

# Conflict Resolution

Deryl G. Hunt

# Objectives

- To learn how to identify emerging conflicts
- To examine what causes conflict in the workplace
- To learn an alternative approach to resolving conflict
- To learn how to proactively avoid destructive conflict

# The Ellison Model

- The Ellison Executive Mentoring Inclusive Community Building Model (The Ellison Model) was developed by Deryl G. Hunt in the mid-1990's as an attempt to address the need for diversity training in the midst of tumultuous race relations in South Florida.
- This model incorporates a multi-tiered approach to mentoring. Executive mentors supervise and train professional mentors, who do the same for college/university protégés.
- College students share their insights by subsequently training pre-college students. This mentoring process becomes a learning circle (Collay, 1998) in which ideas are shared all around so that everyone becomes a dispenser and receptor of knowledge
- The Model is named in honor of a colleague of Hunt's

# The Role of Mentoring in Fostering Inclusion

- Mentoring is championed in the Ellison Model because of its potential for bridging social divides.
- Whether it is formal or informal, mentoring is useful in connecting people to support mechanisms that may enable them to progress personally and/or professionally.
- Often mentoring relationships are informal in nature as is the case of mentoring relationships between a teacher and a student or a supervisor and subordinate (Doherty, 1999; Graham et al., 1999; Smith, 1999; Welch, 1993).

# Informational Resources

- Regardless of the arena, mentoring in all of its contexts is used to guide individuals toward a desired path.
- Mentors not only serve as individuals with informational resources, insight and experience, but they also provide the much needed support and coaching that their protégés need to succeed in their school, work, and/or social environment ( DeBolt, 1992; Graham, 1999).

# Mutually Benefit

- Essentially, mentors and their protégés engage in a type of networking which can be mutually beneficial. In some instances, the protégés benefit from learning about opportunities for bettering themselves whether professionally or educationally.
- Ultimately, mentors and protégés can engage in learning circles that promote professional and educational endeavors towards the end of building progressive communities

# Internalize Conflict Resolution Processes

- Mentors learn from trainers how to instruct their protégés in the core values and in gaining technical skills associated with projects.
- The crux of The Model's training for mentors is that they must internalize conflict resolution processes and apply them to interactions with others.

# Challenges to Community Building

- Hunt's model posits that the various outward manifestations of disputes are but symptoms of internal conflicts that individuals experience.
- According to the conflict resolution approach espoused by The Ellison Model, unless the work of conflict management and peace building starts within individuals involved in various disagreements, there can be no true outward resolution among warring parties ( Rice, 2001; Hunt et al. 1997a-b; Hunt et al. 1998a-b).
- Most resolutions would, at most, represent 'band-aid' solutions to deep-seated problems.



# ICB CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Draws from
  - Psychological theory
    - Sees perceptions as important (so as man thinks, so is he)
  - Social theory
    - As individuals with conflict interact with others, conflict often escalates
  - Theology theory
    - Focuses on unity as a meta value instead of division or separation
- Ultimately, the central question posed to audiences is characterized in the following manner: why does division [or conflict] exist in societies?

# Explaining Division

- In addition to competition for scarce resources, causes for division in societies range from ethnic or national pride, suspicion of others' heritage, intolerance for diversity, lack of mutual understanding of differences

# EM Draws on Various Theories

- The Ellison Model draws on various theories regarding why ethnic tension, racial hatred and personal biases persist and cause conflict in patterns of human organization.
- Some theological perspectives focus on unity as a meta (higher) value instead of division or separation among humans.
- While some thinking on human interaction draw upon biological theories as a point of departure, the biological perspectives on human evolution and interaction are treated with care and often signal some dangers of the kind of reductionism which focuses on human genetic makeup as a guidepost for measuring relationships and conflict.
- Psychological and social theories such as the symbolic interactionist and conflict perspectives are also useful.

