

**Developing Soft Skills and Personality**  
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**Lecture - 07**  
**Conflict Resolution Skills: Seeking Win-Win Solution**

Hello everyone. Welcome back to NPTEL MOOC course on Developing Soft Skills and Personality. I am Ravichandran from IIT Kanpur. I have been teaching you this course for the past 1 week. By the way, how did the week go? So, did you enjoy writing the quiz, I hope some of you got 20 out of 20 and I hope you enjoyed answering the questions and going back to the lessons just to cross check your answers.

Now this week, compared to what we did last week; last week I had to introduce you the concepts I had to make you understand that realizing your potential is the first most important thing that you need to do, if you want to excel and if you want to develop your soft skills and personality in an overall holistic sense. Towards that we have been discussing about various concepts and then I thought that, I should actually teach you something about soft skills particularly with regard to one important situation that we come across in our day today life that is conflict.

So, in this week we are going to start with a very interesting and a very relevant soft skill, that is, conflict resolution skill. And I am just trying to focus particularly on a Win-Win solution that we need to give in terms of conflict resolution. Now, before I start this week, just a quick recapitulation of what we did in the last lecture.

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**Highlights**

Highlights of the Last Lecture

- David McClelland: 3 needs
- Affiliation, Power and Achievement
- The desire to excel: N-Ach
- PQ, IQ, EQ & SQ
- Danah Zohar's Spiritual Intelligence
- 12 Underlying principles
- Act from higher motivations
- Live life as a project with sensitivity towards Goodness, Truth and Beauty
- Self-awareness
- Spontaneity
- Being vision- and value-led:
- Holism
- Compassion
- Celebration of diversity
- Field independence
- Humility
- Tendency to ask fundamental "Why?" questions
- Ability to reframe
- Positive use of adversity
- Sense of vocation

In the last lecture, I was just focusing on David McClelland's 3 needs, particularly, three motivation needs pertaining to affiliation need, power need, and the most important one, the achievement need or the need achievement or the N-Ach trait. The desire to excel is otherwise called as the need achievement trait. And then, later, I told you that there was a time people were so concerned about the physical quotient PQ, and then there is a shift in thinking that came with regard to IQ, and over and above this, we have this EQ; and today people say that without SQ—that is, spiritual quotient, you will not be able to live a very holistic life and you will not be able to sustain whatever success that you have earned in your life.

Now, towards explaining what is this "spiritual intelligence," "spiritual capital," terms which are used by Danah Zohar, I refer to her book on *Spiritual Capital* and then I was discussing with you the 12 underlining principles of developing or building your spiritual capital such as—She starts with self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision-and value-led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, humility, tendency to ask fundamental why questions, ability to reframe, positive use of adversity and having a sense of vocation.

Now, above all, before concluding I said that using this spiritual capital as pointed out by Zohar that we should be able to act at a higher level of motivation. And if you start acting with a higher level of motivation, most of the mundane problems which we are normally getting bog down—normally we are struck with very simple trivial things in life—they are all over come. So you will be able to live life as a project as suggested by the author, but with the kind of acquired sensitivity towards 3 important rights that has been mentioned. That is: one is goodness, the other one is truth, and beauty.

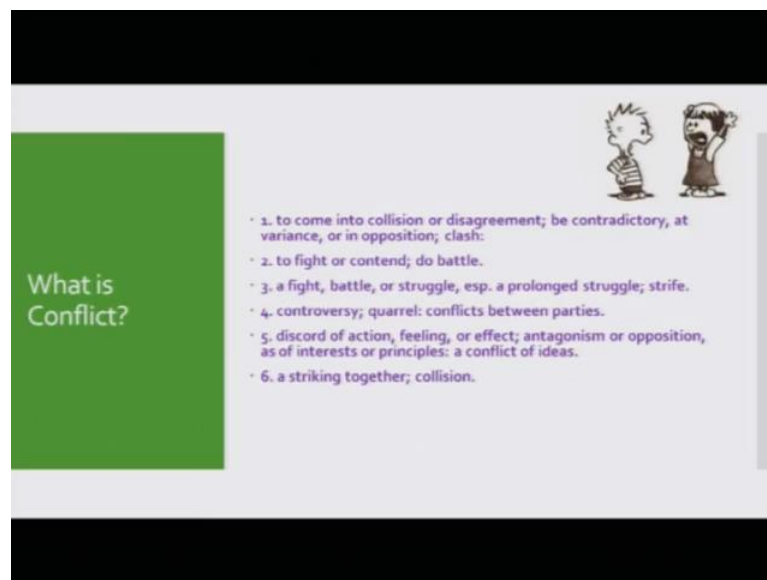
Now, the next question that you need to ask; last week you read about this, you started realizing your potential, you want to excel and then you are trying to self-actualize, and then, you are trying to know that there is this need achievement trait in you, you are trying to bring out all these things in you. Will you live a very happy peaceful life just by building that? Obvious answer is—“No.” Because life is not only about building your inner core, but having built that inner core, what are you going to do with the people who are surrounding you? Because life is something that you have in you, but it is validated, it is given to you, by so many people around you.

