

Joyce L. Hocker | Keith Berry | William W. Wilmot

Interpersonal Conflict

Eleventh Edition

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INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT, ELEVENTH EDITION

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To our students, who continue to inform, challenge, and enrich our thinking about conflict resolution. We write for you. You inspire us. May the book inspire you to live with more hope than cynicism as you face the conflict that complicates our lives.

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Preface

The eleventh edition of *Interpersonal Conflict* keeps with the book's tradition of examining the central issues that inform conflict and, in turn, make our personal and professional lives challenging and fascinating. We continue to provide recent research and a wide array of cases and applications, which invite readers to reflect on, and better understand, conflict as it pertains to the unique vantage point of students' lived experience. This new edition also includes new cases and applications and reflects recent cultural changes that shape the ways people move through conflict.

We have revised all of the chapters with a sharp eye to clarity, new research, and writing. In some chapters, we have reorganized or rewritten sections to improve on their relevance to today's readers. In addition, we have chosen to eliminate the chapter Third-Party Intervention in favor of including a new chapter on the ubiquitous societal problem of bullying. Also, we have included a new chapter on reconciliation and forgiveness. The chapter on reconciliation and forgiveness includes some material from the last edition of the text on the ways in which third parties may be helpful in reconciling partners and groups. We made this choice partly because students who wish to pursue third-party skills need to do so with professional credentialing.

Keith Berry, University of South Florida, is the new co-author of the book. Keith's research and teaching take a cultural approach to the study of relational communication. Methodologically speaking, he relies heavily on ethnography, autoethnography, and phenomenology. His work primarily focuses on the ways in which people's identities inform, and are informed by, communication. Common to his teaching and research are questions about the role and impact of conflict in relating. Keith is especially interested in exploring underrepresented and vulnerable populations, and, more generally, issues of social justice. Much of Keith's research over the last 11 years has examined the intersections of bullying, communication, and conflict. This

includes his solo-authored and award-winning book *Bullied: Tales of Torment, Identity, and Youth* (Routledge). He has served as the Co-chair of the National Communication Association's (NCA) Anti-Bullying Task Force and Chair of NCA's Ethnography Division.

Joyce Hocker continues her role as reviewer, consultant, and adviser to the current edition. She is semi-retired as a communication consultant and clinical psychologist, still immersed in the practices and problems of conflict resolution. She consults with therapists and teaches life writing in the University of Montana lifelong learning program. *The Trail to Tincup: Love Stories at Life's End* (SheWritesPress) is her memoir of loss and resilience.

Chapter One, "The Nature of Conflict," retains the resilient definition of conflict that has gained acceptance and use for more than four decades. The definition serves as the chapter's main framework. The chapter still includes activities on intrapersonal conflict, which introduce students to self-reflection as a basic first step in this area of study. We also continue to emphasize the relevance of relationships to conflict. In addition, we have added discussions on the concept and practice of "mindfulness," which we return to throughout the rest of the book. Our engagement with mindfulness serves multiple purposes, including reminding students of the importance of gentleness and nonjudgement within conflict and learning about conflict. Also, the concept of "chosen families" is now included in the first chapter. We have also added the case "The Roommate Compromise," which highlights the ways communication climates (e.g., supportive and defensive) shape conflict. Overall, the chapter makes an important and ongoing case for the study of conflict from an interpersonal communication perspective.

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Chapter Two, "Perspectives on Conflict," keeps the popular section on worldviews that influence one's approach. The metaphors of conflict section retains its simplified approach, organizing metaphors around danger and opportunity, used in past editions. This chapter retains the recently added section that explores how narratives frame conflict, with an extensive case study that helps to illustrate the approach. New to this chapter is a definition of culture. We invite students to reflect on conflict in terms of culture, and cultural variations in practices and meanings, throughout the book. The newly added case "Is It a Game or Balance?" invites students to reflect on the

ways in which one's perspective shapes conflict.

Chapter Three, "Interests and Goals," retains the popular teaching tool of the TRIP acronym (Topic, Relationship, Identity, and Process goals), which assists students in analyzing layers of any conflict. We have added an extended example ("Sales Meeting Gone Awry") to the chapter to help students understand about conflict interests and goals.