# Social Interaction Theories

- Social interaction theories such as the conflict perspective and symbolic interactionist approaches relate to social identities, values, and relationship formation and conflict.
- The conflict perspective, first formulated by Karl Marx (Lemert, 1999; Giddens, 1971), sees conflict as the result of the oppression of the masses by the rich, who are invariably in competition of scarce resources.
- Rationale choice theories, derived from economics, relate to personal or self interest.
- In essence, people's actions are measured toward calculated gain. They have "ends," "goals" or "preferences" (Galtung, 2000, p. 51; Ritzer, 1996, p. 263), which if not satisfied can lead to conflict

# Scarce Resources

- **The problem arises when people's resources are scarce, and they must engage in judgments concerning which of their most valued goals must be sacrificed in order to achieve their primary goals (Ritzer 1996, p. 264).**
- **Galtung (2002) proposes, “any actor/party with unrealized goals feels frustrated and more so the more basic the goal, like basic needs and basic interests; frustration may lead to aggression, turning inward as attitudes of hatred, or outward as behavior of verbal or physical violence” (¶ 17).**
- **If people have goals or private interests, which while sometimes unimportant or inconsequential to others, they may define them as crucial (Galtung, 2000).**

# Defining Situations as Real

- “If [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences”
- This is a symbolic interactionist concept, which influences greatly psycho-social analyses of human interaction and behavior (Berger and Luckman, 1966).
- Conflict arises as a result of one’s perception of reality as it differs from another. Such perspectives, invariably influence conflict analyses from a cultural perspective.
- Since the thrust of various ICB training sessions deal with the need for understanding and appreciating culturally different people, special consideration will be given here to the role of culture in social interaction, and ultimately, individual conflict resolution processes.

# The First Cause

- Theological theory is used to answer the “why” of conflict--the ontological questions of *first cause*.
- First cause in ICB conflict analysis refers to the initial processes, which led to a state of division in human existence.
- Hunt draws from philosophical ideas proposed by a noted philosopher, theologian, and conflict resolution expert, William R. Jones.
- Jones contends that the process of division is clearly seen in the division between the organ (man) and the organism (the Creator) (Hunt 2001, personal communication).
- The premise is that conflict in the world comes from humans’ initial separation from their Creator.
- Subsequent to this act of separation, all conflict, whether emotional or physical in manifestation, reflect this division.

# The Need for Conflict Resolution Skills Within Organizations

- Conflict resolution is a valuable skill to possess because you invariably encounter problems dealing with others
- Many people are able to manage conflict in a healthy, productive way, but some find it hard because they are prone to getting defensive or angry.



# Managing Conflict the ICB Way

- **The manner in which conflict is managed determines whether your project reaches a successful conclusion.**
- **To have a successful project, each person in the group must adhere to the caring, sharing and loving principles expounded in The Ellison Model toward seeing conflict resolved.**

