Building a culture of Healthy Conflict in Tech Teams

September 2023

Overview

Building a culture of Healthy Conflict in Tech Teams

- Unhealthy vs Health Conflict
- What are the benefits of Healthy Conflict?
- How do you ensure only Healthy Conflict arises?
- Q&A



The human

Andrew Murphy













My Career

Coder ~ 20 years

Tech Leader ~ 15 years

Trainer ~ 5 years

Tech Leaders Launchad





What can cause “Conflict”?

What can cause “Conflict”?

- Debating Languages / Frameworks / Cloud
- Choosing a Design Pattern
- Build or Buy
- Code Review
- Knowledge Hoarding
- Ego-driven Code Ownership
- Denying promotions
- Roadmapping and sprint planning
- Working Style / Communication Preferences



What's the difference between "Healthy Conflict" and "Unhealthy Conflict"?

Unhealthy Conflict	Healthy Conflict
Misaligned Goals / Outcomes	Aligned Goals / Outcomes
Lacking Respect / Trust	Mutual Respect / Trust
Negative Intent	Positive Intent

Unhealthy Conflict

Misaligned Goals / Outcomes

Lacking Respect / Trust

Negative Intent

People Win!

Healthy Conflict

Aligned Goals / Outcomes

Mutual Respect / Trust

Positive Intent

Ideas Win!



What are the benefits of Healthy Conflict?

Benefits of Healthy Conflict

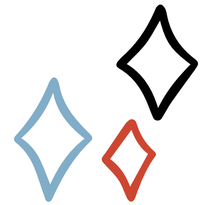
- Improves Problem-Solving
- Enhances Team Cohesion
- Encourages Accountability
- Fosters Innovation
- Promotes Open Communication
- Breaks Down Silos
- Increases Resilience and Adaption to Change
- Facilitates Personal Growth
- Promotes Learning



How do you know if you're in a Healthy Conflict or an Unhealthy Conflict?

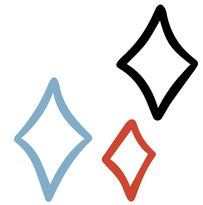
“

Safe Dialogue

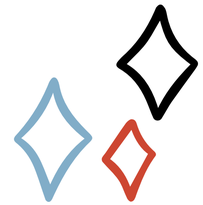


“

Safe Dialogue



Safe Dialogue





Two distinct styles of behaviour:

Withdrawing Dialogue ('Silence') and Forcing Dialogue ('Violence')



What do you do when Unhealthy Conflict arises?



