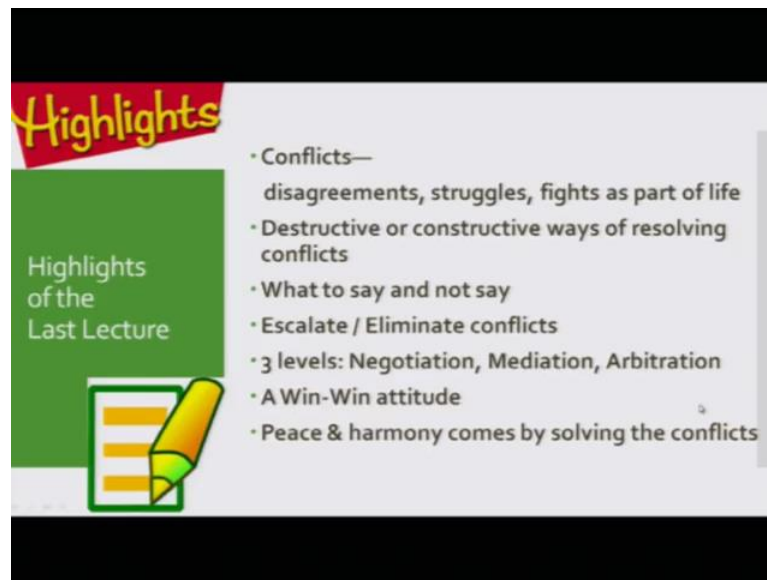


Developing Soft Skills and Personality
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Lecture – 08
Inter-Personal Conflicts: Two Examples

Hai, hello everyone! Welcome back to my course on *Developing Soft Skills and Personality*. I am Ravichandran from IIT Kanpur. This is part of the NPTEL MOOC project on giving courses to all students. Now, in this week, I started with discussing with you about conflict and then suggesting that you should be developing conflict resolutions skills despite whatever personality development you might have attempted so far in terms of developing your potentialities, developing your attitude towards excellent and all that. Now in this lecture particularly I will try to focus on some inter personal conflicts and then rather I will challenge you to work on some of the examples that I am going to give you.

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Before I start let us take a quick recapture of what I did in the previous lecture. Quick highlights on what we did before. I introduced to you about various definitions which are available for conflicts, but, by and large, conflicts are about disagreements, struggles, fights which are part of the normal life. You can be a very destructive person in terms of

conflict resolutions. You can also use constructive ways of resolving conflicts, but much depends on what you say and what you do not say when there is a conflict.

Are you the person who is creating conflict and then trying to escalate it knowingly/ unknowingly or are you part of the person who is trying to solve the conflicts and who is trying to eliminate it as much as possible. We had pros and cons in terms of escalating and eliminating. We discussed about that and then towards the end I said that there are three levels of conflicts resolutions; one is negotiation, the other one is mediation. Negotiation is two people sitting together and trying to sort it out by talking and discussing and brainstorming, but mediation is calling a third party mostly known to each other, and then, the person is trying to mediate and then bring back the relationship back to the proper shape.

In the last type, that is arbitration you go to a third party, third person again, but this person may not be known to you it could be politician, it could be a leader, it could be your boss, it could be a judge, it could be a person whom you believe that has the legal capacity to sort out your problem. So, usually, you should go to the arbitrator only when it is necessary otherwise you try to resolve conflict by simple negotiation at a personal/ inter personal level.

Now, while resolving I keep telling you that focus on Win-Win attitude and try to sort it out with Win-Win solution only then there will be peace and harmony if the conflict is solved in a very favourable manner to all parties concern. Now let me ask you another question: How was your day? How was your yesterday? And, how the day begin today? Also, how was it? Was it going without any conflicts? Did you start observing that there have been conflicts and then you are trying to sort it out? Or, did you wish for a day that should not be without any conflicts?

I would like to tell you that if you ever wish that your life should be without any struggles, life should not have any conflicts, I tell you that it will be very boring life. You would not like to live a life that is without any conflicts. All you should need is conflict resolutions skills. I tell you why life will be very boring, I give you this situation. When you go for a movie why do you go for a movie? Why is a movie becoming a blockbuster? Look at a movie situation, a very handsome boy meets a beautiful girl, the boy is intelligent, smart, and then, he has a job at hand and the girl is also equally

intelligent and smart. So they fall in love with each other, they tell the parents and then the parents are also belonging to the same community they speak the same language so they like each other and then they meet each other and then they finalise the marriage. And then they get married they have children in time and the children are also growing up they are also smart they are also happy. And then all of them are living happily ever after. Will you pay 200 rupees ticket to watch a movie like this? No, you will never do this because when you go, you want to see what life in reality is going to give you. You want to have the boy, may be, he is handsome, but the girl is not beautiful—conflict starts or the girl is beautiful and intelligent the boy is not that smart; conflict begins again. Now the boy and girl somehow initially they didn't like each other, instead of the other situation where they meet and then they immediately fell in love each other. They start quarrelling, they dislike and then there is a situation where it changes that was another kind of conflict in which they learnt each other.