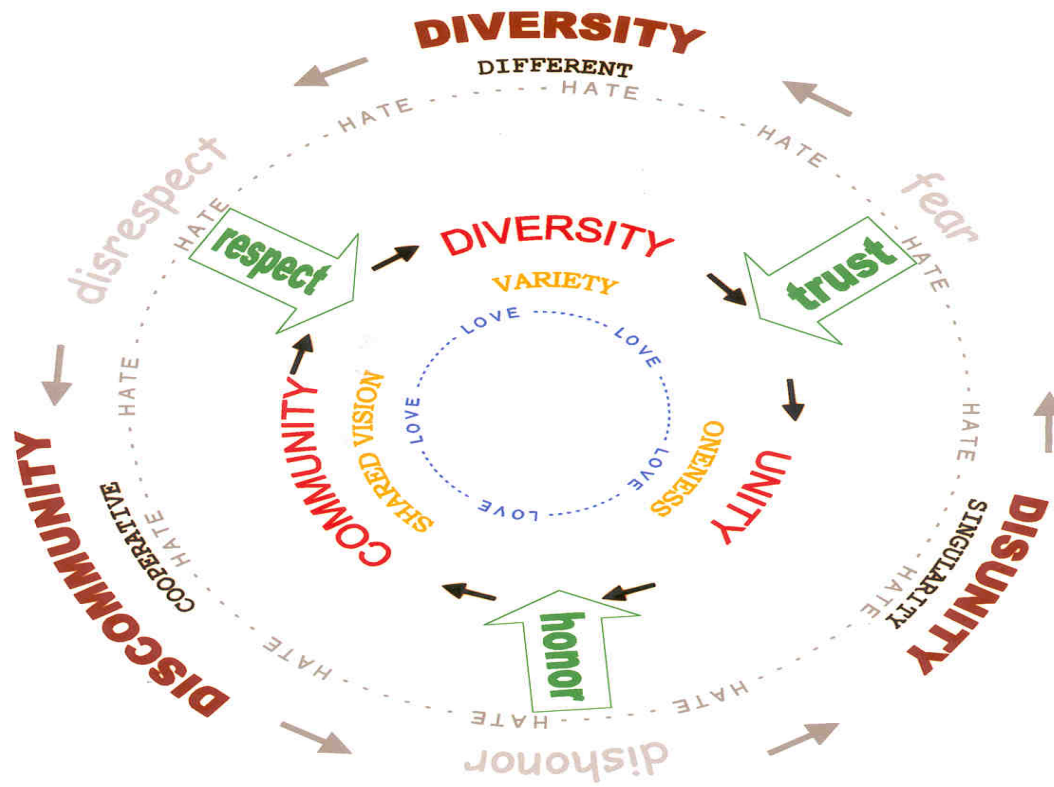
# Managing Conflict Via ICB Values

- Honesty, trustworthy, friendly and inclusive in outlook are Ellison Model values.
- Devotees do not force their will on others nor do they believe in racial prejudice and unfair treatment of others.
- They adheres to The Ellison Model's caring, sharing and loving principles.

# Diversity to Unity to Community

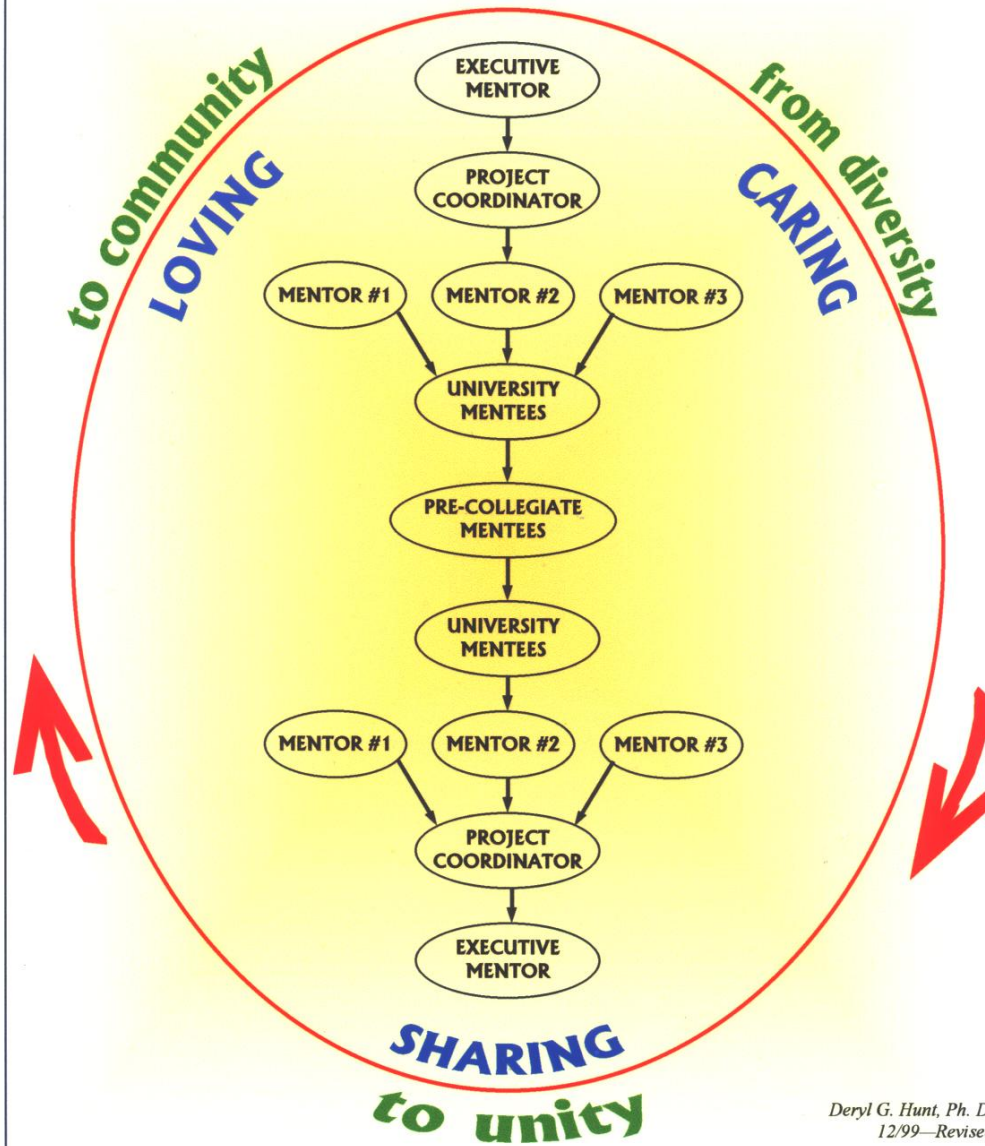
## BUILDING THE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

