

Principles of BIM Conflict Work

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- 1) This outline focuses on the somatic principles underlying BIM methods of conflict management. The actual body awareness exercises which are the life of the principles are described in other writings and videos.
- 2) Under the heading of "conflict" we can put everything in our lives we have to fight to overcome. It is what makes us anxious, challenged, possibly unsure of how we are going to handle a situation. It can be as different as employee reviews or receiving a diagnosis of cancer. Interpersonal conflicts are possibly our greatest difficulties.
- 3) Conflict and conflict management are usually approached as mental, emotional, spiritual, historical, political, and cultural in nature. However, there is one element that is always present in conflict and usually ignored—the body. Our responses to various kinds of conflict are all physically much the same.
- 4) *Emotions* are actions that we do in our body. Though we normally speak of emotions as mental, they are fundamentally physiological events. *Feelings* are the experience of the physical events by the person who is doing them. Though English uses nouns to refer to emotions, emotions are actions not objects.
- 5) Challenging or threatening tasks or situations evoke in us the reflex pattern of fight/flight/freeze/collapse. These are physical distress responses — contraction or collapse of posture, breathing, vision, movement and attention. They are experienced as fear, anger, dissociation, effort and so on. The common element in all the stress patterns is "smallifying."
- 6) These powerful physical response patterns undermine people's ability to think and act rationally, empathically, compassionately and assertively. They constrain people to think and behave in tense, oppositional ways, which usually turn out to be inefficient and ineffective—compared to balanced and expansive ways of acting.
- 7) You cannot simply stop an emotion or other behavior – you must do something to replace it. Even sitting perfectly still instead of yelling angrily is using one body action to replace another. The contraction/collapse is our natural, hardwired response, and it will continue until more effective resources are learned and deliberately used to supplant old patterns.
- 8) The opposite of and antidote to the smallness of the old response is expansiveness -- relaxed muscles, soft breathing, stable posture, radiant attention, kindness, and focused strength. This is a specific physical state brought about by specific body training methods. It won't happen through belief, desire or abstract knowledge.

- 9) These body awareness skills will enable you to maintain a peaceful and powerful bodymind during conflicts, which will enable you to search for and find possibilities for resolving conflicts in harmonious and productive ways.
- 10) In the state of embodied power and kindness, people will be more aware of themselves and others. They will tend to make healthful choices to maximize well-being for all. This is not philosophy. It is physiology.
- 11) For most people, ongoing practice is crucial in being able to generate this somatic state easily and apply it in daily life.

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- *Feeling Aikido: Body Awareness Training as a Foundation for Aikido Practice*
- *Winning is Healing: Body Awareness and Empowerment for Abuse Survivors*
- *Embodied Peacemaking: Body Awareness, Self-Regulation and Conflict Resolution*
- *Teaching Children Embodied Peacemaking: Body Awareness, Self-Regulation and Conflict Resolution*
- *Reach Out: Body Awareness Training for Peacemaking – Five Easy Lessons (A free download) Also available in German & Spanish.*
- *Embodying Power and Love: Body Awareness & Self-Regulation (10 hour video)*
- *Talking with the Body: Training for Helping Professionals. (10 hour video)*

These are all downloadable from **www.being-in-movement.com**