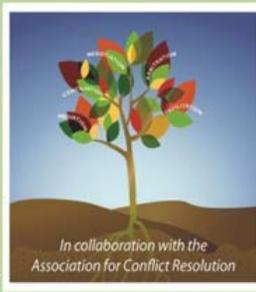


READERS GUIDE

STICKING POINTS: HOW TO GET 4 GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER IN THE 12 PLACES THEY COME APART

BY HAYDN SHAW



October is

Conflict Resolution Month

in Colorado

Listen. Talk. Work It Out.

www.conflictresolutionmonth.org

Each year Conflict Resolution Month in Colorado selects a book as recommended reading for the community at large, with the goal to spread information and encourage conversation on ways to resolve conflicts at all levels of society. Although this book focuses on issues that arise in the workplace, it quickly becomes apparent that the sticking points Shaw identifies also appear in a variety of settings including home, school, neighborhood, congregation, or civic group. *Sticking Points* is a timely work as there are currently four generations in the workforce – retiring Traditionalists to the as-yet-unnamed post-Millennial generation. Families already consist of up to five living generations. Shaw uses “ghost stories” of each generation, pivotal events that shaped each generation’s perspectives, to build a foundation of shared understanding between generations. Shaw presents a five-step process to transform sticking points into places of renewed unity. *Sticking Points* provides better understanding of generational differences, and teaches ways to improve communication and build stronger relationships.

THE GUIDING QUESTION

How do we develop shared understanding, respect, and appreciation of each generation’s views, and how do we use that shared understanding to improve our relationships at work, home, and in the community?

INDIVIDUALS

Shaw’s examination of the events that shaped each generation’s perspectives encourages the reader to question their assumptions about generational stereotypes and apply this new-found understanding to relationships with members of different generations in any setting. What are your assumptions about Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials? What do you think others assume about you and your generation? Do you fit the typical description? What helps you feel understood by those of other generations?

FAMILIES

The five-step process Shaw describes in Chapter 3 will prove useful for untangling family conflicts rooted in generational differences, particularly in the multi-generational households that are becoming more prevalent in the United States. What are the “ghost stories” that form your perspectives? What are the values of family members? Are they based on experiences from certain times in history? What are “old” or “new” expectations in your family?

WORKPLACES

Shaw writes “If we are going to get through this next decade, we have to understand that we are natives to only one generation and immigrants to the other three.” (p. 18) Workplaces devote significant resources to enhancing cultural diversity, yet many workplaces cling to outdated norms, policies, and processes because “that’s the way it’s done here.” Do you experience outdated policies or norms at your workplace? Are there inappropriate behaviors that diminish the productive atmosphere for employees and customers of varying ages? How can you use the five-step process to develop corporate norms that engage the differing generation-based values?

COMMUNITIES

The nature of community changes with each successive generation. Communities – neighborhood, civic group, faith-based groups – that wish to remain viable for the long term must find ways to connect with members of all generations. What makes community members feel isolated and unimportant? Are understanding and inclusion concerns of the group? Do individuals take responsibility for their own choices? What are ways to find out about opinions and needs of individuals so your community can keep members of all ages engaged and ensure they feel valued?

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