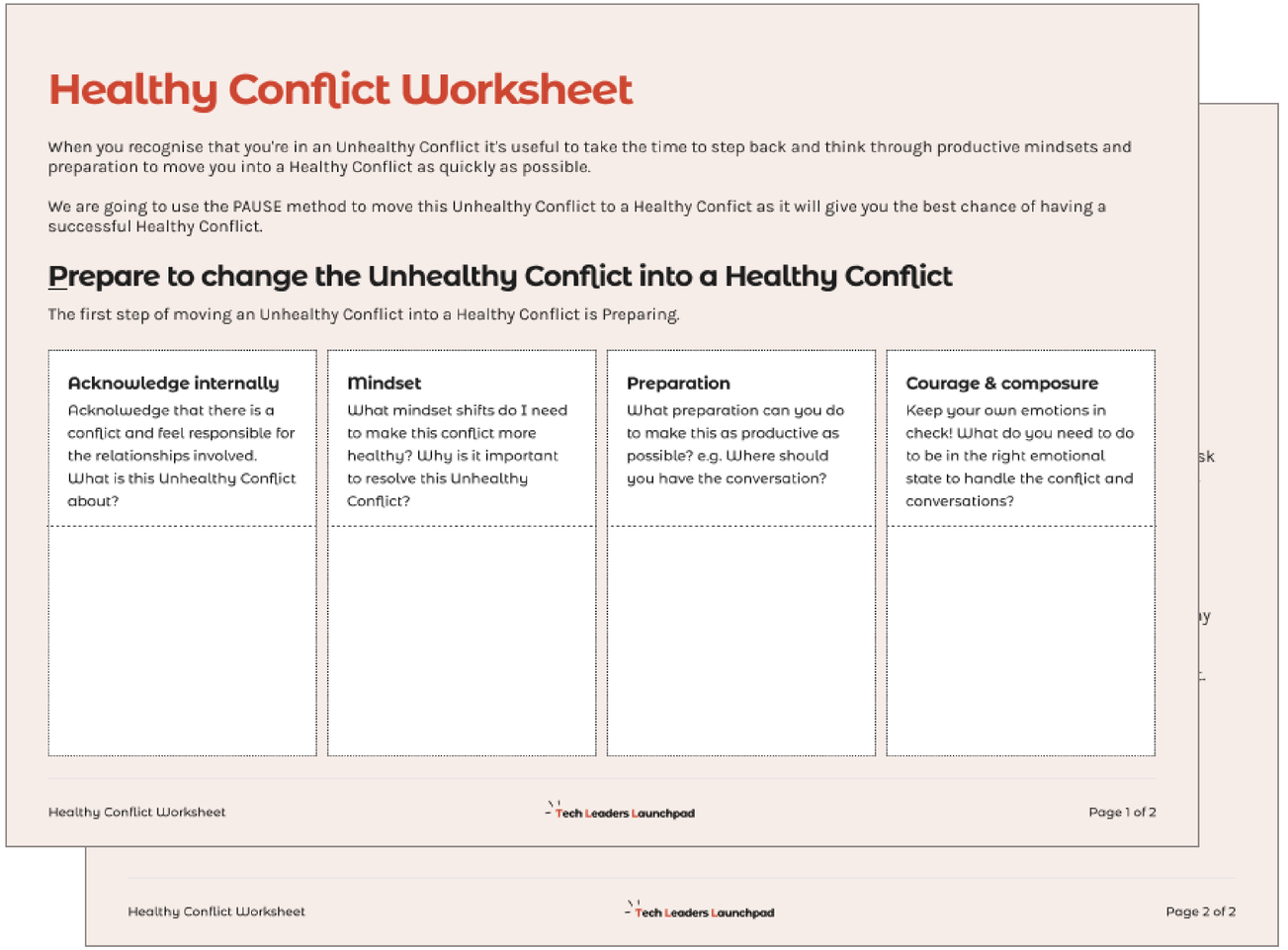
Long term

Unhealthy Conflict	Healthy Conflict
Misaligned Goals / Outcomes	Aligned Goals / Outcomes
Lacking Respect / Trust	Mutual Respect / Trust
Negative Intent	Positive Intent

Short term



bit.ly/tll-hcws



Healthy Conflict Worksheet

When you recognise that you're in an Unhealthy Conflict it's useful to take the time to step back and think through productive mindsets and preparation to move you into a Healthy Conflict as quickly as possible.

We are going to use the PAUSE method to move this Unhealthy Conflict to a Healthy Confict as it will give you the best chance of having a successful Healthy Conflict.

Prepare to change the Unhealthy Conflict into a Healthy Conflict

The first step of moving an Unhealthy Conflict into a Healthy Conflict is Preparing.

Acknowledge internally	Mindset	Preparation	Courage & composure
Acknolwedge that there is a conflict and feel responsible for the relationships involved. What is this Unhealthy Conflict about?	What mindset shifts do I need to make this conflict more healthy? Why is it important to resolve this Unhealthy Conflict?	What preparation can you do to make this as productive as possible? e.g. Where should you have the conversation?	Keep your own emotions in check! What do you need to do to be in the right emotional state to handle the conflict and conversations?

Healthy Conflict Worksheet Tech Leaders Launchpad Page 1 of 2

Healthy Conflict Worksheet Tech Leaders Launchpad Page 2 of 2



Q&A / Links / Thank you!

Learn more about Tech Leaders Launchpad

bit.ly/techleaderslaunchpad

Worksheet

bit.ly/tll-hcws

Free Debugging Difficult Conversations Course

bit.ly/debugfree

LinkedIn

bit.ly/aam-linkedin

Prepare

Actively Listen

Understand

Share

End

Prepare

Acknowledge internally
Mindset & preparation
Courage & composure

Actively Listen

Acknowledge externally
Listen carefully
Empathise & respect

Understand

Ask open questions
Assume positive intent

Share

Acknowledge their assumed negative intent
Apologise and correct it
Talk to your perspective

End

Re-align common goals
Agree what happened previously
Agree what should happen in the future