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February 1, 1992

Philip P. Marcotte, P. E.
558 20th Avenue
Blanchard, Michigan 49310

92:11

Dear Mr. Marcotte:

Re: *Talk to joint mid Michigan Chapter meeting - MSPE
Thursday, March 5, 1992*

This is in response to your request for a brief description of my talk to the joint MSPE meeting in March 1992. I suggest we focus on current methods by which the professional can help resolve potentially destructive technical and professional conflicts in the planning, design, manufacture and construction of our physical environment.

These conflicts affect us as engineers working among a larger group. This larger group might include planners, regulatory bodies, architects, contractors, attorneys and manufacturers. In addition conflicts often adversely affect interactions of the sizable driving group providing a primary source of income - our clients or employers.

The mission of my talk will be, if satisfactory to you - *to identify, describe, and where possible propose solutions to some of the more pressing of these conflicts.*

Professionals have proposed many ways, both soft and hard, of resolving conflict. Some of these require third party participation such as litigation, arbitration and mediation.

Others deal with methods of resolving destructive conflict within the technical, managerial and organizational levels where the conflict starts. Recently the subjects of personal persuasion, leadership and partnering have lead the way as helpful tools to find solutions to destructive adversarial situations.

To compress this subject into one story line, let me try out some possible titles and subheadings for the program on you.

"The Rough Road to Conflict Resolution in Engineering"
Methods of handling conflict in engineering relationships.

"The Engineer's Role As A Conflict Manager"
The responsibility of the engineer to turn conflict into a positive force for improvement.

"Methods of Managing Destructive Conflict in Engineering Practice"
The application of management ability and leadership in defusing destructive conflict.

"Technical Conflict - Avoid it, hide it, or manage it?"
What choices does the engineer have as an originator and manager of ideas and methods that arouse disagreement?

"Is a Conflict Free Project Always A Good Project?"
The nature of controversial elements of a project and what they contribute to success and failure.

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"Common Causes of Contested Claims"

What are the most common causes of conflict and financial loss in the engineer's management of projects.

"The Professional's Role in Managing Conflict"

How can the professional engineering manager manage conflict to achieve successful execution of engineering work.

"The Future of Engineering With & Without Disagreements"

What part will managed conflict play in the future activities of the professional engineer and manager.

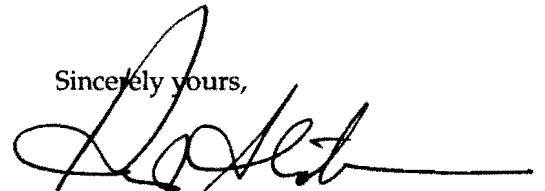
"Staying Professional on the Non Level Playing Field of Conflict"

How the professional engineer can work in unfair situations to stimulate and achieve excellence.

The titles marked with an asterisk may fit the mission slightly better than the rest. However, since you know the makeup of the audience, please mix and match the titles and sub titles to your satisfaction.

When you have decided on the program name please put me on your announcement mailing list.

Sincerely yours,



Ralph J. Stephenson, P. E.

Methods of Managing Destructive Conflict in Engineering Practice

A. Introduction

- What kinds of engineers are present?

T • Definition of destructive conflict

Animosity or disagreement which results in lowering the potential for an individual or organization to succeed.

- Those among whom destructive conflict may occur

B. Examples of destructive conflict

C. Where does destructive conflict have its roots?

- Begins in family life
- Continues in professional life

D. Examples of destructive conflict

- Active dislike of _____ for _____. - you can fill in your own words

E. Methods of defusing destructive conflict

01. Provide good leadership
02. Seek out good leaders to follow
03. Take responsibility for your thoughts and actions
04. Don't play sum zero games
05. Do play win-win games
06. Continue learning
 - Education
 - Training
07. Seek out those who share your value systems and try to work with them
07. Learn to use your values within other's moral and ethical structure

Most people are honest, concerned, desirous of challenge, need attention, and welcome help in times of turmoil.

- 08, Use understandable ethical principles to gage your behavior
- 09, Use a simple hierarchy of obligations to help make decisions

As formulated and stated by Dean Freund

- *Prime obligation - Protection of public health, welfare & safety*
- *Secondary obligation - Your employer or client*
- *Tertiary obligation - Your peers*

10. Maintain your cool without putting out your fire
11. Argue well for your beliefs
12. Know when to concede
13. Learn your philosophy from your failures
14. Build your philosophy from your successes
15. Be oblivious to getting the credit
16. Be competent
17. Do good front end planning - simulate well and intelligently
18. Clarify the scope of work to be done, and then clarify it again
19. Clarify who is to do the work
20. Lower conflict levels internally by keeping the conflict focus on external challenges - this demands good leadership!
21. Avoid using the word "but"

F. What to do when the conflict turns to active hostility

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- Cool off
- Reason - with yourself, then with others
- Where essential turn to third party resolution methods

But only where essential!

