

Friendly Scenarios – How Specific Approaches to Conflict Can Help Avoid “Frienemies”

Approaches to Conflict based on Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument

| Scenario | Approach to This Conflict | Discussion Starters and Suggestions to Apply This Approach |
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| <p>The Town Finance Officer states the purchases patrons make from the Friends ongoing book sale area should be rung into the cash register at the Circulation Desk with a separate key for these transactions, rather than collecting cash in a bank deposit pouch. The Friends Treasurer won't receive a weekly accounting anymore.</p> | <p>Competition</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know this will not be a popular decision, but we must.... • We're just going to need to “agree to disagree...” • What are your expectations? • What do we need to do to make this acceptable to you? • That doesn't make sense to me. Can you explain that to me in another way? |
| <p>The Book Sale Committee members want to earmark the proceeds of the fall book sale as a donation to a local literacy charity for children in the community. The Staff Liaison to the Friends points out that the Friends' purpose statement in their by-laws specifically says the Friends will raise money for the library.</p> | <p>Collaboration</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we come to a mutual agreement, so we can implement this change? • What if we... • Would you like to know what I think? • Let me suggest something different. <i>[Do not micromanage.]</i> |
| <p>The library has determined to save money and trees and create an electronic newsletter for patrons, rather than a printed piece which always included a page to promote the Friends and their activities. The Friends feel their members would rather have a print newsletter: “no one will read it in their e-mail.”</p> | <p>Compromise</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we can agree on this point, everyone can move forward with our work on this project. • Help me to understand... • You sound frustrated. • What are you losing? What could we potentially gain from this change? • What concerns you about this change? |

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| <p>A long-time member of the Friends left a significant gift to the Friends in his estate plan. The library’s Board of Trustees “knows” he wanted to make his gift to the library, to help renovate the library’s reading area. The Board’s President states the trustees should control these funds, not the Friends Steering Committee.</p> | <p>Avoidance</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we revisit this issue at a later time? • Have we calmed down enough to discuss and resolve this? • Can we solve this problem without confrontation that will damage our relationship? • How did you come to that decision? • Are you open to an entirely different solution? |
| <p>The Friends Board of Directors have discussed over several meetings whether or not to have a Lifetime membership in the Friends when they change the dues categories on their new membership brochure. Any membership fees are established by the Board each year and this new category won’t require a by-laws change. The group is deadlocked.</p> | <p>Accommodation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May I give you some feedback? <i>[make it positive, constructive, and consistent]</i> • What’s getting in the way here? <i>[listen closely, with empathy]</i> • What have I missed? • I apologize – I did something wrong. • Could we try this? • It sounds like a risk, but maybe it is something we could take a chance on. |

Compiled and written by Lisa C. Wemett for FLS/NYLA webinar, “Before Friends Become Frenemies.” September 2021. **All rights reserved.** Contact FLS/NYLA at: FLS.NYLA@yahoo.com

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