Now, they bring this to the parents. Now the parents realise that they are of different religion conflict begins again. Now even if the parents are willing, now the religious community that is surrounding them, is not allowing that these two kids should be allowed to get married now conflict continuous. Now one parent goes and talks to the other parent the parent doesn't agree, conflict will continue. Now, other than religion there are problems with regard to caste, for example, different caste, both parents are not agreeing because of this issue. Now even if they agree there is society that is not going to accept it.

Now how the protagonist, the hero, or the heroine, or the parents will resolve the conflicts and then bring the movie to climax where a major conflict is there and then it is resolved and then you leave at these, the theatre, and then you are willing to pay your 200 rupees to watch that movie, and the movie becomes a blockbuster depending on the way the conflict is resolved.

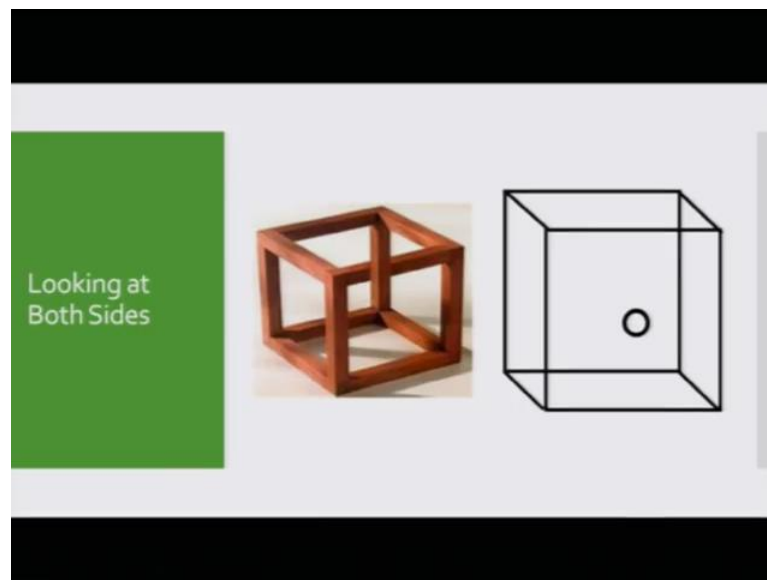
So if you look at from this perspective you will realise that it's like you want to know how to resolve conflict by seeing fictitious things and then that is a reason why you want to go to theatre, that is a reason why you want to listen to stories, that is a reason why you are even involved in gossips, how somebody is handling his or her life. Okay. And it

is a very conflicting situation, but how is this fellow doing, you want to know all these things.

So, in short, I just want to tell you that if you pray for a life without conflicts you should understand that that life will be very dull, very boring, very monotonous. If you want a very challenging inspiring life, you need conflicts, but you need very good resolution skills especially in terms of having a Win-Win attitude and solving it in a very favourable manner to all the parties, which are involved in it.

Now if you want to do that, in the previous lecture I said that you should be able to look at both sides.