The meaning, at least, the purpose, at least, is something that you are inventing. But then, how do you reach that meaning? How do you reach that fulfillment is again the people are the ones who are going to give it to you. Remember, at the beginning, I said that whether it is your failure or it is your success, it is a people around you who are going to contribute to you.

In that sense, even if you acquired all these traits which are highly desirable, such as self actualization, you cannot escape people who come across in your day today life and cause conflicts in your life. Think about your day, how is your day beginning? Is the day beginning without any conflict? No, there is not a single day that is beginning or ending or progressing without any conflict. In fact, there are very minor conflicts and then there are major conflicts, there are conflicts which are taking us to every crisis kind of situation. There are conflicts which make us deal with that so easily and some of the conflicts we are used to dealing with so easily in our day today life.

For example, morning you get up, and then it rains very heavily. Now you know that you will take an umbrella and then you walkout or you wait for the rain to stop. Now you have learned how to manage this kind of conflict. Now your scooter has broken down or car has broken down, so you know that you will call the mechanic, you will get it repaired. Now these are something that you have taken as part and parcel of your life. Now, the conflicts that I am interested in; is the conflict that will arise because of your interaction with human beings, now, how do we define conflict first of all? What is conflict?

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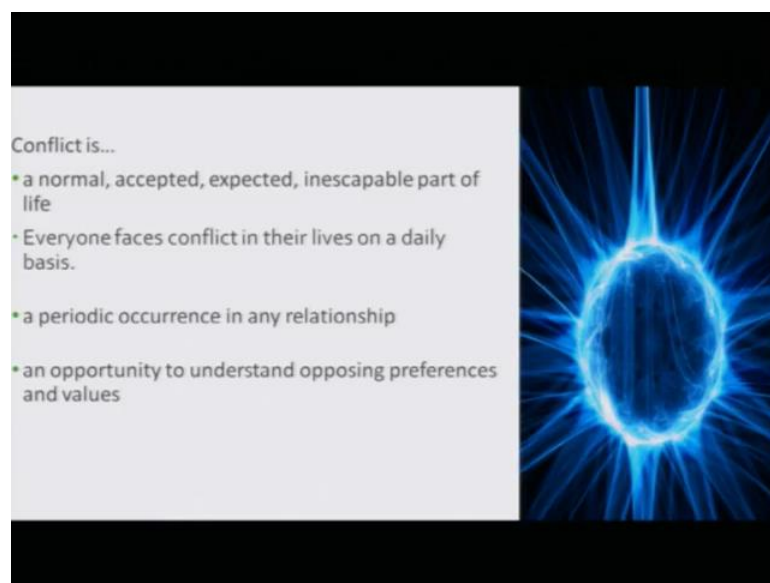


If you look at the dictionary definitions, some of which I want you to think about. Firstly, it says that when you are in a conflict you are just coming into collision or disagreement. You are not able to agree with somebody's view, so there is a confrontation. Conflict means to be contradictory at variance or in opposition; clash. It also means to fight or content to do battle. To fight with each other, to struggle especially a prolonged struggle, sometimes, strife, so again, conflict with the very grieving situation. Conflict also means controversy, quarrel and conflicts between parties. Conflict also means discord of action; that is, action is not going in a very harmonious direction, discord of feeling disharmonious feeling or effort. Antagonism or opposition, hatred for somebody,

opposition to ideas, principles of others, conflict of ideas. Conflict also simply means a striking together collision.

Now, of all these ones, you can simply look at definitions like disagreement, contradictory, fights, and then, sometimes disagreeing, there is a disharmony of feeling. Now can you avoid conflict in real life, can you live without conflicts?

