CONFLICT IN WORKING RELATIONSHIPS: AN OVERVIEW. THE CRISIS OF ROLES IN MODERNITY: THE MAN-WOMAN WORKING RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract
Conflict is a divergence of opinions which, as such, generates an emotional alteration in turn arising from a clash of mutually antithetical views. (Bonfanti, 2011).

I decided to start from this definition to emphasize how much, within a conflict situation, whether it be work or family, the factors in the field concern both the cultural aspect of a person and the emotional one. Speaking of conflict, therefore, without taking into account the socio-cultural substratum in which it has its roots, inevitably involves an emptying of those which are the fundamental ingredients of any type of relationship.

As already mentioned in previous chapters, the socio-cultural transformations that have occurred in recent decades have led to a complete redefinition of the roles that men and women respectively cover during their lives. In fact, in the era of modernity, many of the roles that had been at the basis of society for decades were gradually overturned.

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Introduction

Man is in fact going through a phase of profound changes that go hand in hand with the socio-cultural changes of our time. The stereotypes that aim to relegate man to the narrow role of an always strong, dominant and self-confident figure have over time given way to more flexible models with which men can identify. Women, in turn, by overcoming cultural limits, are becoming more and more competitive. By not accepting the role of shoulder, over time they have acquired a critical sense that more easily reveals less standardized aspects of the masculine. The result of all this is that men lose the privileged position they previously enjoyed and find it more difficult to maintain dominance, power and trustworthiness in the eyes of the other sex and their own.

What emerges from this new condition is a man in crisis, frightened by the loss of the status that for decades he had considered the only possible one, a man who often tries to react by closing himself defensively, avoiding any form of confrontation or showing aggression and attacking. even before being attacked. Schematizing, generalizing, simplifying reality and pigeonholing the information of what one is experiencing in rigid categories can create an illusory sense of security and control over reality. Which is rigidity, but not strength.

In the same way the woman, finding herself in the position of someone who acquires a new status, runs the risk of approaching this new condition with an attitude of someone who owes something by virtue of a past that today she finds unfair; this idea risks leading the woman to assume that she is right in all the circumstances that see her confronting a man in one of the new contexts she is part of. To all this must be added the difficulties that this change of status has generated in the management of family dynamics that previously were the exclusive prerogative of women. In fact, it was the women who dealt almost entirely with all the matters concerning the management of the house and the children, and in general with all matters concerning the family ménage.

Finding having to delegate to a third party what until recently were their characterizing activities often leads women to experience a strong personal emotional conflict, torn between the desire to fulfill themselves by exploiting the new opportunities that modern society has given them, and the duties imposed by the cultural heritage with which they grew up.

With these premises, it is inevitable that men and women who now find themselves sharing a new space in their lives risk critically raising the threshold of conflict, risking losing the enormous opportunity for enrichment to which confrontation with a different model from ours inexorably leads.

1. The hidden potential of relational conflict

To better understand how to manage conflict, it is important to start with two brief considerations:

1) Conflict is an event that inevitably occurs within human relationships, especially in working relationships as they are strongly dependent on the personal opinions that people feel about each other, greatly influenced by power relationships, hierarchically determined to the point of determining not only the social visibility of the person who is the protagonist but also the level of self-esteem and the personal perception of the self as a valid person.

In fact, work represents a very important part of our life (both for the large amount of time invested and for the quality of the resources invested) and it is therefore absolutely impossible to consider it as if it were a marginal experience with no consequences for the perception of itself in the world.

2) Conflict cannot be identified exclusively as a painful event or as a regressive form, in fact, thanks to its onset, a change is often implemented, an evolutionary turning point: as Duccio Demetrio affirms, who supports the idea of the conflict understood as a creative force for change especially in adulthood: "The crisis, the conflict, the fracture (all implications of the metamorphic process, because there is no form of rebirth that is painless) are not regressive manifestations. Those who change rather return to growth. Renewing himself adds power to the previous adulthood (....). The change, experienced and suffered, becomes the emblem of a more fascinating adulthood, because it is the emblem of a superior synthesis that we have been able to achieve against all adversities ". (D: Demetrio1998). According to this vision, the conflict between adults contains within it a powerful transformative and emancipatory force as it inevitably leads its protagonists to question themselves, to get involved, to consider in any case the positions of others in order to understand them and then decide whether to support them. or less. Conflict also leads to a deeper understanding of relationships, increases their intensity and consequently generates ever greater emotional involvement. Moreover, it can often increase productivity if it manages to give light to new ideas, if new agreements and mediated solutions arise from the conflict.

For all these reasons, not only should the conflict not be avoided but rather it should be taken as a possibility of exchange, of confrontation, of growth while clearly sensing all its painful presence. Conflict should therefore be lived considering its most constructive aspects: (strengthening of relationships, growth of self-esteem, improvement of productivity, increase of stimuli, greater trust and openness in

relationships) and at the same time "endured" in its heaviest aspects by manage (difficulty concentrating but also relaxation, increased irritability rate, problems in having a correct opinion of oneself and the surrounding reality up to extreme situations in which the individual who cannot cope with the conflict implements increasingly complex defense mechanisms up to avoidance and escape).

