



Human Resources and Allied Professionals Program



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Resolving Workplace Disputes

UC Human Resources & Allied Professionals Program

February 7, 2006



“In it’s most basic sense, conflict is inevitable, the source of all growth and an absolute necessity if one is to be alive...Adults don’t seem to know how to enter it with integrity and respect and some degree of confidence and hope.”

Jean Baker-Miller

Toward a New Psychology for Women



Agenda

Workplace Conflicts

- Challenges and Opportunities
- Some Questions

Barriers to Effective Communication

- Culture
- Perceptions
- Expectations
- Realities



Agenda (continued)

The Aikido Strategy for Managing Conflict

- The Underlying Theory
- The Steps
- The Techniques
- Your Reflections



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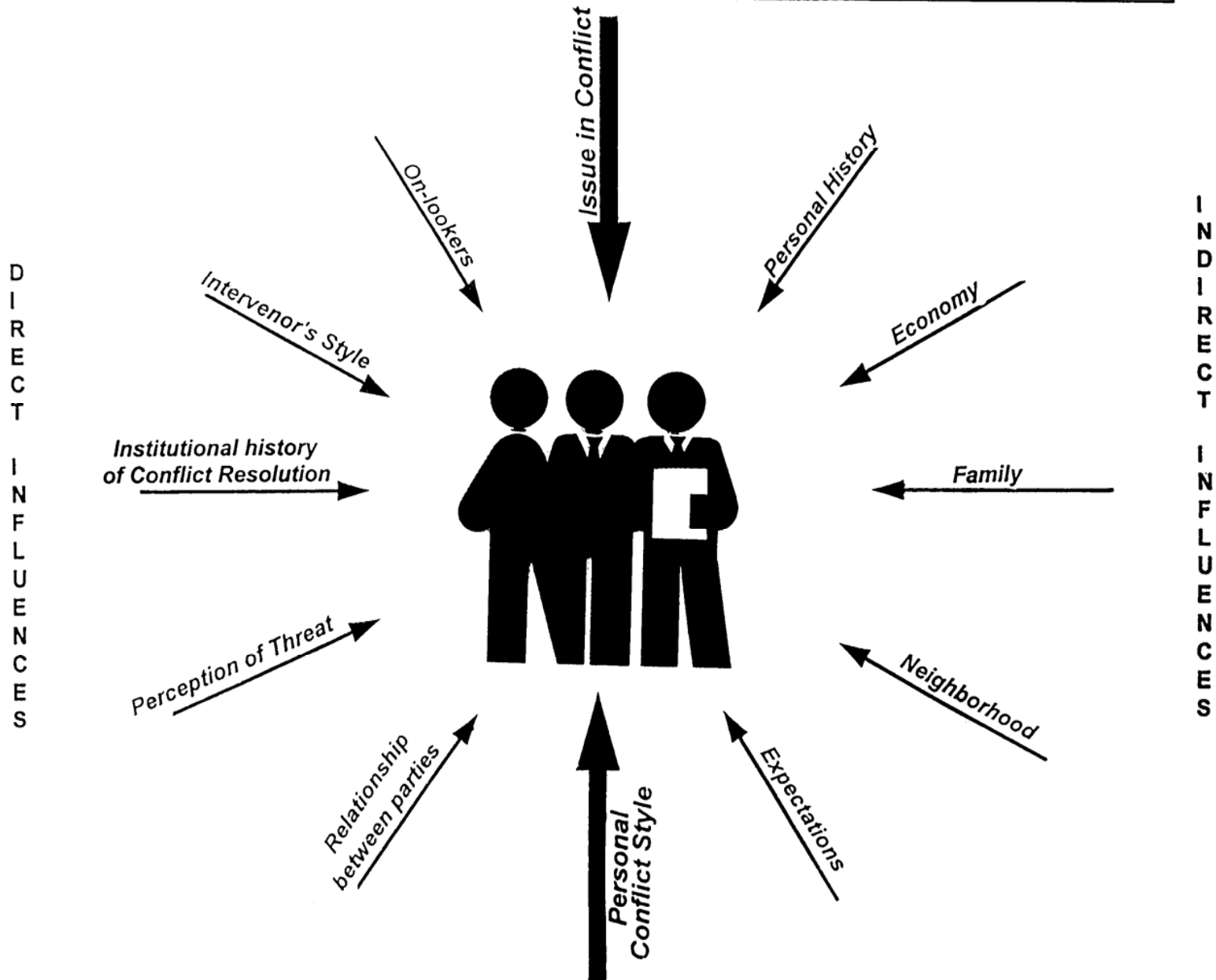
Workplace Conflicts

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SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING CONFLICT RESOLUTION





**What types of
conflicts have you
been involved with?**

What have you seen?

