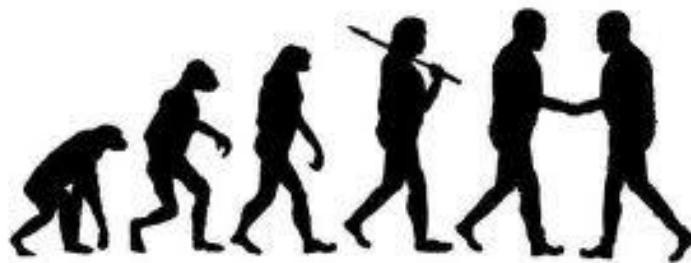# Dealing with Each Other

Applied BCR

(Behavior Change Request)

Conflict Resolution Training Manual

Dealing with Each: Applied BCR (Behavior Change Request)

Introduction

This manual is designed to train people in applying the BCR method of conflict resolution. It's organized in sections so that each step is identified and discussed. The discussion is in two parts. The first part is a direct explanation of the process being focused on. The second demonstrates the process of the unit in a conversation between Jonathan, Kris and Stan. Jonathan and Kris are 25 years old and live in Spanish Harlem. Both Jonathan and Kris are from parents where one is Dominican and the other is Puerto Rican. Jonathan grew up in the

<u>**Zendo**</u>

South Bronx, didn't go to high school but did get an AA. He works as a health coach. Kris grew up in west Harlem and also has an AA degree. He is training to be a professional MMA fighter. Stan is white, ancient and has a plethora of degrees and certifications. He grew up on a farm in the 50s. The setting is the Zendo. The Zendo is a large meditation room in a community center. It is carpeted, has subdued lighting, and art work on the wall. The room is open with chairs around the sides.

I. Overview

A. Principal

<u>**Jonathan Meditating**</u>

The purpose of the protocol is dispute resolution. It is designed so that one person can clearly communicate to another that they want that person to change a specific behavior. The purpose of the protocol is clear communication; it is neither to process feelings nor to necessarily lead to agreement. At the

same time there is a problem solving module that can be utilized if desired. The setting is usually a group with at least three people. There is the person who wants the behavior change, or the Initiator, in our example, Kris. There is the individual that is the focus of the change or the Subject, in our example Jonathan. Finally there is a facilitator, again, in our example, Stan. The participants enter into an agreement to allow each individual to speak in turn, uninterrupted. Stan, as facilitator, monitors the process. Participates speak to Stan rather than each other. This tool can only be used with individuals that have the emotional maturity and discipline to sit silently and listen to another person speak without interrupting or emotionally losing it. Stan (Facilitator) has the responsibility of supporting this listening or ending the process if it becomes apparent that one of the participants is unable to let the other participant speak without interrupting.

B. Conversation

Stan (Facilitator) is sitting in the Zendo, Jonathan (Subject) and Kris (Initiator) come walking in and take chairs. They place them near Stan in such a way that they are sitting in a circle.

Stan

Stan: So are you guys ready to process this?

Jonathan: Yeah, I appreciate you taking your time to facilitate. Hopefully we can deal with the shit that's been going down with Kris and me.

Stan: No problem. So which one of you is initiating this? Jonathan, is there something that Kris does that you want him to change?

Kris: No, I'm initiating this. I also have a problem with Hector. He's constantly messing with my gear.

Stan: That's too bad. Hector isn't emotionally mature enough to listen to someone else and wait his turn to tell his side. We can't use this tool with him.

Kris: I know I feel like just deaden him the next time I find him in my gym bag.

Stan: That's understandable, but if Jonathan is the subject, let's get to your issue. What behavior did he do that you want him to change?

II.   Process

1. <u>Identify the behavior</u>

A. Process Description

We start by having Kris (Initiator) identify the behavior that he wants changed. If there are multiple behaviors, each behavior will be the handled separately. Kris is encouraged to be very specific about the behavior as well as give specific examples if there was more than one occurrence. For instance if Kris says that Jonathan (Subject) was "mean" to him, Stan (Facilitator) would help Kris identify specific 'mean' behaviors.

B. Conversation

Kris: Jonathan's always copping an attitude with me, like he thinks he's all that

Stan: Could you give me a behavior you want him to change?

Kris: I don't know. I'm just not feelen him and he's around a lot

Stan: Kris, we got to get concrete. I need a behavior that you want him to change. An attitude isn't a behavior, break it down.

