

Preface

The core concepts of this book have been used by thousands of students and conflict practitioners in the United States and around the world since 1978. The resilience of the concepts has inspired us to keep learning about conflict and revising the book, now in its seventh edition. Our definition of conflict, crafted over many conversations and countless workshops and classes, is the most widely quoted definition of conflict in the communication literature. We are grateful for the continuing warm reception this work has received, and for the ongoing excellent help of the McGraw-Hill editors.

What is different? Long-time users of the book will continue to resonate with our philosophical stance, which has not changed. We have made significant changes as well. We added a new last chapter, changed the order of four chapters, and updated research emerging from various fields of study. We took the opportunity to make revisions to many of the chapters. Desiring to help those who teach the conflict course do so more completely and efficiently, we have added key terms and review questions at the end of each chapter. These will help students keep up with the concepts as they study. To enhance your class discussions, you can use the review questions and the new cases and applications added to each chapter. In response to your requests, we have produced an all-new Instructor's Manual to accompany the book; it contains not only a test bank but many useful teaching exercises and applications not in the text itself. The book's Web site, the Online Learning Center at www.mhhe.com/wilmot7, provides instructors with a downloadable Instructor's Manual and provides students with practice quizzes to help them review course concepts.

Chapter 1, "The Nature of Conflict," has been rewritten and reorganized. Reviewers let us know they would appreciate our getting right down to basics more quickly, so we have. We present the reasons for studying conflict, and then go quickly to the definition of conflict and its elements. We describe destructive conflict, power and self-esteem, and the importance of perception in conflict. Understanding destructive spirals sets the background for the following discussion of how to create a supportive climate for conflict. We introduce the key concepts of escalatory and avoidance spirals.

Chapter 2, "Perspectives on Conflict," was chapter 1 in several previous editions. Building on the core concepts in chapter 1, we discuss how each person's personal history of conflict, especially in the context of family, influences our responses to conflicts. We expanded the section on conflict metaphors by adding a section on transformative metaphors. These stimulate creative thinking about conflict resolution possibilities. We continue to use the lens model of conflict, showing how gender and cultural filters influence us all.

Chapter 3, "Interests and Goals," presents some of the material that readers have told us provides the "meat and potatoes" of the book. We changed the acronym in previous editions describing the four kinds of goals to the easy-to-remember TRIP, representing topic (content), relational, identity, and process goals. We show you how to analyze in depth every conflict interaction based on these four levels. We continue the popular discussion of prospective, transactive, and retrospective goals and end with a discussion of collaborative goals.

Chapter 4, “Power: The Structure of Conflict,” while remaining essentially the same, has been updated. We have added a section on optimum power in interpersonal conflict. We added a short section on “designated power,” to complete the section on kinds of power. We discuss the problems associated with both too much and too little power, and how to work toward balancing power.

Chapter 5, “Styles and Tactics,” retains the comprehensive treatment of styles while updating and shortening it. We removed a confusing section on styles in systems. We highlight the two basic movements in conflict resolution: avoidance and engagement. We have added a new section on bullying as a natural extension of competitive tactics. We continue to use the familiar five styles descriptions, while advocating for flexible and adaptive styles depending on the conflict and the people involved.

Chapter 6, “Assessing Conflicts,” is a practical chapter that gives many ways to diagram, understand, draw, think about, and observe conflicts. We removed one older assessment guide and added a new one based on the Harvard Negotiation Project’s *Difficult Conversations* concept. This new guide supplements the Wilmot-Hocker guide, often used for the major paper in the course. With this new guide, we have provided another option for an in-depth conflict analysis for a major project. We hope you find it as intriguing as we do. Finally, we describe a new analysis of conflict stages.

Chapter 7, “Moderating Your Conflicts,” has been moved to just before “Negotiating for Mutual Gains.” In “Moderating Your Conflicts,” we keep the popular emphasis on conflict in the midrange. We have added a new section on strong emotions in conflict, greatly expanded from the last edition. We end with the key skills of fractionating, reframing, and dialogue. A newly expanded section on communication formats provides guidelines for regulating conflict, ranging from conflict containment, to family meetings, to crisis management.