Heard?

Done?



How have they affected you?

- Your work
- Your relationships



**What is the effect of
conflict on the workplace?**



**What are the hidden costs
of conflicts?**



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Barriers to Resolving Conflict

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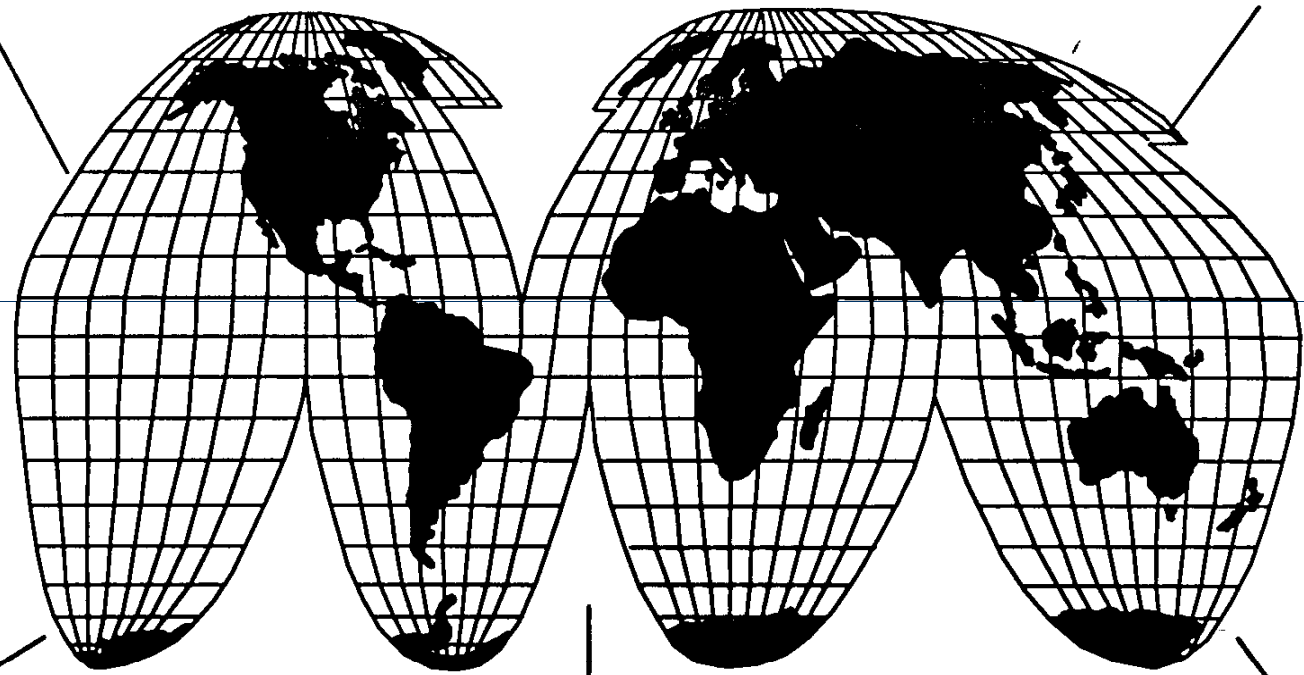
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CULTURAL ISSUES AFFECTING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**Incorrect Assumptions
About Diverse Cultures**

**Expectations That
Others Will Conform**



**Language
Issues**

Values In Conflict

**Biases Against
The Unfamiliar**



Our View of the World

Available Information

1. Our Observations

We notice different things.