Kris: Ok, he never replies to me when I speak to him. He comes in the room, or the school and I say wassup and he never replies. And when we're with the crew and I see a shortie I'm feeling he's all over that. He C-Blocks me.
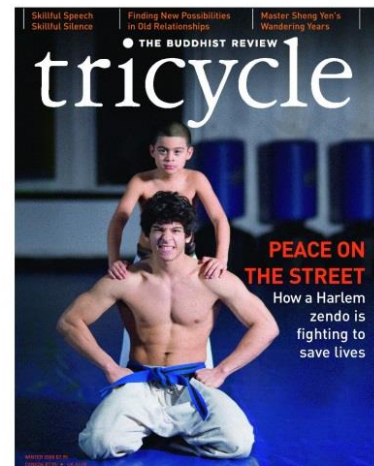
Jonathan: That isn't true, I don't do that.

Stan: (turning to Jonathan) Jonathan!

Jonathan; Ok, Ok, I'll be quiet.

<u>Kris and Brandon in Tricycle</u>

Stan: Kris, you named two things. We need to do them one at a time. Let's take the first one about Jonathan not replying to you and we'll deal with the second request to change a behavior – not interfering socially with you after we're done with this.

Kris: OK

Stan: Now Kris, you said, 'never'. That's a universal, you sure you mean 'never'?

4

Kris: OK, hardly ever.

Stan: Give me some concrete examples

Kris: Ok, yesterday when he came into the dojo, and the day before when I was in the locker room and he came in and Monday when I passed him in the hall.

Stan: Great Kris. What I hear you saying is that Jonathan is snubbing you; and those are examples. That's the behavior you want him to change. You want him to stop snubbing you.

Kris: Yeah and there's a lot more times he does it too.

Stan: That's OK those three specific times are enough for now.

Jonathan as Avatar

2. Share the suspected motivation

A. Process

At this point Kris (Initiator) is asked why he believes Jonathan (Subject) did the objectionable behavior. The concern here is not validating the suspected motivation but to have Kris share what he sincerely believes is the motivation for the behavior. At this step it is acceptable to name attitudes. "He does that behavior because he is mean" is an acceptable sharing of motivation.

B. Conversation

Stan: Why do you think that Jonathan is snubbing you?

Kris: Because he thinks he's a badass; that he is too cool to reply to me. And I'm going to kick his ass if he doesn't get it together.

Stan: You feel it's because he thinks that he is superior. Is there any other reason he is snubbing you?

Kris: I'm not sure but ever since I advanced a belt over him he's had an attitude. We came in at the same time but I busted ass and Sifu advanced me faster and Jonathan began messing with me afterwards. **Kris in Cage**

Stan: So here's what I hear you saying, you believe that

Jonathan is snubbing you because he feels he's superior, he's cooler. You also feel that he might be doing this because he resents that fact that you advanced a belt over him. Is there anything else?
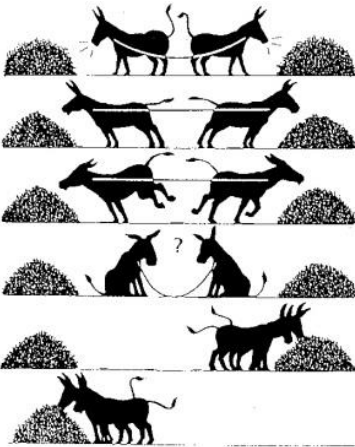
Kris: No, you got it.

a.   Share the feeling

A. Process

At this point Kris (Initiator) says how he feels. The concern here is to keep the focus on the feeling and often Stan (Facilitator) will support the Kris in focusing on a feeling.

B. Conversation

Stan: So how does this make you feel?

Kris: It makes me feel pissed. I'm trying to be nice by saying, 'Wassup', and he doesn't say shit. It makes me feel like kicking his ass.

Stan: I hear you saying he makes you really angry, especially because you're trying to be nice. Do you want to add anything to how you feel?

Kris: No, you got it.

4.   Name something positive about the Subject.

A. Process

At this point Kris (Initiator) names a positive behavior that Jonathan (Subject) has done. Ideally it is a positive behavior that is associated with the behavior Kris wants changed. For instance there might be a situation where someone in Kris' position wanted another person to help him with a task which that person refused to do. Kris might then indicate a positive behavior was when this person had previously helped him with a similar task. What is avoided at this stage is for the Kris to say Jonathan is 'a good person' or 'nice' or something equally vague. Left handed compliments are also avoided. Stan (Facilitator) often assists the person in Kris' position in articulating a valid positive behavior.