Chapter 8, “Negotiating for Mutual Gains,” has been updated but the outline remains the same. We retained the popular competitive, collaborative, and principled negotiation approaches. The examples, however, now more closely relate to the interpersonal focus of the book, explaining negotiation as a key skill that bridges avoidance and “power-over” approaches. The chapter ends with a discussion of phases in negotiation and the useful “languages of collaboration” checklist.

Chapter 9, “Third-Party Intervention,” has been reorganized. We begin with an expanded section on informal intervention for those times when you might be asked by friends or family to intervene. Then, formal interventions are charted, drawing clear distinctions between forms of third-party intervention. Important cautions to the third party are discussed. We added material on third-party practices across cultures, and removed several overly detailed charts.

Chapter 10, “Mending the Broken Branch: Forgiveness and Reconciliation,” by guest author Gary W. Hawk, has been entirely rewritten. We are extremely pleased with this revision and think you will find it accessible, usable, and provocative. Forgiveness is defined, along with many misconceptions about the forgiveness process. The author takes the perspective that forgiveness is an option but is not required in many cases. New examples of forgiveness possibilities have been written, reflecting Gary’s years of teaching in this area. Ways people get stuck along the process of forgiveness are discussed. An extensive new section on apology is presented in the chapter, with helpful lists to allow people to assess where they are in the process. Finally, reconciliation is discussed with its four “strands.” Reconciliation is distinguished from forgiveness.

Self-forgiveness is discussed, and the chapter ends with an assignment on “reconciling conversations.”

We have added an entirely new chapter, chapter 11, “Preventing Destructive Conflict.” For quite a while, we have wanted to add material on the prevention of destructive conflicts in the first place. This new chapter defines prevention, gives a summary of core values that lead to best practices in conflict resolution, and again urges readers to learn from previous conflicts in order to prevent future conflicts. We present material on the overall cycle of conflict, along with warning signs and suggestions for avoidance spirals and escalation spirals. We give specific language that may be helpful for changing these pervasive spirals. We give post-conflict protocols for work and personal examples, and urge the use of post-conflict learning to help stop the recurring cycle of conflict. We include a section on personal change, especially in the areas of relationship and identity issues. We make specific suggestions to those who see themselves as habitually avoiding or escalating.

As always, we hope the book will inform and inspire you. We welcome any suggestions and invite you to communicate with us about any of your responses to this book. It has been a pleasure to continue working on this important topic through the years. Whether you are a long-time adopter or a student reading the book for the first time, we hope your lives are made richer by what you learn.

You can e-mail us at:

Bill Wilmot
wwwilmot@aol.com

Joyce L. Hocker
joyhocker@aol.com

Acknowledgments

To the Reader from Bill Wilmot

Life is quite a journey. We are all blessed to be here—and one life goal is to continually discover why. As our relationships ebb and flow, we move in and out of harmony with others. Even though I have been involved with this “conflict work” since 1976, I feel like a neophyte—continually learning and relearning important lessons.

I am blessed with “significant others” in my life, both personally and professionally. On the personal level, my wife Melanie Trost helps me stay connected and centered. As her own new career in hospice unfolds, she shares it and enriches me in the process. We pursue our interconnected Montana dreams in our log home in the mountains (with satellite Internet access!) and I greatly appreciate her presence. As a friend of mine said, “Bill, I can’t believe you found a woman to live up there with you!” Melanie always leads with a kind heart and a sparkling intellect, never wavering from kindness toward others. Then there is Rosie (the dog) who is a true joy and never fails to get excited by my uttering the word “walk.” Rosie, I apologize for all the absence on business trips. Maybe, in our next lives, I can be at home waiting for you to come back.