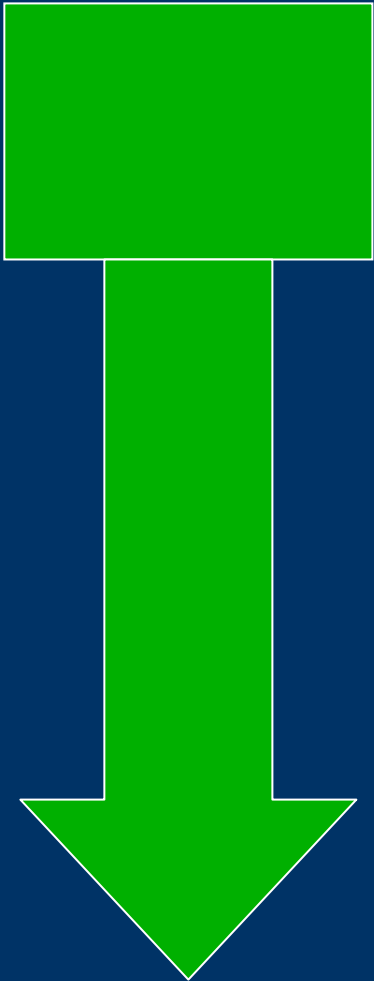
2. Our Interpretations

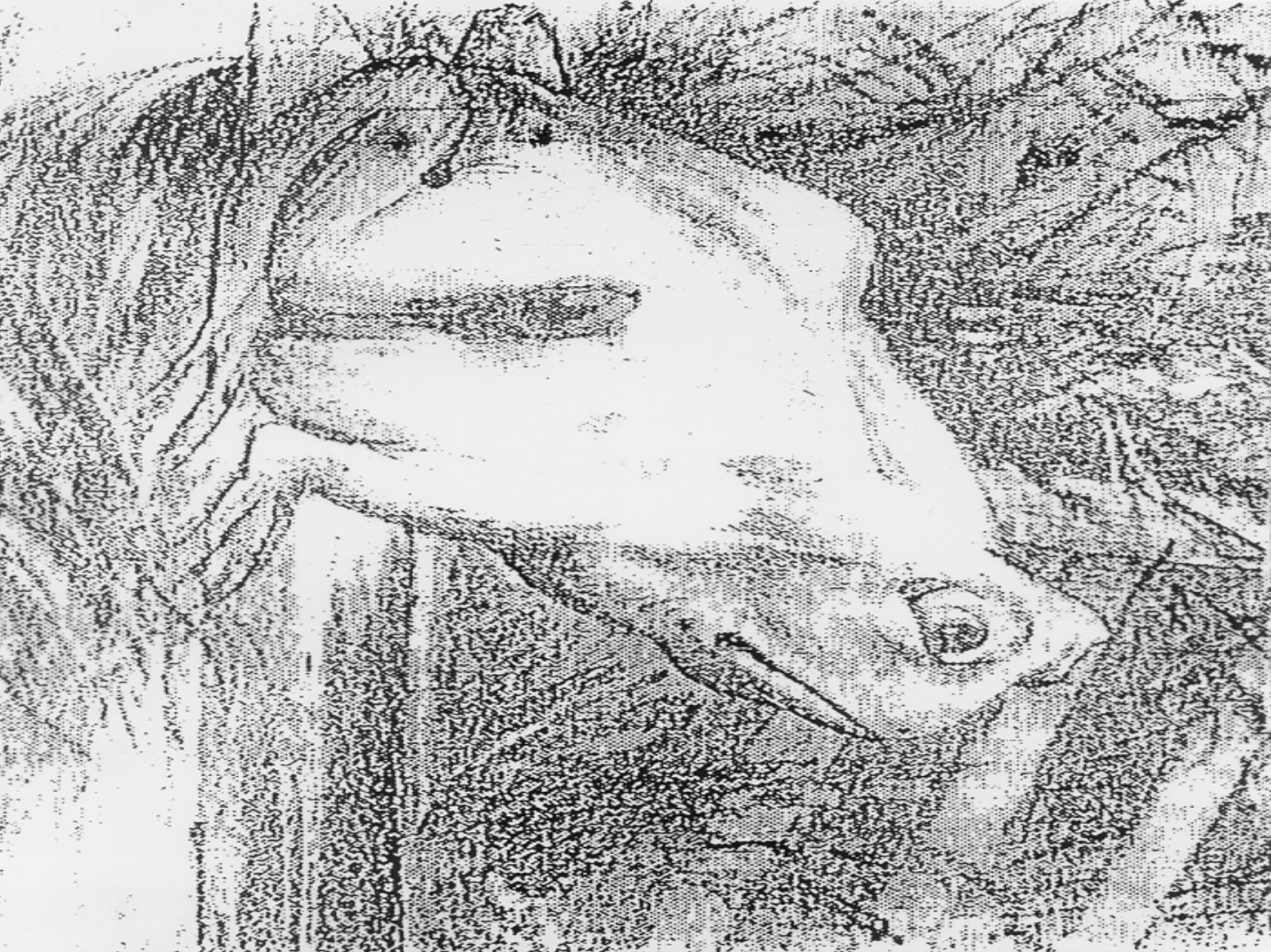
