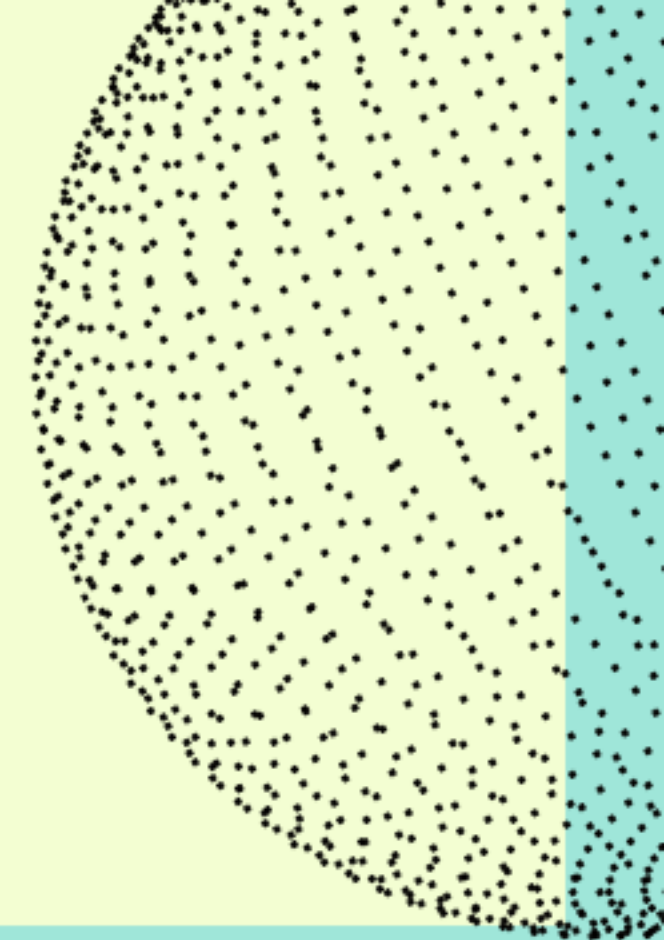




THE 3 RULES OF CONFLICT

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RULE #1: CONFLICTS ARE NOT ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT.

Conflicts seem to be about a choice between the positions of two opposing sides. The situation that people bring up might be important to address, but it's usually not the real problem. Emotional conflicts always point to some deeper issue.

Conflict is created by a system that is impacting all of the people involved.

To transform conflict it is necessary to understand and address the underlying needs, values and interests of the people involved.

Questions to Consider:

How does the situation impact your life and wellbeing? What do you feel? What do you need? Why is this issue important to you? Why is it important to others? How can the situation be described in a way that everyone agrees with? What is the question that everyone has an interest in answering?

RULE #2: EVERYONE INVOLVED IN A CONFLICT MUST BE INVOLVED IN THE SOLUTION.

Conflict will never be resolved by one side defeating the other, nor by someone convincing the other that they are right. If someone is excluded from participating in the solution, they will find a way to include themselves - usually on their own terms.

People are in conflict, because they are interdependent. They are in relationship with one another.

It is unsustainable to win at the other's expense. Everyone wins or everyone loses.

Why does everyone believe what they do? What are the strengths of each side's position? What are the weaknesses (or shadows) of each position? What are the dangers of taking either side to the extreme? How are the different sides complementary and interdependent?

RULE #3: THE PROCESS OF RESOLVING A CONFLICT AND THE OUTCOME ARE ONE AND THE SAME.

It's tempting to try to fix problems by finding a once-and-for-all solution. But the outcome of a conflict resolution process is not a fixed state; it is an agreement on a new process - which leads to the fourth of the three rules of conflict:

The process of resolving a conflict is simply the beginning of a new way of being in relationship.

The values and intentions put into the process are the qualities that will be part of the outcome.

What are the qualities and values that everyone wants to see in their shared future?

How do the participants want to engage with future conflicts?

What are the implications of starting with the assumption that the relationship will continue indefinitely into the future?

THERE WILL NEVER BE A FINAL OUTCOME, BECAUSE LIFE IS AN ONGOING PROCESS.



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