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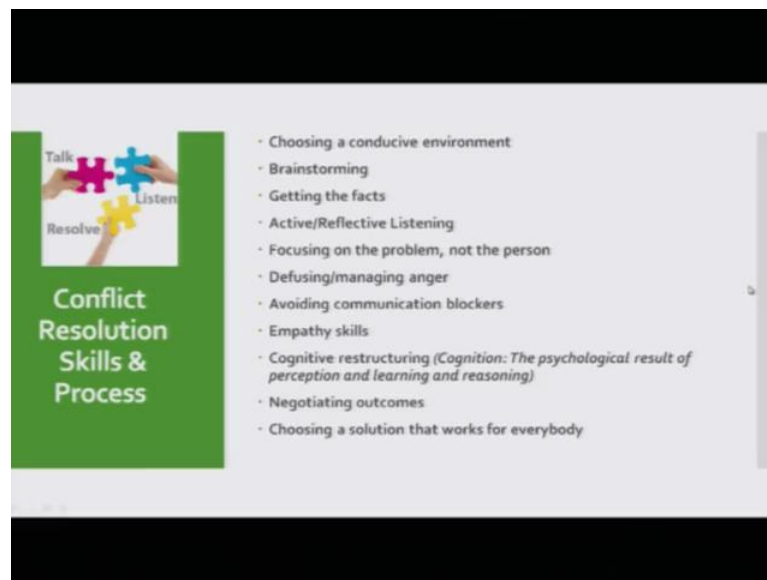
Let us say that there are two people, and then you should be able to look at both sides. But, look at the picture; look at both of the picture for a second. Now, in the first picture there is a square—small square. Now, where do you see this small square? Is this square on the right side bottom of the back side or it is on the left side top of the front side? There are two sides. But, there is a possibility that you may not see this square at all, you can also see this as just a big square not the small one, and then, they are just four sides and then you may think that it is just an illusion. Now that is the issue.

If you look at only 1, you obviously miss the other. Not just the other you also miss the possibility of looking at it from a third angle. Now in a conflict you need to understand

this that it is not always one person who is telling you the truth, the other person is also equally telling you some other truth, but then, the truth may actually not lying with these two persons; it may be somewhere lying outside these two. If you happen to be there to resolve it you need to listen to both and then resolve it, you should not jump into conclusions.

Look at the next example there is again just like this; it looks like there is a small circle here. Now where do you see this? Is it in the first look? In the front portion and is it in the front side, centre or is it on the back side somewhere in the bottom? Where do you see this? As I said, like thi,s there is always two ways to look at the same thing, and then, yet there may be a third way, sometimes, fourth way. We need to ascertain what kind of perspective we are taking before we try to resolve any conflicts. So look at both sides; but, at the same time, keep it with you that there might be a third side also. And then if you are going to be the mediator look at the third possible option which can be favourable. And if you can brain storm even with those involved parties you may be able to look at many other pleasant sides.

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Having said this let us look at some conflict resolutions skills and the process by which you can use it. Before you want to resolve a conflict, especially inter personal conflict, ideally, you should choose a conducive environment, which means if the boss and the worker is fighting in the office, you better take them out, take them to the canteen, take

them to the cafeteria, take them to a nearby restaurant. If the wife and husband are quarrelling with each other, invite them to your home, so this change in the environment where it is very pleasant that is going to make a difference.

The second thing is if they are willing to talk you can be part of it or even the concerned parties you can ask them to brainstorm that is you can ask them to come out with as many possible solutions as possible. Now once they come out with the solutions you just arrange them in terms of pros and cons and then try to get the facts, facts in the sense instead of identifying who is right, who is wrong, just try to get the objective facts; what happened, who started first, who did what, which time, which preceded, which came later so that you can ascertain who actually initiated it.

Most of the times, as I said, there is 1 problem creator who might have actually initiated the entire conflict inadvertently or even consciously both are possible. Now once you get the facts, if you are part of this, you should be able to do active or reflective listening. What is active or reflective listening? When you actively listen to a person, you are all eyes all ears and then you listen to the person without interrupting. If at all you say something, it is just to make the person continue with that, you can briefly summarise, you can briefly ask some questions which will make the person continue with the story, but not putting your ideas into the mouth of the other person, not you trying to speak all the time and not making the other person voice out his or her opinion. So active listening is very important.

Then the next important thing is focusing on the problem *not* the person. So, who did what? Who is responsible? Why should you blame that person? So, that is not important. But, now something has happened; a conflict is there. How can we resolve the conflict? So, that is very important. Now, once you understand this, if somebody is angry, somebody is furious, now it is very important to diffuse or manage anger. Some of the suggestions I said in the previous one: if the person is rising the voice, you should not raise the voice, you should remain calm and collected, you should be very cool. Now if the person is threatening, again you just be polite, you be very calm you don't get provoked.

Now diffusing or even managing angry. The other ways you can diffuse is like the person is coming from the outside, and then he heard of something that you said about

this person is so angry and then he comes and shouts at you and then how dare you do all this things. So you can politely say would you mind sitting. And then, I will order some coffee or I will get some cool drink for you, and then if you can actually convince the person, the person is obviously going to say: “No, I am not here for having a tea or cool drink!” But, then if you can tell him that at least you can have some cold water—I will get it for you—please have it.