Based on past experiences

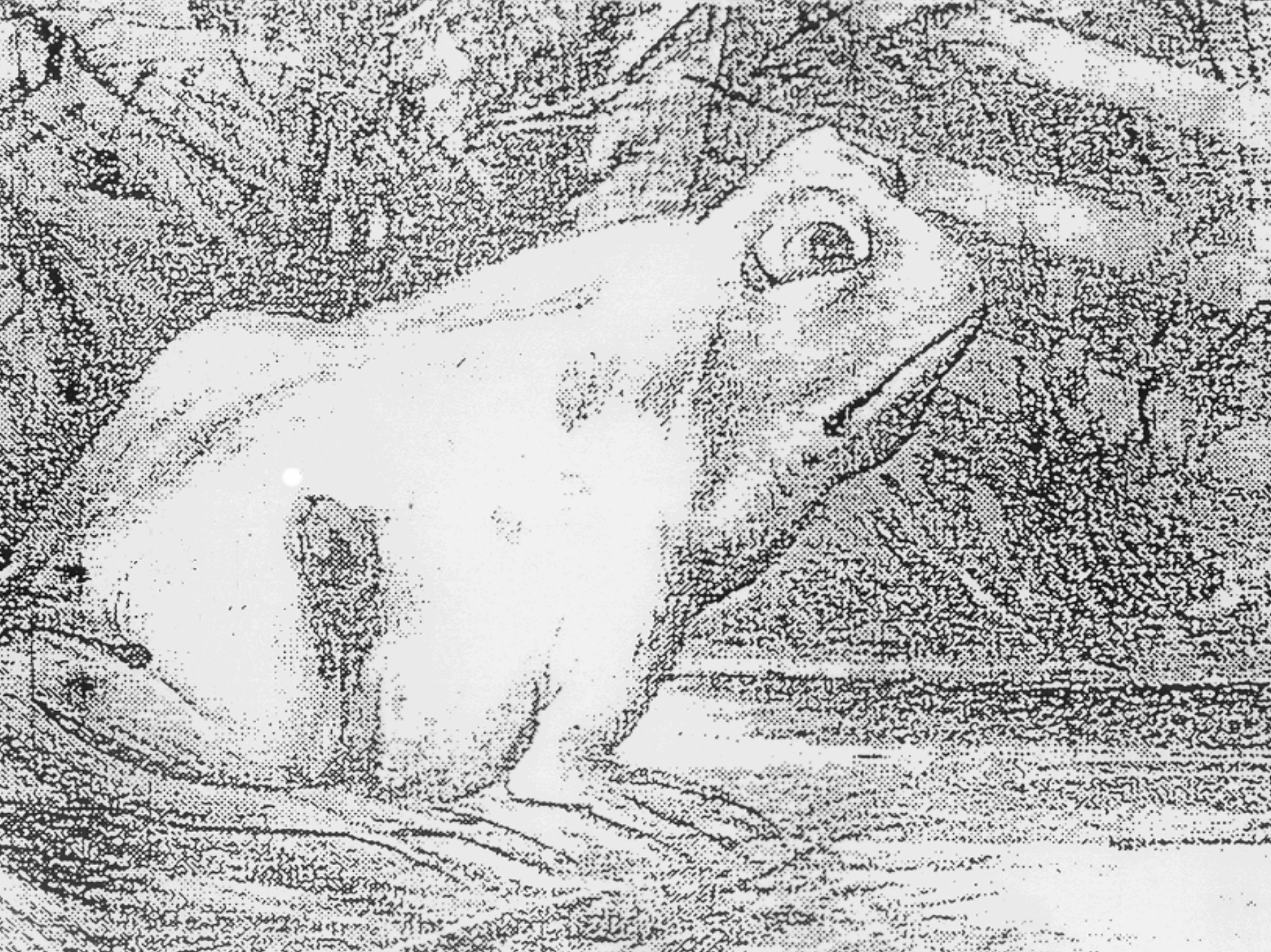
We apply different implicit rules.