*The Discommunity, Definitions, Motivations and Values of Each*



# THE ELLISON MODEL

Sharing Personal & Professional Knowledge



Deryl G. Hunt, Ph. D.  
12/99—Revised

**Giving Feedback ~ Respecting Right Ways ~ Honoring the Honorable**

# Conflict: A Unitary Process

- Conflict resolution is a unitary process.  
The individual must
  - recognize his or her position relative to the dispute;
  - with a clear vision of what took place, acknowledge his/her role in the dispute.
- The conscience is able to direct the individual, beyond the emotions, towards seeing their role in the conflict.

# Conflict Resolution: A Unitary Process

- Conflict resolution being a unitary process is essential to understanding the working of conscience.
- The conscience would seek to lead a person in the right direction, but there is a warring faction where the rebellious person would seek to lead the person into the wrong direction. If the person would but hear what is right or wrong, the person could be led to rightness.
- In terms of internal conflict, the conflict is between the conscience and the false conscience.
- This subject is timely because some people have difficulty understanding that the conflict is within them. However, when they start understanding that it is a war between that which is good and bad, and that there are external forces that influence that inward working of conscience, they will gain clearer understanding of the unitary conflict process.

# The Role of Conscience in Conflict Resolution

- Ray C. Stedman writes:
- Conscience is that internal voice that sits in judgment over our will. **There is a very common myth abroad that says that conscience is the means by which we tell what is right and what is wrong. But conscience is never that. It is *training* that tells us what is right or wrong.** But when we know what is right or wrong, it is our conscience that insists that we do what we think is right and avoid what we think is wrong. That distinction is very important and needs to be made clear.
- Conscience can be very mistaken; it is not a safe guide by itself. It accuses us when we violate whatever moral standard we may have, but that moral standard may be quite wrong when viewed in the light of God's revelation. But conscience also gives approval whenever we fulfill whatever standard we have, though that standard is right or wrong. And conscience, we have all discovered, acts both before and after the fact -- it can either prod or punish

# Conscience in Conflict Resolution

## What is Conscience?

- Hunt describes the conscience as a light given to each person that will lead the individual in the direction of distinguishing between what's right and wrong.
- The conscience level is the base level of Godly morality within each individual. It is that still small voice that speaks to us before we make morality decisions and convicts us when those decisions are not in keeping with what we have been taught.
- People should not mistake the light of consciences as the Spirit of Christ. It is simply a road map to the Spirit. But from birth, people are being shaped into the society's ways and people end up being blinded from the pure conscience. In other words socialization trains the individual on how to read the map.
- Conflict is a battle between the conscience and the emotion



# Confusing Conflict with Behavior

- Conflict is a disequilibria inner state between the conscience and the emotions.
  - These two are at war with the emotions bent on selfish gratification—one or the other will win.
  - The conscience is a moral agent interested in the rightness or wrongness of a matter.
- The outward response is the behavior; it is often misdiagnosed as the conflict.
  - Type III error is the usual results—solving the wrong problem, i.e. treating the outward behavior but leaving the inward war unresolved.

