



## Conflict Geometric Progression

Daniel S. Hull

### The perspective

*Conflict geometric progression* is an exponential influence for good, or for harm, when a disagreement between two or more people results in the betterment of society, or destructively spreads, at an affected rate or sequence. If two people affect two more individuals, who then influence four more persons, who therefore impact eight additional folks, and so on (2, 4, 8, 16, ...), the positive or negative influence of the original conflict has the potential to extend in nonlinear limitless directions (Chaplain Laughrey, personal conversation, December 02, 2018).

**Influence:** Influence continues long after a conflict is generated or even resolved. Matthew 5:14-15 (Good News Bible) teaches, "You are like light for the whole world. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl, instead he puts it on the lampstand, where it gives light for everyone in the house." Some will carry the lessons learned from a conflict and share the wisdom with others, who in turn will pass their version of the story along to the people around them. From one simple action, many people can be led by something as small as a spark of light.

**Communication:** What is shared with one person will impact and reach an unlimited number of recipients as technology continues to connect the world. Ephesians 4:29 (Good News Bible) affirms, "Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that builds up and provides what is needed so that what you say will do good to those who hear you." Not all communication will be positive, some will be critical. How the words are spoken through emotion will be as equally important as the actual language being expressed.

**Stewardship:** Matthew 12:37 (Good News Bible) warns, "Your words will be used to judge you, to declare you innocent or guilty." Both here on earth and on the day of judgment the words chosen to initiate or resolve a conflict will have lasting effects on those who surround you.

### The rationale

Integrative negotiations seek to provide an interpersonal and emotional opportunity to discuss the topic, relationships, identity, and process (TRIP) issues arising from a conflict. The intentions of the act are to resolve the challenges, achieve mutual agreement (Hocker, & Wilmot, 2018), and pass forward a positive illustration for others to learn from. When the leadership of an organization or country can direct a single interaction, by promoting the growth opportunities of the conflict, then, and only then, will the remaining messages spread to the farthest edges of the earth. The challenge will be to assure the communications being advanced do not get watered down, misconstrued, or create additional conflict based on misinterpretations. Allow the message from the conflict to be clear, providing uncertainty will not instill trust or civility.

Listen for the other persons' hurts and perspectives seeing as arguments develop over emotions and feelings, not fear, where the passions behind the idea cause the conflict. If you want to connect with people, start with their needs, their hurts, and their interests. As the active participant, seek to pursue the desire to listen to the emotions behind the words, these actions will be a prized responsibility (Saddleback Church, 2014). Peace will not be achieved by forcing an opinion on someone else during a conflict. Proverbs 12:20 teaches, "Those who plan evil are in for a rude surprise, but those who work for goodwill find happiness." When seeking to resolve a conflict, knowing how many additional people will be changed by the simple act will provide the selfless motivation to achieve conflict resolution.

As practicing Christian leaders, inspiring others through inclusion, building community through fellowship, orienting others towards self-service, concerning others with selfless inspirations, and promoting holistic stewardship are commendable individual, corporate, and societal accomplishments (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017). Speaking a message of clarity affords the possibility to reach community members who hold differing views, who felt excluded from the previous conversations, or were the earpieces of intentional and selective information. Providing the communication outlets deemed most appropriate will allow for the same message to be dispatched with the least amount of resistance and the greatest rate of acceptance. Acknowledging the personal and professional gifts provided throughout one's lifetime means being accountable to others, to yourself, and most importantly should seek to please God and the Prince of Peace.

Self-compassion is the way others are treated based on personal failures, the desire to treat oneself with kindness versus insensitivity, the ability to recognize mistakes as part of human nature, and the learned skill to address negative thoughts, emotions, and behaviors without judgment, defensiveness, or condemnation (Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis & Schumann, 2018). Life provides endless opportunities to cast a single stone into a pond and the freedom to watch the proceeding ripples develop until the changes reach a stationary mass. Those same proverbial waves formed by a single conflict will travel in many directions, some towards the intended recipients, with others being received by unplanned individuals. Interpreting how other people, groups, and societies will be notified regarding the geometric progression of the conflict, resolution, and reconciliation will be based on the concerns of the citizens.

## References

- Gotsis, G. & Grimani, K. (2017). The role of spiritual leadership in fostering inclusive workplaces. *Personnel review*, 46(5), 908-935. doi: 10.1108/PR-11-2015-0286
- Hocker, J. L., & Wilmot, W. W. (2018). *Interpersonal conflict* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Saddleback Church. (2014, Jul 28). *Learn how to resolve conflict and restore relationships with Rick Warren*. [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1udN6OShf4&feature=youtu.be>
- Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, A., & Schumann, K. (2018). Self-compassionate or apologetic? How and why having compassion toward the self relates to a willingness to apologize. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 124, 71-76. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2017.12.002