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Again the obvious answer is no, because conflict is a very normal, accepted, expected, inescapable part of life. As I said, day today normal conflicts people have accepted as part and parcel of their life. In fact, people expect sometimes, “What kind of conflicts I will have?” They look at the horoscope channels, they look at astrology. They just want to anticipate what kind of conflicts will be there in my life today and will I be able to sort it out. People know that it is an inescapable part of their life. Now everyone faces conflict in their lives on a daily basis. It is not like that conflict will come to you once in a year, once in a blue moon.

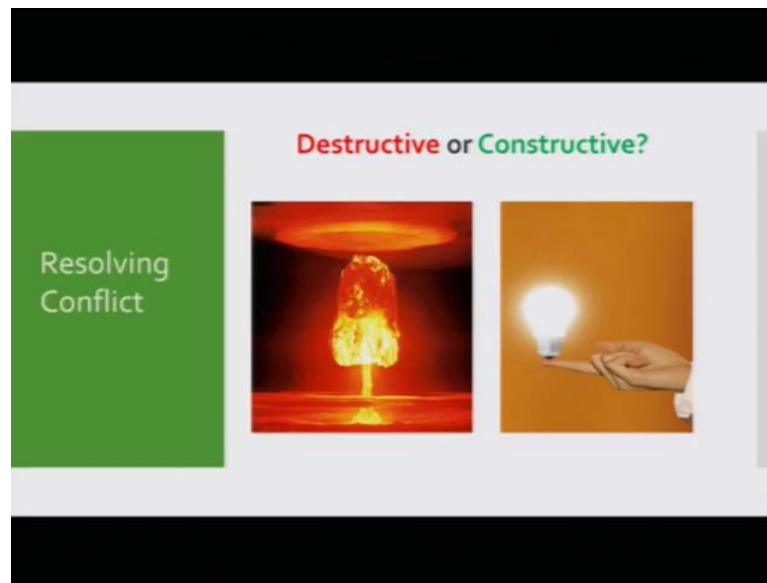
But the next interesting thing about conflict is that there is no one that conflicts spares, everyone faces conflict in their lives on a daily basis. It is not visiting somebody on yearly basis, once in a decade, once in a blue moon; no, on a daily basis we all

experience, undergo conflicts. But as I said, there are small conflicts and then there are big conflicts. And then, even in human relationships conflict happens to be a periodic occurrence in any relationship, it comes periodically. But then, there are cases as I said, husband and wife—they quarrel with each other every day. Now, this is the very minor trivial conflict that is resolved then and there very quickly. But then sometimes the quarrel leads to the level of living separately from each other; now this becomes a major conflict which needs to be resolved.

Now what are the positive aspects of a conflict? Once a conflict is resolved; you know that it is not actually a problem, but it is a problem that has come to you with a gift in hand. What is it you understand? It is an opportunity to understand opposing preferences and values. With conflict you learn what other people value in you and what are their preferences. And if you really value that relationship what will you do, you will try to modify according to their preferences.

Remember, learning is after all about modifying your behaviour. And once you know that the other person finds some of your behavioural traits unacceptable or leading to a conflicting situation you will try to alter, you will try to modify. And your behaviour will change which will become more pleasant for the other person to accept you easily as a friend, as a partner, as a colleague, or as anybody in the family network.

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Now, the next aspect of conflict that you need to know is: Why we should resolve conflict? And then, while resolving conflict, how do people do that? Now, normally, people think that okay conflicts are there, and then, there are people who are there to solve it in a very amicable manner, harmonious manner. No, not always! There are some people who will try to resolve the conflict in a very destructive manner. The others who would like to resolve it in a constructive manner.

Look at the picture that I have put here. Conflict can explode like an atom bomb and then destroy so many lives and relationships, but it can be used constructive to really enlighten a situation, instead of just flaring it up, instead of firing a situation you can also use to enlighten it. You can bring peace, but you can also lead a situation to a battle like war front where people lose their lives and relationships.

So would you like to be on the destructive mode or constructive mode? Obviously, if you want to develop your personality, so, you need be on the constructive mode. Now the next question is now what kind of mode you are naturally getting into, what is your style: Are you in the destructive side or constructive side?

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And if you are in the destructive side, like I am just going to identify both the destructive as well as the constructive, if you think that you are on the destructive, it is high time that you come to the constructive. If you are already on the constructive side, please do enhance this quality and improve this further, people need you, the world needs people like you.