Party B hurt Party A's feelings.

Party A is looking for a fight.

But Party B is not willing to fight.



Party A

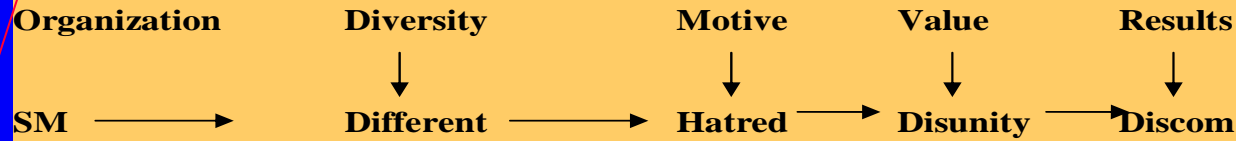
Party B

Internal Conflict

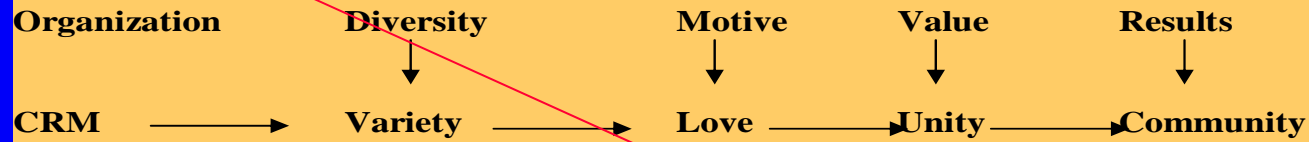
No Internal Conflict

## Community/Discommunity Building

### Wrong Foundation



### Right Foundation

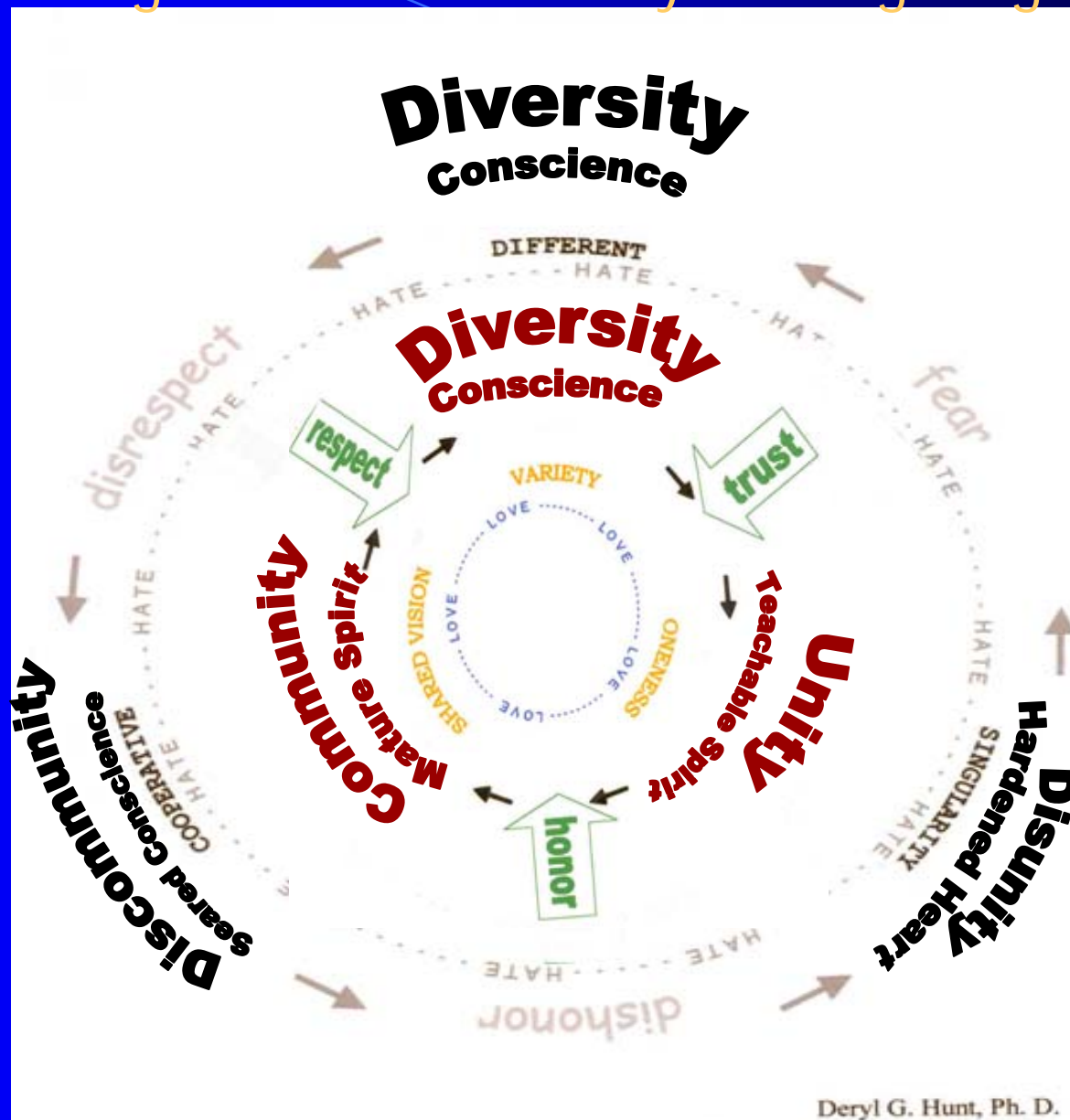


SM = Segregationist Movement  
CRM = Civil Rights Movement

The top of above illustration depicts an individual's movement or decision based on a wrong foundation. If motives are not right, the individual's movement would be doomed to failure.

This can be used to show an attempt to build community built out of the right motive—respect for others, but not all in the movement embraced this motive.

# The Impact of Conscience in Community Building: Using the ICB Community Building Diagram



# Responses to Conflict

- Shifting Blame (never acknowledging fault)
  - Conflict is not resolved when one party blames the other for his or her state because it gives another control over one's emotional being.
- Saving Face (glossing over problem)
  - Conflict is not resolved because the person knows that he or she is at fault but refuses to acknowledge as much.
  - The problem will surface again because the conflict is not dealt with.
- Acknowledging Fault (being true to self)
  - Conflict is resolved because the person sees the problem for what it is and seeks resolution.

# The Use of Mediation

- Mediation may be helpful, but the focus of mediation is to get the individual to understand his or her role in the dispute.
- Conventional mediation, however, is not always able to resolve conflict because mediators are negotiators.
  - The art of compromise is highly prized in their work because conflict is viewed as a two party dispute.
  - Each party is asked to give up a little to bring about resolution.

# Coming to Resolution

- However, resolution comes when *each party* understands that conflict is *an individual act*.
- Both parties to the conflict might reach resolution at the same time or at separate times; consequently, methods utilized to reach resolution vary.
- Each person involved in a conflict must take personal responsibility for his/her own resolution.