My family expanded this past year. My son Jason and his wife Kate, and my daughter Carina and her husband Alex, produced my first grandchildren just six days apart. It thrust me into the next generation with a bang. I now have a “favorite granddaughter,” Sydney,

and “favorite grandson,” Evan. We share a family cabin in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming with my nephew Curtis and niece Pam. Thanks to all of you for your true collaboration on all our renovations and decisions. It is actually pleasurable to make decisions about Tepee for this and future generations. And Joyce Mangus, my “shisty,” is a lifelong connection (she was here before I was). The funny thing is how she says, “I thought you said you were not going to write another book” whenever I express any frustration about writing deadlines. Thanks, Joyce, for continually opening your heart to your weird brother.

Friends are crucial. Elaine Yarbrough and Mike Burr have stayed the course for over 30 years, and it is a pleasure to be working professionally again with Elaine. If workshop participants can live through the two of us all at once, they are resilient! Mike’s stroke has been a challenge, and I am humbled that he and Elaine allowed me into their lives in a small way to help. Roy Andes, who digs a wicked snow cave, is always ready to go on a trip, serve as a consultant, and be more like a brother than anyone. All I have to do is show up and he feeds me, makes me talk details on outdoor gear, and dream of future trips while packing for a current one. Curt Carlson is a model for how to treat people and never stray from one’s ethical compass. We are writing our own book together (*The Discipline of Innovation*) that will bring his life work to fruition and help many organizations. My colleagues of the Collaboration Institute, Jacquie, Roy, Marc, and Julie (www.collaborationinstitute.com), are all wonderful professionals. Wouldn’t it be nice if we weren’t all so busy and could get together more often without all the “schedule wars”? I continue to learn from all of you about facilitation, mediation, and intervening to help people in organizations.

Life is precarious, and the loss of a number of close family and friends over the past few years brings this message home in a way that one has to actually attend to it. My parents Vi and Wally are now gone, as is my sister Jeri, who was only 13 months older than me. My family of origin continues to slowly disappear—highlighting the importance of good relationships with those left. Janice Hocker Rushing and I had an almost 30-year relationship, first as an in-law and later as a resilient friend. This book is dedicated to Janice, a truly sweet soul. More than anyone over the years, she gave us insightful critiques and support. My friend Wes Shellen left a very positive mark on his students and family and allowed me into his life. I always tell stories in conflict workshops about Wes and me and how we went from enemies to friends—showing that working at conflict can transform relationships. When he and I were once debriefing how that all happened, he came up with the line of a lifetime. He said, “Bill, this transformation happened when you stopped worrying about my karma and began working on your own.”

My incremental disengagement and early retirement from the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Montana has been difficult but rewarding. My very last class on conflict was one of the best—a great way to go out. Thanks to my students. As I continue doing workshops on conflict management and mediation, I have to admit I rather like not reading papers from the participants. As professor emeritus, I go back frequently, use the library, hang out at the student union, and consult and intervene in trouble spots with staff and faculty. I am pleased that university people find my conflict management and facilitation skills to be of some help.

As you might surmise, this revision would not have happened without my verbally talented co-author Joyce Hocker. We have fine-tuned our working relationship so well that it is almost tempting to take on another book project. Even in spite of the Microsoft

Word difficulties, we persevered and got it done. Your counseling work combines with my organizational work and enlivens the book with real world applications. Thanks Joyce, especially given all the personal losses you have borne in the past year; you managed to step up and never fail.

And thanks to Nanette Giles and Jennie Katsaros of McGraw-Hill. You have been more supportive than most editors and we really appreciate your prompt responses to all sorts of questions and queries. Our reviewers were extremely helpful. While we can never take all your suggestions, we very much appreciate your assistance.