B. Conversation

Stan: Kris, tell me something positive about Jonathan.

Kris: He doesn't snub new students. He's nice to new students.

Stan: We can't use that. Not doing something negative doesn't count as a valid good thing.

Kris: But I said he was good with new students.

Stan: I think that's too general. Jonathan do you accept that as a positive thing?

Jonathan: No, it's too general.

Stan: Kris?

Kris: Ok, Jose is one of our new students and he came to sparring class last week and he didn't have his mouth piece or gloves. Jonathan found some extra ones and gave them to him so he could spar.

Stan: That's good.

III. <u>Validation – Subject</u>

A. Process

At this point Jonathan (Subject) speaks to the request and Kris (Initiator) listens. Jonathan may say that the request is invalid because he didn't do the behavior or because Kris does not have the right to ask the request. He might say that the request is valid but the motivation is not valid. Kris' belief about Jonathan's motivation is inaccurate. Finally Jonathan might say the feeling is not valid or is inappropriate. The behavior request might concern being two days late in repaying a $3.00 loan from Jonathan. Kris might also say that he is overcome by extraordinary anger. Jonathan might say that the emotion is inappropriate to the situation. This is not to say that Kris is not feeling the emotion. It is making a judgment about appropriateness of affect.

"A Hardware Conflict"
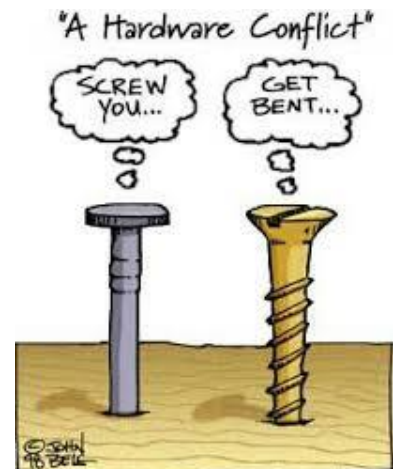
B. Conversation

Stan: Jonathan, was Kris's request valid?

Jonathan: No it's not valid; I might not reply to Kris all the time but he says wassup to me when we're just standing around, not just when we meet for the first time for the day. Maybe I'm putting together my gear or studying something and I don't feel like talking. But when he says 'wassup; when I first walk into the dojo when class begins I reply; maybe I don't say it loud enough but I say it. I reply to Kris if he says something to me. Those times he mentioned I replied most of the time. Maybe I didn't hear him once or twice but I replied. And the motivation isn't valid. Even if I acted that way it wouldn't be because I think I'm cooler than him or I'm all that. I don't feel that way. Also I know that Kris took a lot more classes and worked harder for the belt and I'm cool with him being up one belt.

Stan: Here's what I hear you say. The request is not valid because you don't snub Kris. You *may not reply all the time if he says something to you when you're doing something else but you reply when you first see each other. I also heard you say that he might not hear you when you respond. Concerning the motivation, I heard you say that the motivation isn't valid. You don't feel superior to Kris and you recognize he worked harder than you for the belt. You're Ok with him being a belt ahead. Did I miss anything?*

"You played well, son. But you have to learn not to throw a tantrum whenever things don't go your way. There's plenty of time for that after you enter the workforce."

Jonathan: No, Stan I think you got it – wait a second it's also not true that I interfere with Kris and the shorties.

Stan: That's a different issue. We'll process the interference request when we are done with that.   Do you feel Kris's feelings are valid?

Jonathan: Yes, if he sees things the way he said it makes sense that he would feel that way.

IV.   <u>Exchange</u>

A. Process

 At this point Kris (Initiator) adds any additional comments that he wants to. This is Kris' first chance to speak on what he has learned from Jonathan's (Subject) response concerning the validity or lack of validity of Kris' request for a behavior change, in essence, what he thinks of Jonathan's presentation. Stan (Facilitator) has an important

role at this time. Kris may speak as much as he wants as long as the material is original or new. He is not allowed to repeat the request or to repeat the points that he made earlier. Stan also insures that the process does not turn into a back and forth argument with Jonathan.

