THE FOUR FACTORS FOR DE-ESCALATING CONFLICT

From the book, Don't Take the Bait to Escalate by Jay Payleitner

Questions for Personal Reflection, Round Table Debate, or Large Group Presentations

1. Conflict is everywhere. And playing nice is not always easy. List seven conflicts in the world, in your circle of influence, and/or in your own life.

2. What's the worst possible outcome of the following conflicts?

- The two best athletes on a team both want to play shortstop.
- A manufacturer ships a defective product to a new client.
- Your spouse quietly tells you that you're not meeting your potential.
- A drunk driver dents your car in a dark parking lot.
- In 1962, John F. Kennedy tells Nikita Khrushchev the Soviets cannot harbor nuclear missiles in Cuba.

3. Now, go darker and consider even worse possible negative repercussions of those five scenarios.

4. Introducing the **Four Factors**:

I. Decide what you really want
II. Know the risks
III. Empathize with your adversary
IV. Expect the win

5. Apply the **Four Factors** to the following real-life, highly-charged conflict:

A newlywed couple realizes he likes crunchy and she likes creamy peanut butter!

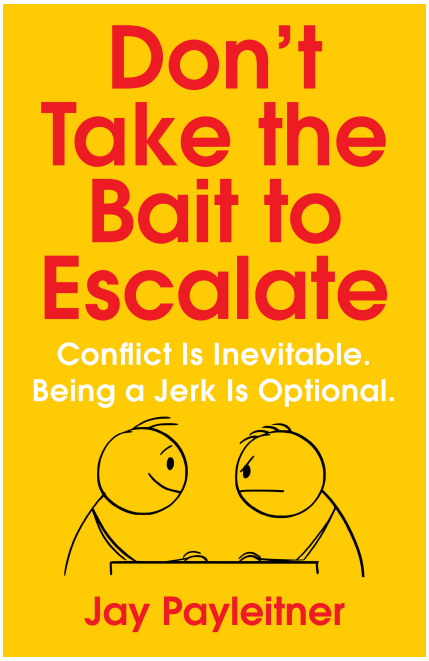
Consider: *The newlyweds do WANT their preferred peanut butter, but they REALLY want to start their marriage right. The RISK is disrespect, division, and anger every time they make a sandwich. Or worse, less romance! Regarding EMPATHY, each spouse's desire is not unreasonable. How can you deny your beloved their favorite peanut butter? Finally, a WINNING solution is readily available: Compromise by purchasing creamy then crunchy every other jar. Or, one spouse lovingly sacrifices their desire for the other. Or . . . buy two jars!*

6. With wisdom and optimism, apply the **Four Factors** to the five scenarios from Question #2. What are the wants and risks? Imagine a true win.

(Note: Resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis led to installation of the hotline between the White House and the Kremlin, helping keep the peace for five decades.)

7. Now, choose one (or more) of the seven real-life conflicts you listed in Question #1 and apply the **Four Factors**.

8. Finally, get serious. What very real conflict is most burdensome to you or your team right now? Apply the **Four Factors**.



For further discussion:

A. When is compromise not a good thing? What if you sought a "third" answer?

B. When should a conflict be dealt with immediately? When should you take your time? Examples?

C. What are the pluses and minuses for using these tools to address conflict:

Listening. Humor. Apologizing. Walking away. Organizing a march. Turning the other cheek. Posting on social media. Going to arbitration. Yielding 100% to your adversary.

D. In your most recent conflict, were you stuck in the crisis of the moment or able to "see the big picture?"

Jay Payleitner

Jay is a national speaker and bestselling author of more than 30 books on relationships and doing life right.

Invite him to deliver a Keynote or host a "Lunch & Learn" on the Four Factors and other life strategies.

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