3. Our Conclusions

Serve our own interests.









THE BASIC REALITIES OF COMMUNICATION

REALITY I. Many times others interpret something a person says or does or fails to say or do as a message when the person did not consciously intend it to be one.

REALITY II. Meanings are in people not in words.

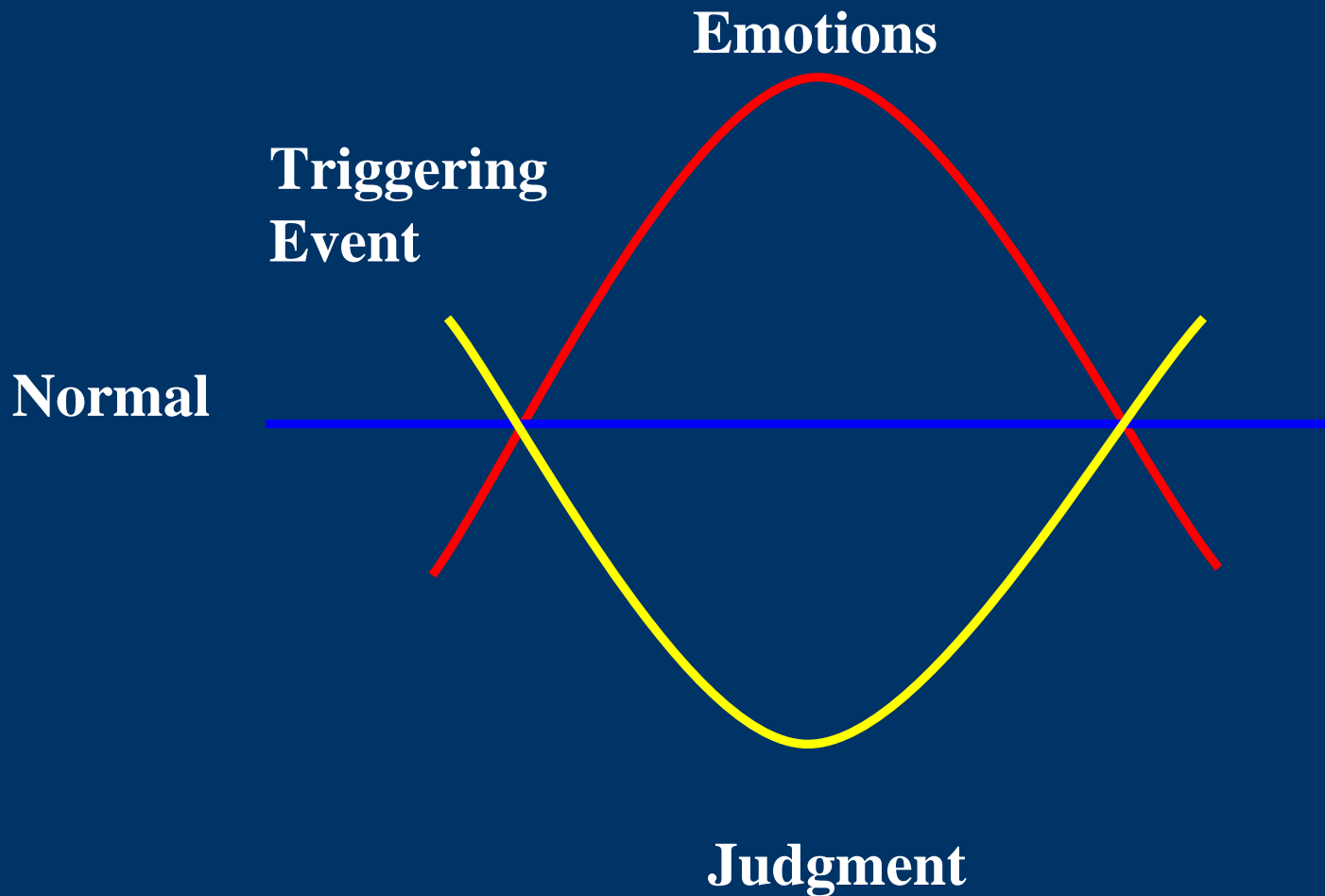
REALITY III. The ability to communicate is a learned behavior and, as in all learning, reward and punishment determine how the individual behaves.

