

Introduction: What I learned on the sandlot from the "Barnes Boys"

Conflict is normal

Conflict is an opportunity for growth

Conflict must be diffused or it will destroy

Healthy conflict demands rules so no one gets hurt

God's perspective on conflict:

- **Conflict is inevitable in a fallen world**

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 (NIV)

- **Conflict flows from our differences and our selfishness**

- Differences in **belief** produce conflict. Acts 15:1-35
- Differences in **perspective** produce conflict. Acts 15:36-41
- Differences in **style** produce conflict. Philippians 4:2-3
- Selfish **desires** produce conflict. James 4:1-3

¹What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 4:1-3 (NIV)

- **Conflict is an Opportunity for Growth**

Philippians 2:1-4

- In Christ, differences compliment vs. compete. Philippians 2:1-2
- In Christ, selfishness is transformed to servant-hood. Philippians 2:3-4
- In Christ, we can "fight fear" and safely. Ephesians 4:25-32

(See Part 3 of this series: *How To 'Share Hearts' Instead Of 'Exchange Words'*)

The most common communication styles:

1. **Turtles:** The goal is to _____.

- Can _____ and not speak.
- Can give the _____.
- Can _____ affection.
- Can _____ and _____.
- Can run to _____ interests (alcohol, spending, pleasure).
- The natural inclination is to _____.

2. **Sharks:** The goal is to _____.

- Can try to be _____.
- Can do _____.
- Can keep _____.
- Can use logic to _____ emotional reality.
- Can make _____ or cause _____.
- The natural inclination is to _____.

How to *diffuse* conflict in your marriage:

- D** - **DEFINE** the problem (on your own). Proverbs 15:14

- I** - **INITIATE** a time to talk. Matthew 5:23-24

- F** - **FOCUS** on the "perceived" problem, not the person. Proverbs 18:19

- F** - **FEEL** their pain (as though it were your own). Proverbs 17:17

- U** - **UNCOVER** the root symptoms. Proverbs 20:5

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Root</u>
Money	Values, Priorities, Power / Control Issues
Sex	Communication, Unmet Emotional Needs, Past History / Baggage
In-Laws	Loyalty, Expectations
Children / Work	Roles and/or Goals

S - SET things right between you.

James 5:16

1. Own your responsibility.
2. Confess - "I was wrong. . ."
3. Ask forgiveness - "Will you forgive me?"

E - ESTABLISH a specific action plan that addresses the issue discussed
(Write it down)

James 1:22-25

- Husband - I commit to . . . by . . . (when?)
- Wife - I commit to . . . by . . . (when?)

Discussion Questions:

1. How did your family handle conflict growing up?
2. When conflict arises, do you tend to become more a "turtle" or a "shark?"
3. What specifically did you learn about resolving conflict that was most helpful?
4. Is there a specific issue in your marriage that needs to be diffused? Are you willing to put into practice the "Diffuse Conflict" game-plan you learned today? When and how will you go about it?