Now first this side—what will destructive mentality people will do in terms of conflicts? There will be disagreement about personality and character. So they will find fault with your character is not good, your personality is the one that is creating it. Now, the one who are on the constructive side, they do not say anything about personality or character they just look at disagreement about ideas and approaches. They know that it is not the person, but the ideas are creating conflicts.

This side: destructive mentality, the person attacks individuals. Now the one with constructive mind set goes on issues and focuses only on issues not on the personal preferences likes-dislikes. Now this side: destructive mind-set, personal antagonism is fueled by difference of opinion, whereas, in constructive side the person respects differences, tries to resolve without hurting personal sentiments. And this side: the one

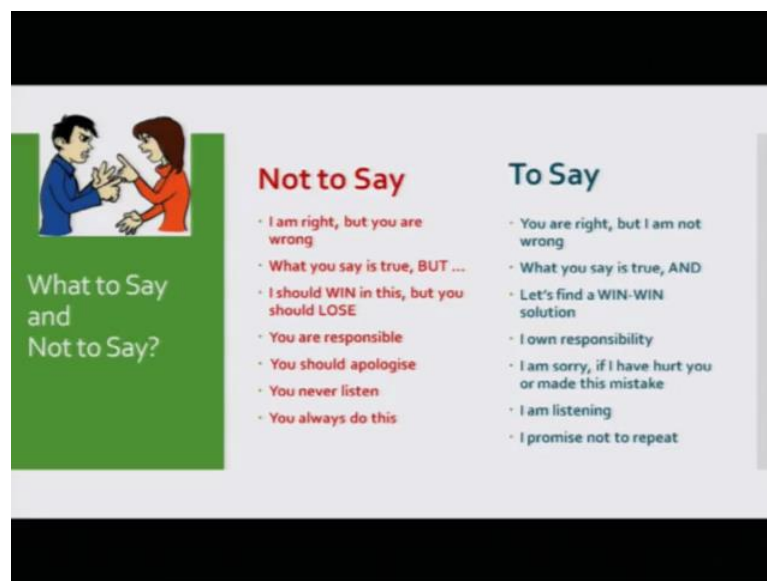


who is on the destructive side, if the person is in a group the person will try not to let the group progress or will affect the cohesion of the group.

Now, the one who is in the constructive side will ensure group performance and try to make the group cohere with each other. Now, over all if you look at destructive mentality mind set people who always try to create more problem when there are conflicts are the once who are known for performing very low—who have low self-esteem, who have negative thinking. Okay, now this side: the constructive people, if they are in a team, when I say team it is not necessarily the team in some kind of management business setup, but even a family network is a team, any kind of human relationships if they are in a group so they work in a team.

Now, the people with constructive mind-set, they are high performers, they want to resolve conflict, they want to arrive at harmonious situations and solutions and then they go for high performance. Now, agree that you should be on the constructive mode-constructive mind-set you should be careful about what you should say when you want to resolve a conflict and what you shouldn't say.

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**What to Say and Not to Say?**

Not to Say	To Say
· I am right, but you are wrong	· You are right, but I am not wrong
· What you say is true, BUT ...	· What you say is true, AND
· I should WIN in this, but you should LOSE	· Let's find a WIN-WIN solution
· You are responsible	· I own responsibility
· You should apologise	· I am sorry, if I have hurt you or made this mistake
· You never listen	· I am listening
· You always do this	· I promise not to repeat

First let us say, **what not to say** and then look at **what to say**, both I have kept side by side. What you shouldn't say? You should not say, I am right—implying that I am the only right person and you are wrong; rather you can say you are right, but I am not wrong. You are right to the extent and I agree up to that extent, but please understand that I am also not wrong when I am trying to say this.