After Kris finishes, Jonathan is allowed to comment following the same rules. Often Stan will repeat back what Kris or Jonathan says in order to facilitate keeping the exchange restricted to new material. Eventually there is nothing new to add. The concept of new or original data vs. repeating data already said is critical at this point. Often the participants will want to repeat the same complaint or the same defense over and over. Encouraging new material while suppressing 'repeating' is often the most difficult task for the facilitator, it is also often the most important task.

B. Conversation

Round 1

Stan: Kris, is there anything you want to add?

Kris: Yes, what's up with Jonathan saying that he's greeting me but I can't hear him? I can hear fine. If he's mumbling or trying not to be heard its' the same thing only he's gamin or being passive aggressive. It's still the same thing as being snubbed. And another thing….

Stan: Kris, let's not add anything and just stay with this point. I want Jonathan to respond. Is that OK?

Kris: Sure

Stan: Jonathan, do you want to respond to that?

Jonathan: No

Stan: Kris said that by not speaking loud enough for him to hear you are snubbing him. Is that valid?

Jonathan: Ok you're right and other people have said I mumble and don't speak loudly. I'll make sure Kris hears me if I say something to him.

Stan: That's great, is there anything else you want to add?

Jonathan: Yeah, I'm make sure that Kris hears me but it's just as good to me if he comes and goes without saying wassup. I know we're in the same crew and everything, but I like it quieter and I won't complain that I'm being snubbed.

Stan: That makes sense. Is there anything else that you want to add?

Jonathan: No, I'm good.

Round 2

Stan: Kris, is there anything else you would like to add?

Kris: Not on what he just said, I'm chill with that, but I was going to say something else when you cut me off for this point.

Stan: Go ahead on your other issue.

Kris: What's up with Jonathan saying it's OK to snub me just because he said wassup earlier in the day? He should be civil and respond whenever I say wassup to him, not just the first time we meet. And I have to say wassup since I only do that when I find myself within a foot or so of him – like in the locker room. When one person gets that close to another you're supposed to acknowledge them or say something otherwise you're snubbing the other person.

Stan: I hear that you're forced to say something to Jonathan when you find yourself in close proximity otherwise you're being rude. Is that the only time this is an issue, when you're that close?

Kris: Yeah, I don't say shit to him unless it's rude not to.

Jonathan: You don't need to say shit to me.

Stan: Jonathan holdup. Kris, would you like to add anything?

Kris: No I'm good.

Stan: Now, Jonathan, go ahead.

Jonathan: Kris says it's rude not to say something when we're that physically close for some reason like in the locker room. OK, I can see that's the way it is. Once you get that close you're supposed to say something or the other person feels ignored or insulted. So here's wassup. Kris doesn't have to say anything to me when that happens. I won't feel insulted and he wouldn't feel snubbed when that happens. That way everything is cool

Stan: I hear you offering a contract to Kris. You'll be OK if he ignores what we normally do by saying something if he's that close to you. It's OK for him to be silent and you won't feel snubbed. That would take care of this part of the problem. Is there anything you want to add?

Jonathan: No you got it.

Round 3

Stan: Kris, is there anything else that you want to add?

Kris: No, I'm chill with what Jonathan said. As long as he's all right, I don't need to say anything when we're at the school.

Stan: Is there anything else you want to add?

Kris: No, I'm good.

Stan: Jonathan is there anything else you want to add.

Jonathan: No I'm good.

V.   <u>Group Judgment</u>

SNUBBED BY THE SNUBBEE.

A. Process

The final step is when Stan (Facilitator) as well as any other members of the group indicates if the request is valid. This ends the process. There does not need to be agreement between Kris (Initiator) and Jonathan (Subject). In the example before Stan is the only other member of the group so he alone comments on the validity.

B. Conversation

Stan: Do I consider this request to be valid? Yes I consider it's valid. It's valid for a person to expect a clear response when speaking to another person. I don't think that the motivation is true. I believe what Jonathan said about the motivation and think the problem was more based on other issues that had less to do with Kris and more to do with how Jonathan experiences other people. Kris' feelings were valid giving how he perceived things.

VI. Problem Solving Module

At times a group may have a situation where Jonathan (Subject) repeats the same behavior and continually says that the request is valid. In that situation the problem solving module can be used. This usually takes place after the behavior has repeated itself three times. For instance you might have a group living together and the subject consistently does not do his house task, perhaps taking out the garbage.

