

# Julie Gaver

## Professional Speaking & Corporate Training, LLC

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Theme: Dealing with Conflict

**"Conflict is inevitable.  
Combat is optional."  
Max Lucado**

I attended a conference many years ago and was anxious to hear a particular well known speaker. Unfortunately, my colleague, Dean, and I arrived late and were forced to sit near the back of the room.

Seated to my right was a man with no manners! I know this because he talked to his neighbor during the speaker's presentation, making it difficult for us to hear. I sighed loudly and gave him my infamous dirty look. *(This skill was perfected from years of attending church with two young sons. Trust me, it's been known to turn people into stone!)*

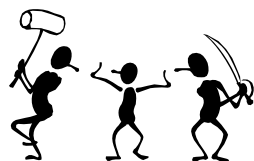
Despite numerous doses of the evil eye, the man continued to talk. Dean, also annoyed, suddenly reached across me and tapped the man on the arm, beckoning for him to lean towards him. The talker complied. Combat was rearing its ugly head and it was about to take place immediately in front of me.

"SSSSHH!!!!" Dean said. *"We can't hear the speaker!"* Mr. Rude just made a face and turned around to continue his conversation. This time my colleague practically knocked me over reaching for our violator.

Once again, their heads came together. Dean repeated his request. Mr. Rude's response was to lift his fingers to his own lips and "ssssshhh" Dean! Then, he did the unthinkable! He smirked!

Dean was quick with the comeback. "Hey buddy," he hissed. "Bad manners, bad suit, BAD BREATH!"

And I thought I loved drama!



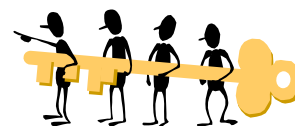
The AMA defines conflict as "the process that begins when one party perceives that another has affected negatively (or is about to affect negatively) something about which (s)he cares about. And so, for obvious reasons, where there are people, there will be conflict!

In a training program I once attended, I learned that conflict can be positive or negative. Positive conflict was most recently demonstrated if you watched the final moments of the *George Mason vs. Connecticut* game! ☺ *Go Cinderella!* However, negative conflict is defined as any conflict which is unresolved.

Studies show that 20% of our workday is spent resolving conflict of some kind. When conflict is properly resolved, it improves creativity, job satisfaction, and personal well being. Left unresolved, it can lead to poor morale, low productivity and stress and tension among employees.

Effective resolution of conflict involves accurate identification of the source of the conflict (structural vs. interpersonal) as well as superior negotiation and collaboration skills. At the risk of sounding cliché, healthy resolution of conflict requires good communication and compromise.

Let's leave the drama for the reality shows. We have work to do!



PO Box 51 Myersville, MD 21773  
(301) 293-4195, [Julie@juliegaver.com](mailto:Julie@juliegaver.com)  
[www.juliegaver.com](http://www.juliegaver.com)