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Consulting Engineer

POSITIVE CONFLICT

**Hostility that is managed so
that its resolution raises the
potential for individuals or
organizations to succeed at
being excellent.**

OBLIGATIONS

Hierarchy of professional obligations as formulated by Dean Freund

- *Prime - Protection of public health, welfare & safety*
- *Secondary - Your employer or client*
- *Tertiary - Your peers*

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PEOPLE

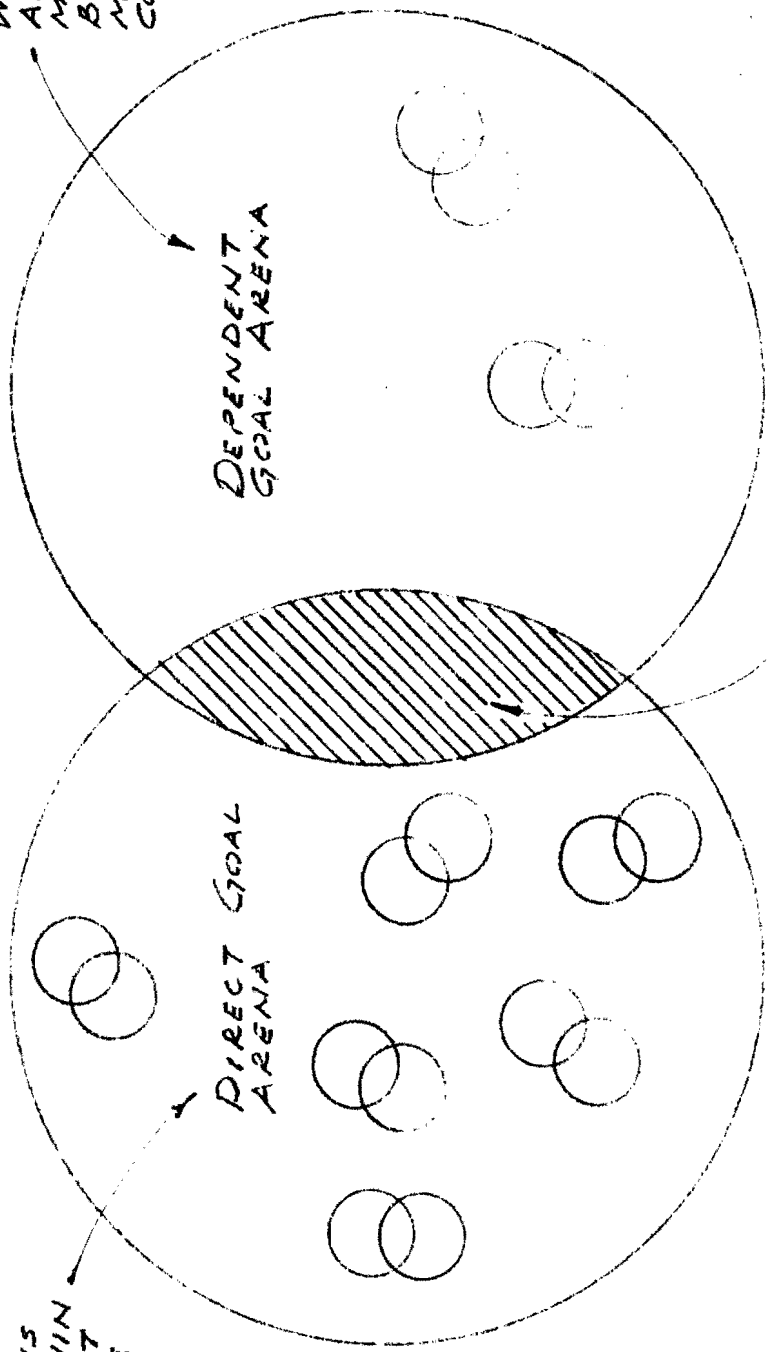
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concerned, desirous of
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DESTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

**Animosity or disagreement
which results in lowering
the potential for an
individual or organization
to succeed.**

TARGETS TO BE
ACHIEVED BUT
WHICH ARE
AFFECTED BY
MAJOR INFLUENCES
BEYOND THE
MANAGER'S
CONTROL



TARGETS TO BE
ACHIEVED BY
MANAGING
CONDITIONS
WELL WITHIN
THE DIRECT
INFLUENCE
OF THE
MANAGER

THIS INTERSECTION IS
WHERE THE GOOD PM
IS USUALLY FOUND TO
EXCEL: MANAGING THE
INTERFACES BETWEEN
DIRECT GOALS & DEPENDENT
GOALS.

THE DIG/DEG INTERSECTION