Conflict must therefore be seen as an opportunity for personal growth, as it contains our frailties and weaknesses that clash with those of the other. From the conflictual modalities that we put in place with the people with whom we enter into a relationship, we can in fact understand, by observing ourselves carefully, what our shadow areas are, and ask ourselves questions about the origin of anger and therefore of pain, that the relationship with the other he has discovered in us.

2. The labor conflict

Whenever you find yourself in group situations, you are exposed to conflict and you cannot try to avoid or ignore it, the only possible solution is to face it and maybe try to resolve it.

But in addition to this general relational condition, there are many other types of more specific conditions that determine its existence and feed it, making it unsustainable for the people involved.

R. J. Edelman, has long examined conflict situations in the workplace and argues that the most recurrent factors of conflict can be summarized as follows. (R. J. Edelmann 1996).

- Factors related to the nature of the job itself,
- Factors dependent on their role in the organization,
- Career-related factors,
- Factors related to relationships with superiors, colleagues, customers.

Conflict within a work group occurs when people, who depend on each other due to the nature of their work, bring different points of view, interests or different or even conflicting goals into the working reality. A good leader knows that conflict is a natural and potentially productive component within group relationships and interpersonal relationships. Indeed, conflict stimulates thought, causes various points of view regarding a situation to be considered, and stimulates various group members to better understand the key factors regarding the decision to be made. All this can happen in situations where the conflict is managed well through a conscious and constructive approach.

The key aspect is not to choose whether or not to stimulate the conflict, but how to manage it in order to make it productive for the goal that teamwork sets itself.

Depending on how the conflict is handled within the group it can be either constructive or destructive. Effective leadership facilitates communication dynamics which in turn stimulate constructiveness. Let us now look into these two sides of the conflict within working groups.

We speak of destructive conflict when this interferes with the effectiveness of the work done and with a positive working climate for the participants of the group. usually, this type of conflict is characterized by an excessively competitive way of communicating in which each member of the group tries to influence others with the sole purpose of being right about their ideas, their solutions and their points of view on the matter. This creates a type of win-lose relationship in which there are those who lose and there are those who win. The individual members of the group are convinced of the fact that only one of them (or a part of them) have the possibility of "winning" and therefore of affirming themselves over the others, leading them to accept their thinking.

One result to which these dynamics usually lead is the rapid deterioration of the corporate climate and consequently of interpersonal relationships. A context is therefore created in which most of the members of the group put themselves in a defensive position by limiting themselves to the expression of their ideas in order to run the risk of being aggressively evaluated (or judged with sarcasm) by others. Within this type of situation, we frequently witness personal attacks that inevitably end up well beyond the content of the topic in question.

This context emerges from a communication modality that leads people to get defensive and distracts them from the common goals that should be the core of the work group. We are therefore witnessing a communication characterized by: evaluating; judging; the superiority of one over the other; a way of thinking and considering things only from a perspective using an attitude of certainty and rigidity. This way of communicating undermines both interpersonal relationships and productivity, in the effectiveness and efficiency of teamwork.

Constructive conflict in turn occurs when members of a working group have accepted the fact that disagreement is a natural aspect of group dynamics, and that it can indeed be a factor that can facilitate the achievement of their goals. common.

This type of attitude is characterized by a communication modality based on cooperation: the ideas and opinions of others are taken into consideration with attention, interest and positivity. Communication is consequently used in order to highlight the common objectives of the group members and the factors that unite them. It is a communication method that encourages a win-win orientation in which everyone can feel like a winner and this leads people to be able to freely

express and motivate their points of view by focusing on the content of the themes rather than on character or personal aspects.

In order to further stimulate constructive conflict, communication should clearly be geared towards highlighting the interest of group members in listening to each other's ideas and points of view, willingness to change their perspective on a topic, and respect for the integrity of other group members and the views they represent. It is in a context of this type that people are able to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and actively and constructively participate in group activities.

For all these reasons, constructive conflict is a fundamental factor for the effectiveness of teamwork. Indeed, it allows group members to improve their understanding of the issues involved, enabling the group to develop a wider range of ideas and solutions.

Being able to create this type of context is not always easy because it is first of all necessary to go beyond the sources of individual pride and self-centeredness that are always present in these situations, and actively seek to understand the importance of the contribution of each individual person by stimulating their active participation in the activities of the group, driven by the awareness that only this type of dynamic will allow the group itself to reach the goal it had initially set itself in a fluid way.

Below it is possible to observe a summary table of the ways in which the two different types of conflict manifest themselves, the attitudes connected to each type of conflict, and finally the consequences of the different modes of conflict both from an organizational and personal point of view.