At the end of the Group Judgment step the Stan (Facilitator) could ask for problem solving. In our example, this essentially is contracting with Jonathan (Subject) to agree upon a penalty if the behavior takes place again. In this example Kris (Initiator) might agree that he would accept some penalty if Jonathan continued to snub him.   The purpose of the problem solving process is to maintain harmony in a group where one member agrees that he is consistently doing a behavior that is wrong or unfair. The following conversation is a sample conversation from the process above.

Unbeknownst to most students of psychology, Pavlov's first experiment was to ring a bell and cause his dog to attack Freud's cat.

Stan: So you think it's valid that Kris asks that you don't snub him?

Jonathan: Yes

Stan: This has been the same for the last couple of weeks. You said twice before that it was valid to ask that you don't snub him.

Jonathan: Yeah, I guess it has been brought up a couple of times.

Stan: Yet you are still snubbing him?

Jonathan: Yeah, I guess so.

Stan: So it would make sense that we use the problem solving process.

Jonathan: I guess so.

Kris: For sure, this just goes on and on and on.

Stan: Jonathan, what sort of penalty do you think will work?

Jonathan: I don't know. I guess I should pay a fine. But I don't have any money.

Kris: How about writing lines?

Stan: Jonathan's 25 years old. Lines are more appropriate for the younger brothers.

Kris: How about me getting a free shot at him.

Stan: You mean to hit him without him hitting back?

Kris: Yeah

Stan: Jonathan?

Jonathan: Actually, I could handle that, but open hand and not on the head.

Kris: That works.

Jonathan: Or in the groin

Kris: Sure

Stan: How can we confirm the snubbing took place?

Jonathan: Kris could confirm with Sensei, or I'd cop to it.

Kris: I'm chill with that.

Stan: Ok, let's meet in a week and see how this works. But just one thing, Kris, you need to chart each incident. Describe the snubbing and the penalty. I want to see what's really up with this situation.

Kris: Absolutely

VII. <u>No Blame Intensive</u>

This tool is used for problematic situations that one or more people find themselves in where clarity is desired. There are no clear behaviors that individuals want other individuals to change but there is a complex problematic situation that requires analysis and understanding. However when the group meets and individuals try to analyze what is

going on the conversation is at risk to degenerating into blame and argument. The No Blame Intensive is designed to safeguard against that happening.

The process is very simple. One person begins describing as accurately as possible the situation that is being analyzed. If during the narrative any member of the group feels blamed they stop the process and indicate how they feel. The narrator then re-describes the situation but in a way that the person does not feel blamed. As this goes on things will become clearer and clearer without turning into an argument since an individual's natural defensiveness about being blamed will not exist.

At the same time as the process continues it will become apparent that some members of the group want other members of the group to change a behavior. At that point the BCR process may be implemented or after the analysis a number of requests could be processed at the same time. The No Blame Intensive allows a group to clear a problem that is more complex than a simple behavior change; a situation where everyone is to blame and no one is to blame.

VIII. <u>General Comments</u>

"Your logic is flaccid and your data suppositional, dawg!"

The BCR process works best when small things are dealt with, rather than waiting for things to build up. If the process is used in a work or residential environment it is useful to integrate it into a reoccurring weekly or biweekly meeting. The ideal group size is six. Our example, for the sake of exposition only showed three but the ideal size of the group is five or six. The group should generally not be more than six. In the example the facilitator is reframing and confirming much more than is necessary once participants are used to the process. At that point the facilitator would only do this if it became very apparent that the two participants did not understand what was being said.

It is assumed that each person is acting sincerely. If one participant feels that the other is not being sincere this is processed as a separate behavior change request. This request would be initiated by Stan, as Facilitator. The following is a sample conversation drawn from the process above. We are picking up on the point where Jonathan (Subject) is being asked if Kris' (Initiator) request is valid. It should be noted that both Kris and Jonathan have been trained in the conflict resolution process and are able to take over as facilitators. During this example Kris becomes a facilitator. It would be much better if there was a larger group so someone else could facilitate.

Stan: Jonathan, was Kris's request valid?

Jonathan: Oh yeah, Kris is so sensitive and can't deal with being real.

Stan: Jonathan was Kris' request valid.

Jonathan: Kris is just being a little punk, he can't even spar right.

Stan: Jonathan, quit doing this. Speak to the question; is Kris's request for you to stop snubbing him valid?

Jonathan: What request, Kris is just being annoying.

Stan: Ok, let's reset this. I have a request for Jonathan, Kris could you facilitate?

