Is "Idea Ownership" Creating Unproductive Conflict?

Conflict is a reality of life on this planet.

And although you don't always have a choice about when and where it will show up, you CAN determine how you respond to it.

Mature leaders who handle conflicts constructively build a culture for healthy teams to thrive—and the by-products are CREATIVE and best-case solutions.

Let's examine two sequences that might play out when a group of people faces conflicting viewpoints.

Scenario #1

Imagine a conference room filled with people, coming together to resolve an issue. As would be expected, there are conflicting opinions on how it should be handled.

Each person stands to share their thoughts. **But underlying competitiveness creates a charged atmosphere.** Those who are courageous enough to stand, begin to take ownership of their idea.

Thanks to the unwelcome guests, "pride" and "ego," participants also feel compelled to defend and fight for THEIR idea.

When others voice differing assessments, the idea-owner feels attacked and offended. Hyper-sensitivity to the tone of voice and body language of those speaking escalates the disapproval and frustration that is filling the room.

Here is a snapshot of what this unproductive sequence looks like:

Idea ownership→ Individuals take things personally→ A win/lose atmosphere grows→ Conflict Enemies develop→ Healthy resolution is not reached

Scenario #2

Now let's look at how this could have gone differently.

Picture the same conference room filled with team members tasked with resolving a disputed issue. As each person takes their turn at sharing an idea, others listen respectively and internally weigh and measure each suggestion.

Although this room is equally as passionate about elements of the discussion as those in the first scenario, individuals have learned to value the relationships formed, MORE than the ideas they presented.

Given enough time, a collaborative approach can play out. The final answer might be something so creative and imaginative that none of the members saw it before arriving in the room. The resolution would clearly be a win-win for everyone.

Here's the snapshot version:

Ideas presented→ Everyone listens respectively→ Weigh and measure each idea→ Relationships are valued above pride→ Conflict partners are developed→ A creative solution is agreed upon

Successful Conflict Resolution

British statesman, Winston Churchill, effectively communicates the two options people have when dealing with conflict:

> *"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.*
> *Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."*

The ability to respond in both ways originates with compelling leaders who value the relationships within an organization and teach the skills of listening well to their teams.

At Growing Leaders for Life…

Outstanding leaders understand that group dynamics can be complicated and may vary from one season to the next. They rely on the core values of a company to provide consistent direction. These leaders trust in the process of team collaboration to come up with the creative solutions their company needs.

David Benzel provides the resources and training to help leaders learn and teach healthy approaches to conflict.