	Destructive conflict	Constructive conflict
Manifestation of the conflict	Not visible and hatched for a long time, so the conflict, being indefinite, is not manageable.	Visible and immediately identifiable, therefore being able to observe and "touch" it becomes manageable and resolvable.
Attitude of individuals	Hostile, therefore the parties: 1-they carry out a vague	Collaborative, therefore the parties: 1-they know the

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involved in the conflict Hostile, therefore the parties:	communication, they exchange information in an unclear way. 2-They carry out a lying and dishonest behavior within which there are factors such as slander and sabotage.	importance of dialogue and listening. 2-They implement clear and transparent behaviors, aimed at trust and respect.
Consequences of people's behavior	The parties remain fixed on their position, prey to emotion made unmanageable by personal involvement. In these conditions it is impossible to reach an agreement.	The parties manage to arrive at a joint solution having understood the reasons for the conflict.
Effects on the organization	Negatives: 1-Inside the workplace, confusion, insecurity and discontent reign. 2-Misunderstandings are created more and more often. 3-Economic losses occur and yield drops as does productivity. 4-The organizational climate becomes very bad.	Positive: 1-People are serious. 2-Company values and objectives are shared and accepted. 3-Increase the yield and with it the productivity. 4-The business climate is excellent. .

3. Emotional intelligence as a "weapon" for conflict resolution

In the second axiom of communication, Watzlawick (1971) states that every type of communication contains within it an aspect of content and an aspect of

relationship, where the second defines the first (to deepen the subject, we point out the article "The principles of communication: a panoramic view "by the same authors). Consequently every time we express a content, it also defines the relationship between the people who are communicating.

To convey the relationship is the non-verbal channel, therefore it would be appropriate to offer a reflection on the importance of paying attention to the communicative feedback that our interlocutors provide us, since the relational nature contained in the message classifies the content and could cause the interlocutor's reaction . It is precisely through the relational aspect contained in the communication that the perception we have towards our own of the person in front of us is transmitted.

To make relationships simpler and better by encouraging the emergence of a positive climate, based on mutual understanding, we can appeal to emotional intelligence. This is defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to monitor and understand one's own feelings and sensations and those of others, differentiating the various types of emotions in order to be able to act better and be able to achieve a common goal.

The use of emotional intelligence is based on the ability to understand the feelings and emotions of the people around us, managing to have a full understanding of their state of mind. This allows us to adopt appropriate behaviors in favor of individual or common goals.

Emotional intelligence consists of the following abilities: knowing emotions (what they are, how they differ from each other, how and why they arise and how they change), recognizing their own and those of others, knowing how to manage emotions and use them to face and solve a problem.

Daniel Goleman (1995) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) listed the five fundamental characteristics of emotional intelligence:

• ›Self-awareness: ability to produce results by recognizing one's emotions.

• ›Self-control: ability to use one's feelings for an end.

• ›Motivation: ability to discover the true and profound reason that drives action.

• ›Empathy: ability to feel others by entering into a flow of contact.

• ›Social skills: ability to be together with others trying to understand the movements that happen between people.

As soon as a conflict arises, emotional intelligence tries to understand whether the way to manage it is based on the problem or on emotions. In the first case, a

type of solution is sought that can resolve the matter in the best possible way; in the second case, since it is not possible to act directly on the conflict, one works on the negative emotions involved. It is of great importance to have the time available to understand negative emotions, and try to use different strategies and observe the effects of their use, without risking making hasty decisions, paying attention to the behavior and non-verbal communication of the other and, finally , don't talk more than you should.

In the workplace, emotional intelligence allows you to positively evaluate and appreciate differences, rather than considering them as a negative factor, and makes sure to strengthen work teams, thereby increasing profits. The concept of feedback is therefore fundamental, which allows for an exchange of information between workers.

Levinson (1992) suggests the best way to behave when feedback is exchanged in the company without annoying the interlocutor: to be as specific as possible: to communicate precisely what was done right or what was wrong, without being evasive, saying things as well as they are, always bearing in mind that a moderate tone is always highly appreciated; offer a solution: after making a criticism or giving advice, the most appropriate thing is to suggest a possibly constructive solution, otherwise you risk demoralizing and demotivating the other; be present: it is advisable to talk face to face with each other and in private. Although written communication can in theory "lighten" the task of the critic, this modality makes communication very impersonal, making it impossible at times for the critic to have a confrontation. Being empathic and sensitive: it is important to listen to the other, to identify with, to be a little bit in her shoes, avoiding being aggressive and offensive.

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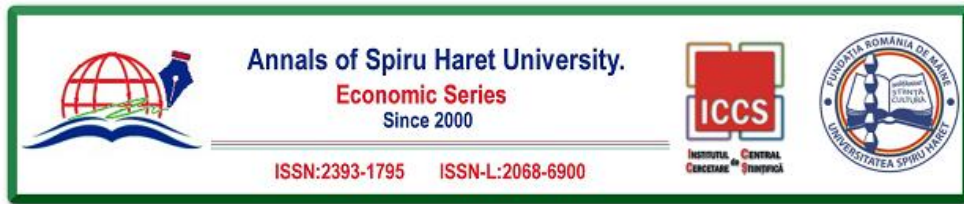
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