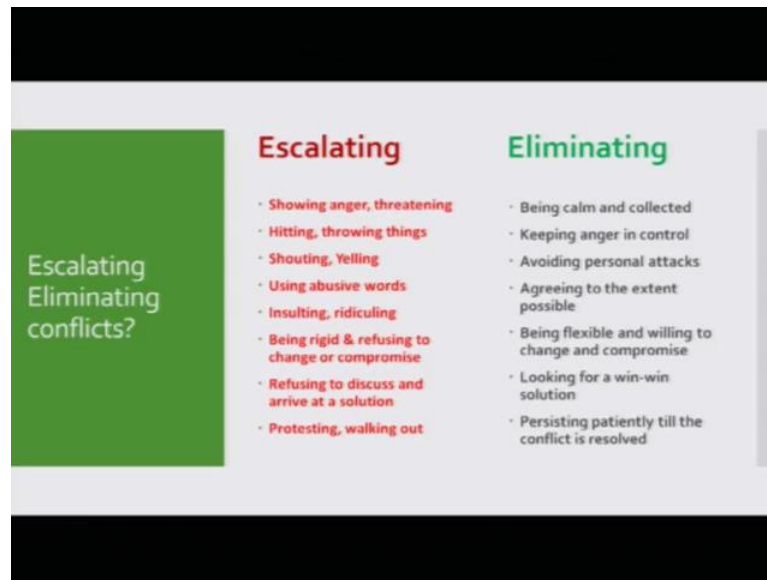
Now, you should not say an expression like—what you say is true, but I will not accept it; but this is contradicting. Now on the other side, if you can say what you say is true and what the other person is saying is also not that unacceptable. So that “and” instead of “but” will make a difference. And then, this side, you should not say or you should not think, “I should win in this conflict,” “I should win at the end of this fight, but you should lose” –it is a win lose situation. But to the other side what you should say, you should rather be thinking and saying, “let's find a Win-Win solution,” “let's find an amicable and friendly solution.” This side, the other person blames and says: “You are responsible!” “You are the one who created in this first instance!” Now, the other side, the constructive mind-set person says, “I own responsibility, I am sorry.”

Now this side the person says, “You should apologize,” the other side, the constructive mind-set person begins by saying, “I am sorry, and if I have hurt you, your sentiments, or made this mistake, I apologize for that.” Now this person says: “You never listen you always talk, you always put your side, you never listen to me.” The other side the person says, “I am listening, please talk. I would like to listen to your viewpoints first.” And you should never say like: “You always do this!” “You never do this for me!” Words like **always, never, all the time, none**, are again, mind blockers in communication.

Now, this side, he would say, instead of saying, “I always do this,” you would say, “If you think that I did it, I promise you, I will not repeat, I assure you, it will not occur, I will take care that this thing will not be repeated in future.” So, you decide what you should say, and what you should not say, and what is it that you being saying so far. If you are saying the wrong things, just now you can understand why the conflicts are escalating. What do I mean by conflicts escalating? Escalating is the conflict gets increased in its intensity. Instead of getting eliminated, instead of completely removing or resolving. What happens the conflict escalated and what happens when the conflict is

to be eliminated or what should you be doing if you want to eliminate or if you want to escalate?

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Now look at this side, if you want to escalate or if you are the part of the negative mindset person who is indulging in escalating these are the things you might be doing. And, as I said, if you are doing some of these things, try to stop it. And then, look at the ways in which you can eliminate. Showing anger; showing anger in any form like banging the door, throwing something on the person, or ever threatening the person that I will kill you, I will beat you, let me know what happens when you come out of this office, when let me know what you will you do when you come out of the gate, on the road I will beat you, I will insult you, I will humiliate you.

Now, this side, the eliminating the person remains calm and collected cool. Even when the other person raises his voice he will not raise his voice, because, if you raise the voice it will again escalate the situation. He will keep calm, he will speak in a low tone instead of raising the voice if he threatens, he calmly just listens what he says. Now this side, if the person is hitting, beating, throwing things; the other person tries to keep his anger in control, keep his repulsive, impulsive action. Instead of he throwing, he doesn't want to throw things back on him, so he keeps to—he tries to keep that in control. This

side he shouting, yelling, the other side he will try to avoid any kind of personal attacks. But the fellow who wants to escalate it will use abusive words he will be insulting, ridiculing. Whereas, the other side, the person tries to be as agreeable as possible, he wants to remain pleasant because he knows that resolving is more important than fighting.

Now, this side, the person is very rigid and he is refusing to change or compromise. The other side, the person is flexible willing to change and compromise. This side, the person is refusing to discuss and arrive at a solution. The one who wants to eliminate is always looking for a Win-Win solution. Sometimes the person who wants to escalate, will protest; will say I am not even listening to you, I am opposing openly or in a very violent way just walks out of the discussion room where they are trying to brainstorm and then arrive at a solution to the conflicts. Whereas, the other side, the one who wants to eliminate conflicts resolve it would be persisting patiently till the conflict is resolved.

You choose or you find out which side you are? Are you part of the problem or would you like to be part of the solution? Are you the conflict creator or you want to be the conflict destroyer, solver, and you want to bring the situation to a very harmonious level? What resolves conflicts? At least two things, plus one thing, I will add later.