# Steps in Managing Conflict

- Diagnose the Conflict
- Analyze the Conflict
- Provide Prescription to the Conflict
- Monitor the Results
- Revise Prescription

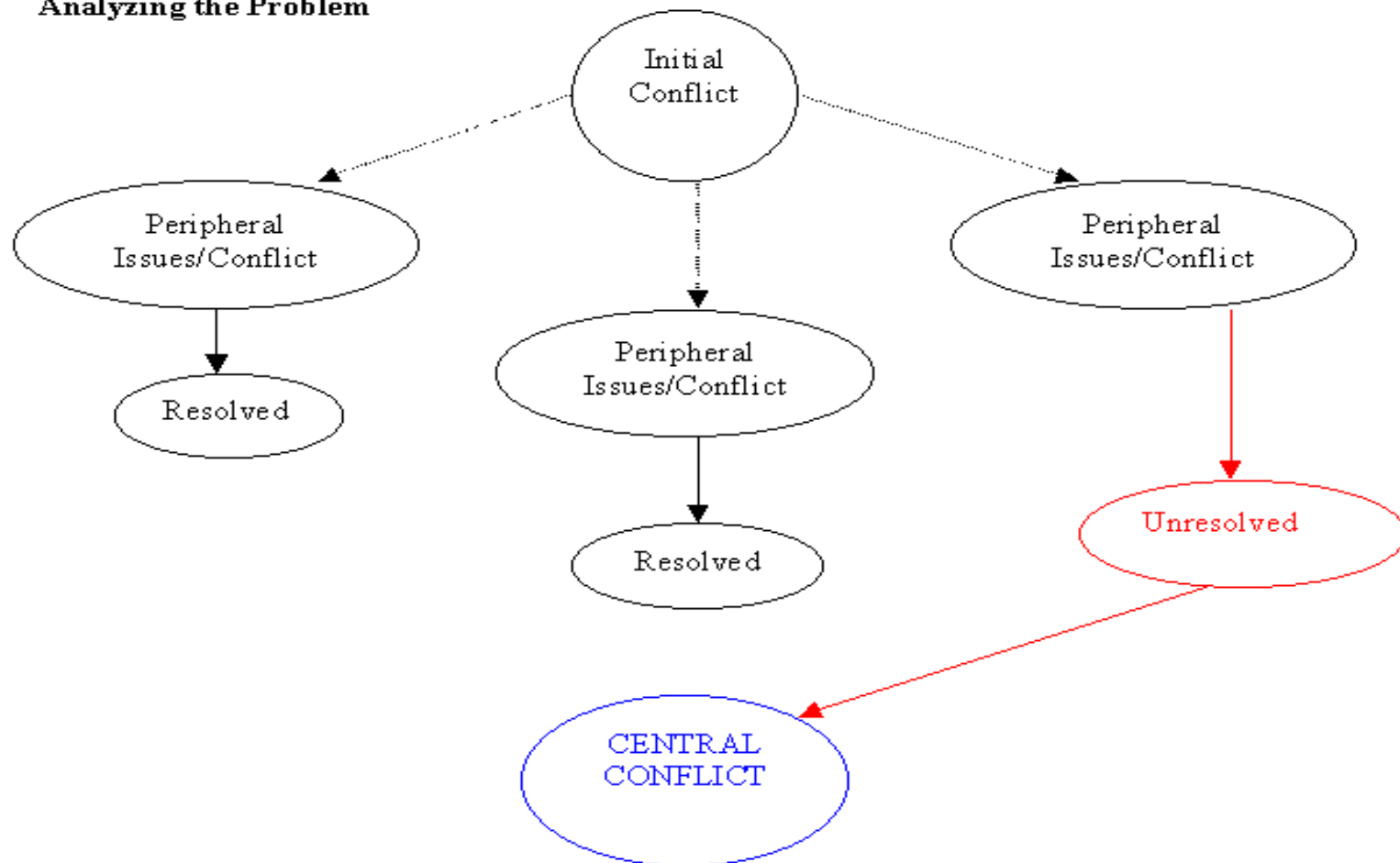


# Analyzing the Conflict

- Consider the nature of the conflict, and its possible effects on others (Is it contagious?).
- Determine what other problems associated with the conflict are; out of a single conflict, other conflicts may arise.
- Analysis may reveal certain limitations or restrictions this conflict might impose on an individual.
- In this approach, the prevailing *unresolved conflict* emerges as the *central problem or central conflict*.

# Analyzing the Conflict

## Analyzing the Problem



# Analyzing the Conflict Relationship Vectors

