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PART I

INTRODUCTION

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

—Marcel Proust

Conflict is a broad term that describes many types of interactions, but most people identify it as some type of interaction with a negative emotional charge. Although it may appear to be about a simple, straightforward issue, more often than not it exists because some core element of trust, beliefs, authority, or passion is being challenged. By illuminating the underlying issue and needs, both our own and those of the people with whom we interact, we have a far greater chance of defusing the charge and achieving a positive outcome than if we stumble through the conflict blindly.

Using Type as a Tool for Managing Conflict

Psychological type and the MBTI instrument can be used as a spotlight to help us see and understand more clearly what is really involved in a conflict situation. By incorporating awareness of how people of the 16 different personality types tend to behave in a conflict, we can better strategize how to approach, communicate during, and resolve conflict situations.

This ability to strategize is extremely valuable in organizational settings, where conflict often becomes a significant distraction for those involved and even for those watching from the sidelines. Helping organizations develop more effective conflict management strategies is a key route to improving their performance and increasing the satisfaction of their people.

The purpose of this training resource is to help you bring to life an understanding of psychological type preferences and how they affect us in conflict. The binder is a tool for helping teams (1) achieve a basic understanding of type and its relationship to conflict, and (2) learn to harness type awareness in conflict management.

One caveat: Exploring the topic of conflict with a team may not be appropriate in all situations. If the team is entrenched in divisive issues, the session could become confrontational and defensive. In such cases, rather than address the conflict in a group setting, it may be more appropriate to provide one-to-one counseling, introducing type as a tool for managing conflict.

Remember that participants have a right to confidentiality of type results. Use your best judgment in determining how to apply your knowledge of type and conflict to help ensure an enriching experience for both you and your clients.

Organization and Content of This Binder

Organization of the Binder

The binder is divided into five parts. The first two parts contain information needed to prepare for the training sessions:

Part 1: Introduction introduces the topic of type and conflict and provides an overview of the purpose and content of the binder.

Part 2: Planning the Sessions addresses some fundamental questions to enable you to provide the best possible learning experience. Preparatory work is essential for success, and some time must be given to deciding who should be present, where the workshop will be presented, and how to make the best use of the facilities. Planning an agenda and deciding which materials are needed for which intervention are addressed as well.

Parts 3 through 5 contain the three training sessions:

Part 3: Type Basics is for those unfamiliar with type. It introduces participants to the concepts of preference, the eight preferences of the MBTI assessment, and reported and best-fit type. This session is optional for those already aware of their best-fit type.

Part 4: Exploring Conflict uses type as a lens through which to view conflict. It emphasizes gaining an understanding of how people both experience and respond to conflict and offers exploratory questions and participatory exercises to illuminate how the different conflict pairs interact in conflict.

Part 5: Managing Conflict Through Type focuses on harnessing the knowledge gained in the Exploring Conflict session and applying it to a simple model for navigating through conflict more effectively. Exercises on and discussion of real-life scenarios bring the model into sharp focus and encourage immediate application.

Format of the Workshop

The modular session format of the binder allows you to easily create your own workshop according to your specific needs. Part 2 includes three sample agendas that combine the sessions in various ways, taking into account your clients' existing knowledge of and experience with type, in order to present an effective workshop. It is important to remember that these agendas are samples and should be customized to match your participants' needs.

Format of the Sessions

Each training session includes an overview of the objectives for the workshop, activities and worksheets used in the workshop, lists of materials needed by participants and the facilitator, and a sample agenda. Contents of the binder are structured to align with the suggested agenda. While individual sections of the agenda can be modified and customized, we recommend following the basic sequence—our experience indicates that participants gain from the progression as presented.

Sessions are divided into several pertinent topics, which include background, examples, charts, activities, and worksheets to help participants thoroughly integrate the information. Each session includes a set of slides to help you with your presentation at specified points. These slides are provided as a PowerPoint® presentation (Windows® format only) on an accompanying CD-ROM; thumbnail printouts of the slides are included at the end of the module. You can copy the printouts or print out full-size handouts directly from the PowerPoint slides for participants' reference and note taking.

A script is provided for your convenience. Feel free to adapt it to your own voice and add your own ideas.

Participant Booklet

Our companion booklet, *Introduction to Type® and Conflict,* is designed as a support piece for training participants and is one of the key materials needed for an effective training session. We recommend providing all participants with a copy of the booklet so that they have comprehensive and accurate information to take away with them. The booklet also includes two key exercises incorporated into the sessions: a self-assessment for best-fit type and a personal development plan.

Facilitator Knowledge Base

Our assumption is that you, as the facilitator, are well versed in and fully qualified to use the *Myers Briggs Type Indicator®* (MBTI) instrument. Your depth of knowledge should include a comprehensive understanding of the four dichotomies, the eight preferences, and the 16 types. You should also have a strong grasp of the fundamentals

of type dynamics. You should have a high degree of comfort with and experience in administering, scoring, and interpreting the MBTI instrument. If you have not used these skills and knowledge in some time, you may wish to work alongside someone with more recent experience or refer to any of the materials listed in the Resources section.

Our approach to conflict in this binder is not so much training for participants as it is an exploration into their deeper points of view. Therefore, it is important that the facilitator feel comfortable asking probing questions and allowing the learning to unfold for participants as opposed to using more traditional types of instruction.