REALITY IV. The normal result of an attempt to communicate is a partial misunderstanding. The great enemy of successful communication is the illusion of it.

REALITY V. When communications break down, a normal response is to ask, "Whose fault is it?"



ANGER CYCLE





NOTES ON ANGER

In most situations anger *is situational and the response is culturally defined*

An angry individual typically feels

- ~ *treated unfairly*
- ~ *as the result of a purposeful and blame-worthy action by someone who should have known better*
- ~ *that the target of anger is not a social superior whose conduct could be justified by that status*
- ~ *that he/she has no other effective sanctioning power that could rectify the situation*



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Strategies to Manage Conflict

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UNDERLYING CONCEPTS OF MEDIATION

Respect for the issue:

Disputes matter to the people who have them

Respect for the person:

People generally have the resources to resolve their own conflicts.

Respect for the process:

When people are involved in the process, they have a stake in the outcome



MEDIATIVE VALUES

Understanding

(not agreeing)

Accepting

(not trying to change)

Involvement

(not giving up)



POSITIONS AND INTERESTS

POSITIONS:

- Demands, requests
- The WHAT
- Often "all or nothing" statements

INTERESTS:

- Motivations
- Needs, concerns, fears
- The WHY
- Come from values and culture



Business/Workplace Interests

FOR THE EMPLOYEE

- Security: having a job
- Acceptance: by co-worker and supervisors
- Personal Satisfaction: the job is meaningful
- Choices: the ability to give input that affects the job
- Competence: the ability to do a job

ADDITIONAL INTERESTS EMPLOYER/MANAGER

- Getting the job done efficiently: meeting deadlines
- A cooperative workforce: employees and supervisors
- Reputation: respect from employees and other managers



The Aikido Way to

MANAGE DISPUTES

- ~ *Non - reactive*
- ~ *Disarming*
- ~ *Participatory*



The Aikidoist in the Workplace is:

Curious

Centered

Balanced

Strategic

Uses all available energy

Broadening your worldview: Moving from Certainty to Curiosity

Certainty

LOCKS US OUT
OF THEIR EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Concerned with teaching, explaining, disseminating expert knowledge
- ✓ Discounts or overlooks experiences, perceptions of the other person
- ✓ People who don't get it are seen as resistant

Curiosity

LETS US INTO
THEIR EXPERIENCE

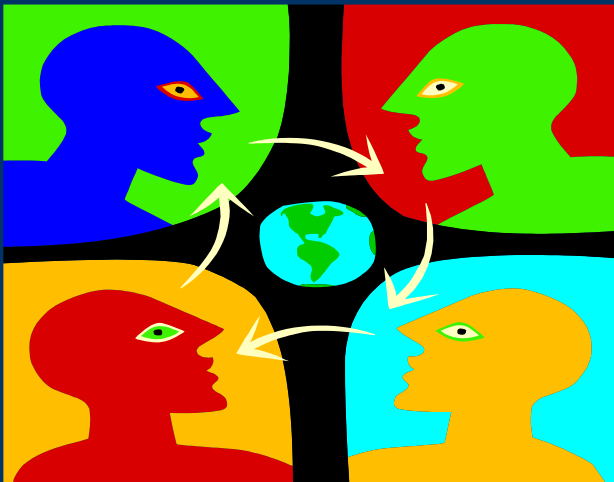
- ✓ Asks questions, exploratory
- ✓ Takes care to discover other person's experience
- ✓ Attempts to understand from other person's point of view



Hallmarks of a Curious Approach



- ✓ *Adopts the AND STANCE*
Understanding the other perspective doesn't mean you give up your own.
- ✓ *Recognizes the complexity of the situation.*





Non-reactive

1. First Do Nothing
2. Listen
3. Ask Open Questions
4. Check for Understanding

LISTENING

EAR



EYES

**UNDIVIDED
ATTENTION**

HEART

The Chinese characters
that make up the verb "to listen"
tell us something significant about this skill.



Disarming

- 1. Understand (paraphrase)*
- 2. Validate (acknowledge)*
- 3. De-escalate (translate)*
- 4. Move-on (summarize)*



Participatory

- 1. Share Information*
- 2. Identify Interests*
- 3. Look for Creative Possibilities*
- 4. Use "Fair" Standards to Decide*



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