

Episode 59: Productive conflict within organizations.

This is probably a good time to remind you that I am not a professional HR manager.

1. Friction is not warfare

While I generally believe some tension and friction at work are good, beware of warfare.

Warfare has casualties and the best way not to be one is not to go to war.

However, there are times friction is good and can be creative.

Examples:

- Between sales in a quarter and the marketing thinking about long term product positioning.
- Between two engineering teams with two different ways to solve the same problem.

There is probably no way of knowing which is the right answer - they both present choices.

2. Above all, transparency

I have no doubt that at the center of solving most disputes at work transparency.

Until you all lay your cards on the table, you will never see all the facts.

Much of the conflict I see comes from not being open and honest with each other.

Every one of us does this – even if by mistake without meaning ill.

However, to someone else it looks like you are hiding.

3. Talk it out, comprise and move on

Every conflict ends in either victory/defeat or a compromise.

However, victories tend to be short lived and are about battles not wars.

In business you always need to talk it out, comprise and move on.

This is difficult because egos and feelings are often involved.

In the end – don't take it personal and don't make it personal.

The objectives of the company are what matters, keep focused on them.

Bottom Line: Conflict is everywhere and can be healthy but only if it is resolved and you can all move forward together.

