

## .....BULLET POINTS.....

### Conflict!

Every great radio show, TV show, movie and book incorporates conflict in some way, with most of the entertainment arising out of the conflict. The power of conflict and contrast is apparent in most successful relationships of any kind, even in real life. On most radio morning shows it is friendly conflict that works best. (More serious and politically based talk shows are the exception to this.)

Shows that regularly tap into the brotherly/sisterly type of disagreements, where it is clear the players love each other yet disagree, tap the emotional hot buttons that make listeners feel something. People will always remember someone or some situation that makes them feel real emotion.

On-air relationships with too much agreement result in sameness and predictability. Conflict and contrast among players on a show, between a personality and a listener or guests more fully engages listeners. Each listener can have someone to agree with and disagree with, resulting in more emotional investment.

Avoid the predictability, however, of always taking opposite views. This is common with a male and female host and often results in "he said-she said", which can take away from realness and believability. People love to hate almost as much as they love to love. TSL is weakest when the audience doesn't care one way or another about a character.

Conflict can come from any number of sources. Use this list to get started and rotate how they are used:

- Take a radical position, such as a lightning rod liberal approach or an ultra-conservative stand to fuel conflict and get the phones going. Taking an exaggerated strong position always galvanizes the audience and creates an entertaining dynamic between show hosts and listeners.

Someone on the show or an acerbic caller who comes on from time to time in the form of a peripheral character or even a staged character can take an extreme position to fire up listener emotions.

- Conflict between show players serves as a platform to heighten character definition, which distinguishes personalities and also creates memorability. For example, natural contrast can be strategically set up in a show by pairing a conservative white guy with a black feminist. *The Odd Couple* TV show is a classic example of built in contrast and conflict.

- Controversial guests set up an opportunity for show players to contrast one another by one aligning with the guest and the other the counter viewpoint, for example. The audience will split with both sides as well.
- Listener mis-matches: Like in basketball, captivating radio is often a game of mis-matches. Create environments where conflict is created organically. Features *like War of the Roses* contain inherently strong emotional conflict. Even old standards like *Battle of the Sexes* set up situations where listeners can't agree.

Listen to great radio shows and watch popular TV sitcoms and notice how often tension is built through conflict, contrast, confrontation, etc. The best shows continually build up tension and release it or create conflict and resolve it (in a positive spirited way).

Focus show content on bringing out the natural contrast among the players to create electricity, friendly friction, sexual tension, etc. Plan the show with content that will cause listeners to talk about the show. Look for ways to push buttons and strike nerves.



## **Healthy Team Conflict Behind the Scenes**

Not only is conflict useful on-air, it's also a key component to a healthy team relationship off-air. It is important to distinguish productive ideological conflict from destructive fighting and interpersonal politics. Ideological conflict is limited to concepts and ideas, and avoids personality-focused, mean-spirited attacks. Passive, sarcastic comments are not constructive conflict.

Many people avoid conflict in the name of efficiency, but healthy conflict is actually a time saver. Teams that avoid conflict actually doom themselves to revisiting issues again and again without resolution.

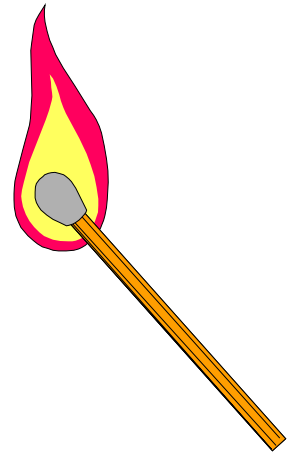
### ***Teams that fear conflict...***

- ✓ Have boring meetings
- ✓ Create environments where back-channel politics and personal attacks thrive
- ✓ Ignore controversial topics that are critical to team success
- ✓ Fail to tap into all the opinions and perspectives of team members
- ✓ Waste time and energy with posturing and interpersonal risk management

### ***To overcome this fear of conflict...***

1. Acknowledge that conflict is productive.
2. "Mine" for conflict – call out sensitive issues so they come out into the open.
3. Interrupt to remind everyone that what they are doing is necessary and good.
4. Promote honesty, not politics. "Politics is when people choose their words and actions based on how they want others to react rather than based on what they really think."

## SPARK



## CREATIVITY :

- ✓ **Every day, do at least one thing that intimidates you.**  
Example: Call someone you just met and invite him/her for coffee.
- ✓ **Change your routine.** Example: Drive a different route to the store.
- ✓ **Think about things from someone else's perspective.**
- ✓ **Make connections between unfamiliar things, just for fun.** Example: Think about what a soap bubble and a fresh tulip might have in common.
- ✓ **Do something silly.**
- ✓ **Write regularly in a journal about your experiences, dreams and thoughts.**
- ✓ **Randomly pick a word from the dictionary or an object in your home and use it as a basis for ideas.**

“Listeners remember how you make them feel more than they remember what you say.”



2660 Townsgate Rd. Suite 800 Westlake Village, CA 91361  
Randy Lane: (805) 497-7177 Fax: (805) 497-9858 Email: [randy@randylane.net](mailto:randy@randylane.net)

**Stan Main: (585) 313-3070**

**Email: [stan@randylane.net](mailto:stan@randylane.net)**