Now, if you can make the person drink the water, so you have actually diffused the angry of the person. It is very difficult for people to continue anger for a prolonged time. Most of the times, people who get angry—either they are short tempered or they have misunderstood the situation, and once, and then and then, it is coming impulsively the blood is boiling because the mind thinks that oh, somebody has done some gross injustice to you. Now you have to show the person the place. Okay. Now even this small gesture that is the soft skill, when you give him a small cup of tea or a cool drink, and let us assume that that by chance the cool drink is something that is this fellow’s favourite, which is not able to say no so he may take it. Or, even water, cool water nobody can say no to it. The person takes it drinks it actually it will calm down the nerves of the person; it is one method of diffusing.

There are other ways like just making the person sit and then like if you are somebody who is busy so you can keep the person engaged in certain other activities like some interesting program on TV or some music So even in the waiting, the anger will slowly reduce for the person. Once you diffuse, manage anger, be sure that you avoid communication blockers. So, communication blockers—will talk more about it later, but right now you should know that people who say: *you always do this, you have never done this*, exhibiting that they have a rigidity of thinking. And then somebody says something—No, No... you cannot say like this—interrupting. And then trying to snub the person. These are all communication blockers.

The person is not letting the other person come out spontaneously in communication, take note of it, if that is the situation, you can say: *please allow the other person to talk and your turn will come and I will allow you to speak fully, I will listen to you please let the person finish it*. And if the person is blaming you say that *do not blame now so I will*

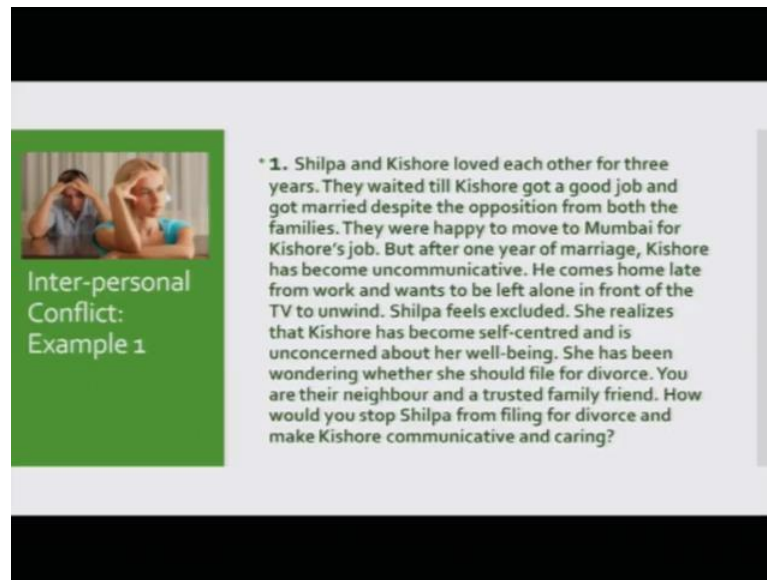
listen to you if he is really done something wrong I am there to help you, okay, believe in me.

Now the next one is **empathy skills**. Go back to the first few lessons that we discussed where I mentioned about Stephen Covey's *beginning with the end in mind*. He also talks about the other example, which I mentioned in the next lecture that *you try to first understand the other person before you say the other person is not understood you*. Seek first to understand before you say that the other person has not understood you. Seeking first to understand; what makes the other person angry? Putting yourself into the shoes of the other, experiencing how the person would be *feeling into*—empathy actually means feeling into the other person and getting what he is actually feeling at that moment. If you can do that, if you can empathise, so that again is going to reduce the conflict.

There is also this thing that you can do that is **cognitive restructuring**. Cognition simply means the psychological result of perception and learning and reasoning. Cognitive restructuring is, like I showed you in the previous picture that for the same problem there could be two solutions, three solutions, and you can look at the same thing from different perspectives. Now you try to reconstruct the entire thing through the perception, and then, correcting the perception and then learning something from the corrected perception and then applying your logic and reasoning to make both people believe that both of them are wrong or somebody is wrong up to some extent, that's why, the person got angry, but the other person didn't mean that. So if we can restructure the entire thing, again, you can reduce the conflict.

And then, finally negotiating outcomes. At the end of it, okay, now you don't do like this, so, now you will be getting this, but you also don't feel that you are losing this, you will also get this. At the end of it you should be able to choose a solution that works for everybody. That is the most important one that is the reason why I say that you should have this Win-Win attitude always aspire for Win-Win situation.