Chapter Four, "Power," emphasizes the influence of power within interpersonal conflict. We have eliminated the sections on bullying and cyberbullying that previously appeared in this chapter. However, several of these sections are now included in the new chapter on bullying. New to this chapter is a timely discussion of the "Black Lives Matter" social movement and its relevance to power and conflict. Overall, the chapter retains its insistence that power constitutes the structure of conflict and must be analyzed in productive management approaches.

Chapter Five, "Conflict Styles," retains the popular Rahim styles assessment, thus, focusing on obliging, avoiding, integrating, and dominating practices and their impact on self and other. The chapter engages students with questions about the effectiveness of their own conflict styles. Also, we continue to underscore the harmful impact of verbal aggressiveness, verbal abuse, and violence within conflict. New to this chapter is a discussion of the concept of "micro-aggressions," subtle but harmful behaviors that influence communication and communicators. Also, we have moved the "Will You Engage or Avoid" application to a new location in the chapter that will best help students as they engage with conflict styles.

Chapter Six, "Emotions in Conflict," continues to present the primacy of emotion in conflict resolution. The chapter still includes the "feelings words" inventory, which invites students to consider the emotions that drive their conflict and conflict resolution. We have added more insights on the role of mindfulness in the study and practice of conflict. Similarly, the chapter now also includes a discussion of compassion and compassionate communication. We have moved the "The Matter of Lights" application to a better location in the chapter which, as with the change with Chapter Five, will help students in engaging with key concepts.

Chapter Seven, "Analyzing Conflicts," continues to provide students with a framework to examine conflict in their lives. We include several guides to assist in the process. Many instructors who have used past editions of the book found great success when using these guides to help structure the

final/major project they assign to students.

Chapter Eight, “Bullying,” is a new chapter in which we convey a thorough account of this all-too-common problem. Although we include a detailed section dedicated to workplace bullying, the chapter primarily focuses on youth/school bullying. We provide a definition of bullying and cyberbullying, and three main reasons that make studying bullying important. In addition, as mentioned above, the chapter uses Keith’s book *Bullied* to illustrate the central dimensions to bullying (bullying is communicative, emotional, relational, and transformative). Additionally, we introduce students to autoethnography, an innovative and systematic approach to research and writing that relies on researchers’ stories as evidence. This approach widens and reinforces our emphasis on the lived experience students bring to, and engage in, class. Overall, the chapter provides students with an extended case through which to apply and better understand the major concepts, theories, and practices discussed in the book.

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Chapter Nine, “Interpersonal Negotiation,” continues to include research on gender, culture, and negotiation. The chapter retains its aim to guide students toward integrative negotiation in most situations. Integrative negotiation uses all of the communication theory upon which most of the book relies. We continue to urge students to develop the skills and thinking practices of integrative approaches to conflict resolution. In the past, we tried to be fair to all the stylistic approaches conflict resolution. No more: We have cast our vote with integrative approaches.

Chapter Ten, “Reconciliation and Forgiveness,” written by Jay Brower, Western Connecticut State University at the invitation of the authors, is a compelling account of the ways in which reconciliation and forgiveness operate within conflict. We situate the chapter by using Pearce’s popular “Coordinated Management of Meaning” perspective. Also, the chapter explores distinctions between reconciliation and forgiveness; the importance of studying these processes; the role of macro, mezzo, and micro communication “strata;” steps toward reconciliation; and the role of dialogue (using Martin Buber’s germinal work) to illuminate forgiveness. As mentioned above, sections on third-party intervention from the past editions of the book (e.g., mediation) appear in the chapter, as we explain that often

third parties need to be employed when reconciliation is desired.

We hope you enjoy and benefit from this book. If you have any feedback, which we always respond to, or any comments of a personal nature in response to our book, you can reach us at:

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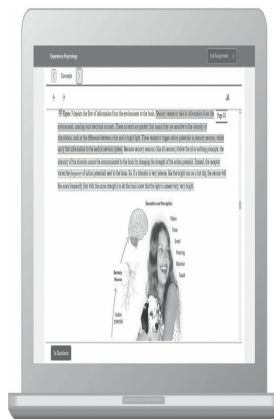
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