

Lens model of conflict essay



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According to our textbook, there are two fundamental aspects that are important in all conflicts:

(1) communication behaviors and (2) the perceptions of those behaviors.

Think of the study of conflict as a view through a lens, like the lens of a camera, or through prescription glasses. The lens model of conflict specifies that each person has a view of (1) oneself, (2) the other person, and (3) the relationship. These perceptual pieces form the fundamental views of all conflicts, and combined together they form the mosaic of a particular conflict (Wilmot & Hocker 2010). There are also minimal features of all conflicts.

They are:

(1) the communicative acts or behaviors of each person, (2) the meanings or attributions attached to those acts by each person, which are each person's view of self and each person's views of the other, and (3) the meanings or attributions the two people ascribe to their relationship, which include past events, current events, and future projections. Each person also has a lens that gives that person a particular perspective, just as people use different types of glasses to see.

There are multiple views of conflict, yet each looks real to the one seeing it (Wilmot & Hocker 2010). In a conflict, each person will have their own view of the situation at hand and react differently. As the old saying says, there are two sides to every story. For example, let's say you have a couple that gets into an argument or should I say, a conflict, about their child spilling juice on the living room carpet. The mother may view it as being a simple

mistake and can easily be cleaned, whereas the father may make a big deal out of it. Obviously, both perspectives are different based on their reactions.

The lens model illustrates that people's views of self, other, and relationship are always, to some degree, distorted. We all have filters that influence our experiences. Clearly, we use a different lens for viewing ourselves than we do for viewing others. When we are exposed to conflict, we tend to attribute the negative effects to the other rather than to ourselves (Wilmot & Hocker 2010).