Kris: Ok, What behavior do you want Jonathan to change?

Stan: I want him to be sincere in doing the conflict resolution process. He's not sincerely dealing with things. He's just saying insulting nonsense that has nothing to do with what we're here for.

Kris: Why do you think he's doing this?

Stan: I don't know. If he was having a bad day and was too emotionally messed up to deal with the process he could have just said so and not wasted everyone's time. He knows the process so it's not ignorance. Maybe he can't deal with being honest around what he's doing to Kris and is trying to escape dealing with things. Maybe he feels intimidated by Kris and can't handle being confronted with his behavior, or maybe there are other things going on with Kris that we don't know about.

Kris: How does that make you feel?

Stan: Annoyed, why is he wasting my time if he can't handle what's going on? I could be at the movies or doing something else if he's too messed up to be real when we're processing a problem he has with another person. It also makes me feel disappointed that Jonathan is regressing to this kind of behavior. He's better than that.

Kris: What is something good about Jonathan?

Stan: He has been doing health coaching with some of the diabetic patients and I was told by one of them yesterday how much he helped her.

Kris: Do you want to add anything?

Stan: No that's about it.

Kris: Jonathan, is Stan's request valid?

At this point the conversation can go in different directions. Jonathan (Subject) could say yes, the request was valid and goes back into structure and begins acting real. Or he can continue to game, to say inappropriate comments, denying what was happening and refusing to engage. If this happens, Stan (Facilitator) would end the process and other tools would be used to help Jonathan at a later time.

As individuals get use to the process the work of the facilitator becomes easier and easier. Besides making sure that only one person and the appropriate person is speaking at one time, the facilitator will usually have two or three specific tasks. The first is to be sure that if there are multiple behaviors that are at issue that they are identified and processed separately. In our example, Stan (Facilitator) also helps Kris (Initiator) identify specific examples of the behavior that is being challenged. Finally during the final phase Stan made sure that the process did not turn into an argument between the Kris and Jonathan with both individuals repeating their positions.

Stan's, or the facilitator's, opinion as well as the opinion of other members of the group concerning the validity of the request is not considered of greater or lesser validity than the judgment of the Kris and Jonathan.

Margaret's skills as a peacemaker had exceeded expectations at the mediaton.

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The process will work with children from about the age of seven and older. At the same time it will not work with anyone, including adults, who lack the emotional ability to listen to another person without interrupting him or her.

In general mocking, name calling and threats are not allowed although street language is permitted. (While not actually cursing, street language is often referred to as cursing). In our example this language was managed by Stan (Facilitator). You will notice in the conversations above that a certain amount of street language/threat was allowed especially when a participant is describing his feelings. For instant while Stan reframes, he does not correct Kris (Initiator) during the feeling dialogue when Kris says, "*It makes me feel like kicking his ass.*" This was not seen as a direct threat. If Kris had looked directly at Jonathan (Subject) and said, "I'm going to kick your ass", Stan would have challenged Kris, reminding him of the structure and through processing have him reframe the threat.

IX Summery

1. **The six basic steps of the Process**

    a. Identify the behavior
    b. Identify what the motivation is believed to be
    c. Identify how the Initiator feels about the behavior
    d. Identify something positive about the subject.
    e. Back and forth between initiator and subject until there is nothing new to add
    f. The group judgment on the validly of the request

2. **The eight functions of the Facilitator**

    a. Moderate the process so only the person with the floor speaks
    b. Insure the participants speak to him, not each other
    c. Insure that the speaker stays on the step in the process.
    d. Make sure that each behavior is handled separately.
    e. Monitor the back and forth so the speaker is speaking to the facilitator
    f. Monitor the back and forth so and only new material is being spoken to. Repeating by the subject and initiator is suppressed.
    g. When needed, repeat back to the speaker what was said.
    h. Manage the problem solving and insincere speaker situations.

3. **The five characteristics of the tool**

    a. This is a communication tool not a therapy tool. Once the communication is complete the process ends.
    b. Agreement is not a goal
    c. The tool can be used by children from the age of eight or nine on up.
    d. Most participants can be trained to facilitate the process.
    e. The tool is limited to participants who are stable enough to listen without interrupting the speaker. However we have found that if a participant has a mentor or a counselor sitting next to him/her, they can often participate because the support person can be effective in managing any interruptions. This allows the facilitator to keep the process going without constantly telling the participates not to interrupt each other.