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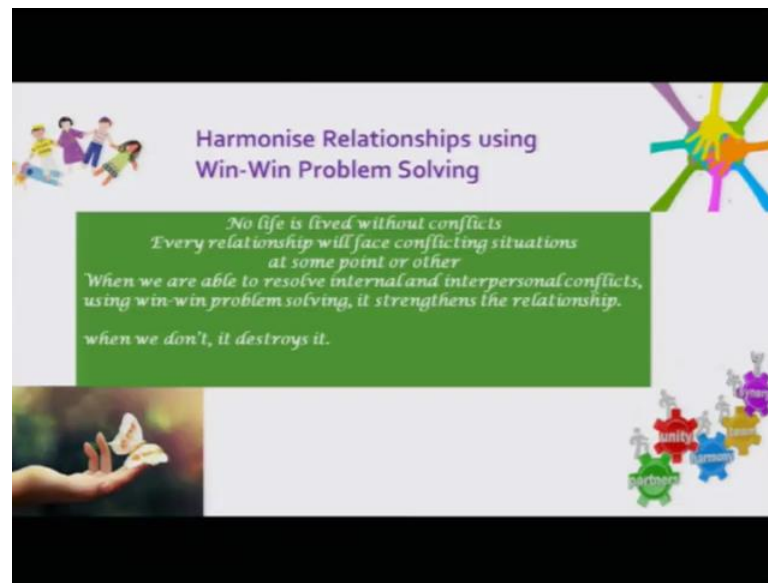
Negotiation, mediation: Negotiation is like talking and then discussing things and then arriving at a kind of solution by talking and then identifying the pros and cons. Mediation again, trying to mediate between two parties, but at the same time, if you really want to sort it out, you should be looking at both sides. About this, I will talk more in the next lecture that how you should be able to look at both sides and resolve and then you should always have this Win-Win attitude.

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Now, I said, the third one is also there, that is, arbitration. And these things, we can say that there are three levels of conflict resolution. What are the three levels of conflict resolution? Quickly, first one is negotiating, that is, two individuals sitting down and working out a resolution together just by talking and brainstorming. Second is mediation where third party assists individuals in finding the solution. And the third one is arbitration. Now this also involves a third party, and is instituted when negotiations mediation fail. Now, in the mediation, usually the third party is sort of known to you, but in arbitration, actually, the third party sometimes becomes somebody like the judge. Like, sort of court you take, and then, there is this judge, literally, sitting and then solving the issue for you. Or you take to somebody unknown but you all agree that you will go to this person and whatever the person tells you, you will accept it.

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At the end of this lecture, I just want to tell you that it is important that you should be able to harmonize relationships using Win-Win problem solving. Why it is necessary and how you can do that? Again, I will try to give some examples in the next lecture. But then at this time, if you think of win lose or lose win that I will win somebody will lose or I will even lose so that I will let somebody win. You are not actually harmonizing the relationship.

Look at this, no life is lived without conflicts. All life will have conflicts and every relationship will face conflicting situations at some point or other. However good the relationship is there, there is no way as you read in story that people will happily ever after. They have only learnt how to resolve the conflicts and then bring back the happiness then and there. Wherever it is appearing to disappear because of the conflicts they try to bring the happiness, they are very good conflict resolution skills developed people. Maybe, that is why they are able to live happily ever after, but not without resolving the conflicts.

And then when we are able resolve internal and interpersonal conflicts using Win-Win problem solving, it strengthens the relationship. But when we do not, it destroys it.

Ultimately it is the relationships which are going to bring you success or it is also bring you down from your success and then you give failure.

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It is important that you learn to harmonize relationship using Win-Win problem solving. And just want to conclude this lecture with the very famous quote that actually gives a very revelatory idea about what we talk about conflicts. Normally people think that peace is something that comes from the absence of chaos or conflicts. But according to this quote, it says, "Peace comes not from the absence of conflicts but form the ability to cope up with it." If you think that you will able to arrive at peace, by thinking that there would not be any conflict in life, so that is not peace. But you have to develop your ability to resolve these conflicts in a very peaceful manner, and then, you will be able to live in a harmonious surrounding.

Now, with this thought, let me conclude this lecture and in the coming lecture, I am just going to discuss about how we can try to sort out interpersonal conflicts, inter relational conflicts in a very amicable manner using this Win-Win situation. We will meet in the next lecture, till then I say bye.

Thank you.