Finally, as life goes on for all of us, we sometimes find that our spiritual path is a necessary source of support and centering. I am deeply appreciative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and all of the teachers in the Tibetan Buddhist and Zen lineages. Two nuns in particular, Ven. Thubten Chodron and Ven. Robina Courtin both teach with incredible clarity and challenge. I highly recommend Chodron's book, *Working with Anger*. She will help you see the "identity" issues that we all bring to our disputes. I had the privilege of traveling with Ven. Courtin to sacred sites in India for a month. Both of these teachers are models for how to do spiritual growth in the midst of life's turmoil. I remain hopeful that someday Tibetans can return to their sovereign homeland, free of Chinese control. The dispossessed people of the world, in Tibet and elsewhere, have incredible obstacles. May you all be free from suffering.

To my students over the years, thanks. You have been an absolute joy. Thank you for all of your hard questions, pressing me always for practical application. And sometimes you even agreed with me. Probably more than any discipline, the study of communication and conflict is enriched beyond measure by always grounding it in real life experiences. Finally, a deep apology to my English teachers in Upton, Wyoming. Had I known that I would actually write books some day, I would have treated you more kindly, challenged you less, and maybe even heeded your advice.

To the Reader from Joyce Hocker

In 1971, when I began the research for my dissertation on conflict resolution at the University of Texas, I could never have imagined that in 2005 I would still be investigating, practicing, and writing about peacemaking in personal lives. Yet, through 15 years as a professor and 19 years as a clinical psychologist and organizational consultant, I remain convinced that we can trust the principles we write about.

This seventh edition is dedicated, as were editions two through six, to Janice Hocker Rushing, my beloved younger sister, who was Professor of Communication at the University of Arkansas. Janice created a climate of openness and excitement in the classes she taught on conflict; the rhetorical study of film, myth, and criticism; and rhetorical studies. Janice was the most involved and perceptive reviewer of this book, from the first through the sixth editions. She taught from it; gave us excellent, considered feedback; and had the most organized set of teaching files for the course I have ever seen. In this edition's dedication we are forced into the past tense because Janice died in February of 2004, shortly after finishing a brilliant book about her life and the lives of women in the academic world. As Bill and I wrote in the dedication of the third edition, "Janice, your presence was the gift." I could not have known that the year of book revision would also revise my personal life so thoroughly. Our mother, Jean Lightfoot Hocker, died in July 2004 at our family cabin in Colorado. Then our father, the

Rev. Lamar Hocker, slipped away in January of 2005, as I was in the middle of this revision. My brother Ed and I were privileged to be with each of our dear family members as they made their transition. I am deeply grateful for Ed's love and support through this time. He is a remarkable man and brother, thoughtful, peaceful, and full of integrity.

Despite the losses, grace infused the year and the revision process. For a while I was not sure I could think and write while in the grip of grief. I found that many people helped me in ways that leave me full of gratitude. First, Janice's voice lives and evolves as an inner dialogue in my life. I hear my father's words and cadence in his impassioned, reasoned speech. I feel my mother's pragmatic, calm, factual, optimistic approach. She believed in "us," we three siblings, and was our first writing teacher. Thank you with all my heart to my hospice support group—Sharon, Rob, Cathy, and Roberta—who held me up through this time. Thank you to the "Divine Ensemble," so named by our good friend Gale Young, who pointed out how we each played our parts to support Janice and each other in those terrible days in early 2004. My husband Gary Hawk played the flute, prayed, and built a stone wall with my brother Ed when it was not their turn to be a part of the interior vigil in Janice's study. Thanks beyond measure to Paula, Joel, Jean, Gale, and Tom. My brother of the heart, Janice's husband, Tom Frentz, has supported and encouraged my writing, told me I could do it, read drafts, and unfailingly, gently urged me on. I am very grateful, Tom. I am also grateful to Art Bochner and Caroline Ellis, who encouraged me to write and to reconnect with the communication profession. One day Bill and I read a brilliant, detailed review for the present edition. It seemed only Janice could have written it; later we discovered that Jane Elvins, at the University of Colorado, a former student and colleague of Janice's, had written this most helpful review. Thank you, Jane.