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The slide features a green header with the text "Inter-personal Conflict: Example 1" and a small photograph of a man and a woman looking distressed. To the right of the photo is a text box with a white background and a grey border, containing a scenario about a couple's relationship.

* 1. Shilpa and Kishore loved each other for three years. They waited till Kishore got a good job and got married despite the opposition from both the families. They were happy to move to Mumbai for Kishore's job. But after one year of marriage, Kishore has become uncommunicative. He comes home late from work and wants to be left alone in front of the TV to unwind. Shilpa feels excluded. She realizes that Kishore has become self-centred and is unconcerned about her well-being. She has been wondering whether she should file for divorce. You are their neighbour and a trusted family friend. How would you stop Shilpa from filing for divorce and make Kishore communicative and caring?

Now, let us look at two examples, and I am not going to give the solutions now. I just want you to think about it. I am just going to put the conflict, think about the conflict, and in the next lecture, I am going to discuss about this and then give you the solutions, but I am not going to tell you now that I am not under the impression that I am the one who will be able to give you the best conflict resolution solution. I believe that you may even come out of with better solutions than me. That's why I just want you to give the conflict now, think about it, discuss with your friends, and then discuss at your family, with your neighbours, friends, colleagues and then see like how would you resolve this situation and this is a common scenario now days in inter personal relations.

Let us look at this, Shilpa and Kishore loved each other for three years. They waited till Kishore got a good job and got married despite the opposition from both the families. So the conflict was there before, so, they waited for him to become financially independent, they resolved by opposing the family's wishes so they got married. So the family opposed it, but they thought that they should be united.

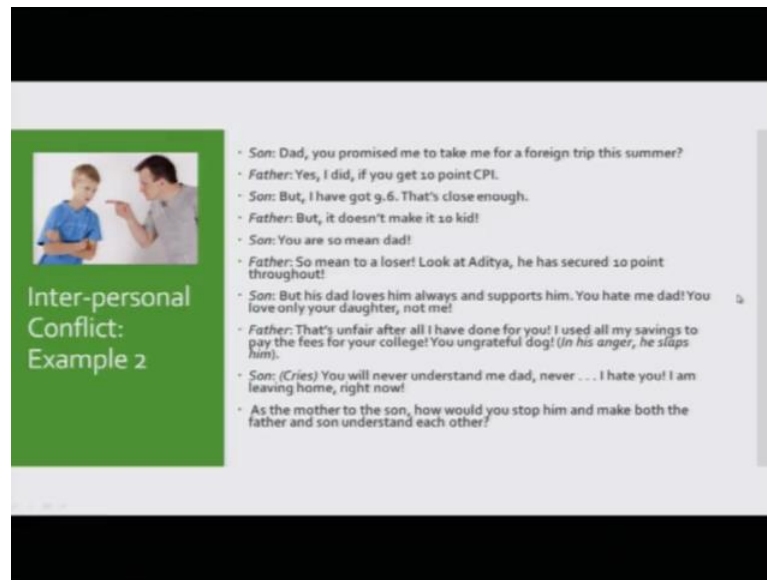
Now they were happy to move to Mumbai for Kishore's job. So they going to a metropolitan city—may be the families from a very remote background, may be, a village so they didn't like the conservative mind set prevailing there so they left it. They were happy to move to Mumbai for Kishore's job. But after one year of marriage, Kishore has become uncommunicative. One year is just over, but slowly he has stopped

talking to her, that is what is meant by uncommunicative, he is not expressing his inner problems. What he is undergoing, he is not sharing. He comes home late from work and wants to be left alone in front of the TV to unwind. Whatever stress that is built up in the job is just comes back home and he just wants to relax just by looking at TV.

Now Shilpa feels excluded. They are the ones, who have come away from the family, living together, and now she feels cut off. Now, this guy is not even sharing anything, not even talking to me, looking eye to eye. She realises that Kishore has become self-centred and is unconcerned about her well-being. She thinks that *he is not thinking about me, he lost his sensitivity towards me*. Now here comes the major conflict she has been wondering whether she should file for divorce. She has come to the stage of conflict where she is thinking that there is no point in living with this guy, *why not I go for divorce and make my life happy?*

Now you are there I am giving you the role of the mediator. How would you stop Shilpa from filing for divorce and make Kishore communicative and caring? How would you do that? Let us assume that you are the neighbour and they trust you as their family friend. You have already a good position, so both people trust you, and they think that you are an unbiased and unprejudiced person. Now how would you stop her to file for divorce and make Kishore communicative and caring? Think about this, tell me in the forum that we keep discussing. You can tell me that like how you are thought of resolving this. And in the next lecture I will give my solutions, I will tell you the way I will try to sort out their problem.

