret: Stay focused on finding the best solution for the issue at hand.***

Listen with an open mind. That does not mean you need to agree. Learn to hold your own opinion without becoming hostile, attacking or defensive.

***Fourth Secret: Do not get emotionally hooked.***

Easier said than done. True.

My technique for staying above the fray is that, in the back of my head, I have this little professor. You have one, too! Perhaps you and your professor need to get to know each other better.

When I find myself in a situation that could become confrontational or when I feel someone is trying to manipulate me or push me into doing something I don't want to do, I can feel my little professor sit back in his chair (my professor is a He I suspect because he seems to be fashioned after Sigmund Freud!), link his hands across his tummy, put his feet up on his footstool and say: Hmmmm, now I wonder why he/she said or did that?

So my focus and energy tend to go into figuring out the situation, similar to a chess game, rather than getting emotionally hooked into the behavior or words of the other person.

***Putting the pieces together: Do NOT engage!!! Listen politely with interest and with respect for the other person's belief system.***

As an example:

Someone I respect and like wanted to persuade me to purchase daily vitamin tablets from a very excellent, reputable company.

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My philosophy of personal responsibility and purpose resonates throughout all of my programs.

Each seminar participant comes away with new skills and ideas on how to approach every challenge with creativity, resourcefulness and tenacity

- all qualities even more essential for success in today's world.

Future issues of *Life Skills* will include a wide range of topics from Nancy Hightshoe Seminars.

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My belief is that I know my body and I know what she needs. I also believe capsules dissolve better. (Did you know that land developers find where outhouses were because of the undissolved pills! Probably not a good thing!!). There is also some evidence to indicate that I prefer to be in control of my destiny (Police detective in a one-officer unit, entrepreneur. Hmmmm, perhaps there is a trend here!)

This individual is very committed to the value of these vitamins and exceptionally good at selling them. She came at the persuasiveness from a number of different angles. As I said, she is VERY good!

It would have been easy to get hooked into one or two of her statements, but my little professor was definitely on duty. The conversation ended on a very positive note with a good relationship still intact, and without my buying the vitamins!

Sometimes we forget how different other people's belief systems are from our own. Let me give you a few examples:

*Different business models:* Laissez-faire or strong control. Re-engineer (old term, but it essentially means take the systems apart and rebuild) or improve on the current ways of marketing, etc. to build business.

*Windows PCs or Mac computers.*

*Medical challenges:* That is one of the main reasons we get a second opinion (this is also wise in expensive car or home repairs!)

*In religion:* Christian or any of the non-Christian faiths - Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, etc. Rarely will a discussion change the mind of a firm believer. The basic belief system is different.

*In politics:* Republican or Democrat. Excellent, high-integrity, committed individuals are in both parties, and their basic beliefs about economics, public policies and programs are different at the fundamental level. World politics: How do we achieve peace? Protect against terrorists?

*For fun:* Are you a Coke or a Pepsi or another brand cola drinker? Growing up, my Dad always insisted on Coke. As a tyke, I thought that was pretty silly. ANY soda was okay by me. As a grown-up, I have searched through entire airports to find a CocaCola!

*Vegetarian or beef-eater?*

What differences would be on your list?

**Now that you have learned the secrets to Conflict Management, it's time to put your skills to the test! Life will present you with many opportunities to practice. I wish you very successful Conflict Management experiences!**

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