My assistant Sally Brown helped make this revision possible. She organized all the references, developed the index, provided technical support, kept my business running, and did research for my other projects so I could focus on writing and revising. Sally, you provide essential ongoing assistance and you are a grand friend. Thank you. Likewise, Bill Wilmot has again been a great team member for revising this book. Bill's consulting experience and immersion in hands-on conflict resolution has again enlivened the writing and revision process. Bill is always helpful in answering the "how does this work?" question. His enthusiasm for the project helped me when my concentration faltered. I am proud of our long collaboration.

Gayle Younghein, my long-time friend and partner in leading women's retreats, gave me her open-hearted friendship in Costa Rica last year when I wondered whether I should have remained in Arkansas with Janice. Later she persuaded me to go to France with her and a group of friends and *then* come home and tackle the revision. You were right, Gayle. In Missoula, my women's group supported me with love, cards, and prayers. Members of University Congregational Church have poured out support and love, and my professional colleagues have helped me focus on both my clients and my own need for rest and exercise. Thank you to Britt Finley, Patricia Hennessy, Marianne Spitzform, Victor Lieberman, Linda Kastelowitz, Diane Haddon, John and Rita Sommers-Flanagan, and Nancy Errebo for your loving listening—and Diane, thanks for all those workouts, Thai lunches, and soaks in the hot tub. I continue to be grateful to the staff of the Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention of Indian Health Service, especially Kelly Acton, M.D., Lorraine Valdez, and Cheryl Wilson, for giving me the opportunity

to consult with them on communication and conflict resolution. I am also grateful for my therapy clients, their stories, their courage, resilience, and trust.

In the swirling currents of this past year I am grateful for Missoula, Montana. I can walk in the back door of Butterfly Herbs and get my morning coffee on the way to work, go see the people downstairs at the bank who greet me by name, and stop off at Scotty's Table after a long workday where the staff treats me like one of the family. The staff at the Women's Club reminds me to work out, no matter what. The web of this community supported me in this last year. I love you, Missoula—but remember, readers, it's dark and gray in the winter and you don't want to move here!

I continue to give thanks for the wholeness of this life, that seasons of sorrow turn round to seasons of joy. Gary and I now have a granddaughter, Emilia Jane, born to her wonderful parents, Andy and Heather Hawk. My hope for "EJ" is that she will live in a world that becomes more peaceful each year. Kyle Hawk and Samantha Wood care for trees, orchids, raptors, and the life of the heart in their adopted Pennsylvania. I am blessed by my extended family and I love you all.

At home, two special "beings" enrich my life. Our aging but still handsome tuxedo cat, Lightfoot, let me know when late-night writing had gone on long enough. He knows he is more important than the computer. He continues to bring joy and lightness to our home. My husband, Gary Hawk, has provided much more than the usual support during this writing process. He has supported me through four editions of this book. After reading his chapter 10, I simply said, "Wow." Gary talks with me about the ideas in the book, especially the deeper challenges of dialogue, reconciliation, and truth-telling. He shares his experiences teaching at the Davidson Honors College, where he explores many of these ideas with his students. He is my partner in life and in all of these practices. Janice always said that Gary is "deep as a well." Thank you, Gary, for being the anchorite this year when I could not be, for loving me and listening to me, and for being patient while I finished this project. And thank you for loving and supporting my family. I cannot imagine this year or this life without you.

From Both of Us

Thanks to our reviewers Thomas Downard, Northeastern University; Jane P. Elvins, University of Colorado; Jennifer A. Samp, University of Georgia; R. Jeffrey Ringer, St. Cloud State University; Dewey Hemphill, Crichton College; Amy Bippus, California State University, Long Beach; Isabel C. Botero, University of Minnesota, Duluth, for your insightful comments. Of course, we take all the blame for any of your suggestions that we passed up, but about 90 percent of them have been incorporated. We both feel gratitude for the competence and professionalism of Nanette Giles and Jennie Katsaros, our editors at McGraw-Hill. You made this a pleasure. We are especially grateful for the expert, timely, and gracious help of Diane Folliard, our production manager, who helped in innumerable ways as the manuscript was prepared for production.