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The slide is titled "Inter-personal Conflict: Example 2" and features a small image of a father and son. The text on the slide is as follows:

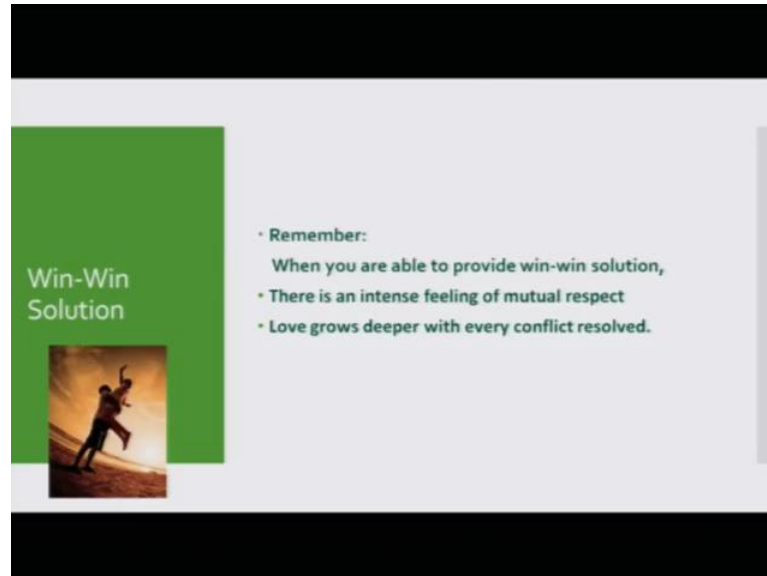
- Son: Dad, you promised me to take me for a foreign trip this summer?
- Father: Yes, I did, if you get 10 point CPI.
- Son: But, I have got 9.6. That's close enough.
- Father: But, it doesn't make it 10 kid!
- Son: You are so mean dad!
- Father: So mean to a loser! Look at Aditya, he has secured 10 point throughout!
- Son: But his dad loves him always and supports him. You hate me dad! You love only your daughter, not me!
- Father: That's unfair after all I have done for you! I used all my savings to pay the fees for your college! You ungrateful dog! (In his anger, he slaps him).
- Son: (Cries) You will never understand me dad, never... I hate you! I am leaving home, right now!
- As the mother to the son, how would you stop him and make both the father and son understand each other?

Let us look at the second scenario. Again another conflicting situation, again it is a very common scenario in Indian households now a days—is the conversation between son and father. Son says, *Dad! You promised me to take me for a foreign trip this summer.* Father: *Yes I did, if you get 10 points CPI.* So, those who don't know like in most of the systems like IIT 10 point is like getting 100 out of 100, full marks. Son says, *I have got 9.6 that is close enough.* Again like 9.6 is like 96 marks. Now father says, *but it does not make it 10, kid.* Son says: *you are so mean dad!* Father says: *so mean to a loser!* Loser—he means that *you lost it, so if you say I am mean, so I am mean to you.* And look at *Aditya he has secured 10 point throughout son.* But his dad loves him always and supports him. *You hate me dad, you love only your daughter not me.* Now father says, *that's unfair, after all I have done for you. I used all my savings to pay the fees for your college, you ungrateful dog.* In his anger, he slaps him. Now the son starts crying and in crying, sobbing, he tells: *you will never understand me dad never, I hate you. I am leaving home right now.*

Now, here you have an interesting role to play. Now you are the mother to the son and that is obviously like your wife to the husband. So you again, you are in a very lovable position, and both would trust you listen to you, how you would stop him, the son particularly, and make both the father and the son understand each other. How would you do that? Go back to the suggestions I have given, the process also I have suggested,

use those skills, do your homework, discuss in the forum, discuss with your friends, come out with solutions and will discuss this in detail in the next lecture.

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Now, before I conclude as I was telling you, try to arrive at Win-Win solution. And if it has to be a Win-Win solution, remember, if you are able to provide Win-Win solution at the end of it, there is an intense feeling of mutual respect and love grows deeper with every conflict resolved. People get back closer; people become more intense and more compassionate with each other. Now, in both cases one is leading to divorce, in the other one, the son is leaving the home. It is a very conflicting, hateful situation; you need to resolve it with Win-Win solution.

I hope you are able to find out good solution. Think about it and see you in the next lecture.

Thank you.