

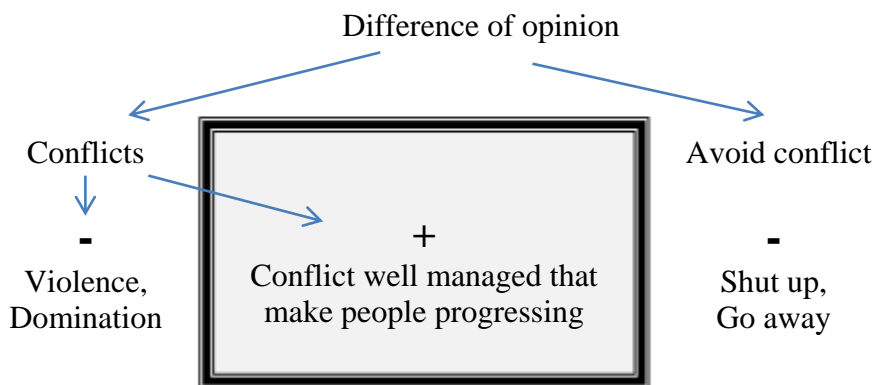
## Conclusion

Let us go back over the main steps of this course. In the first part, we questioned a limited pattern with only two options (p. 42):

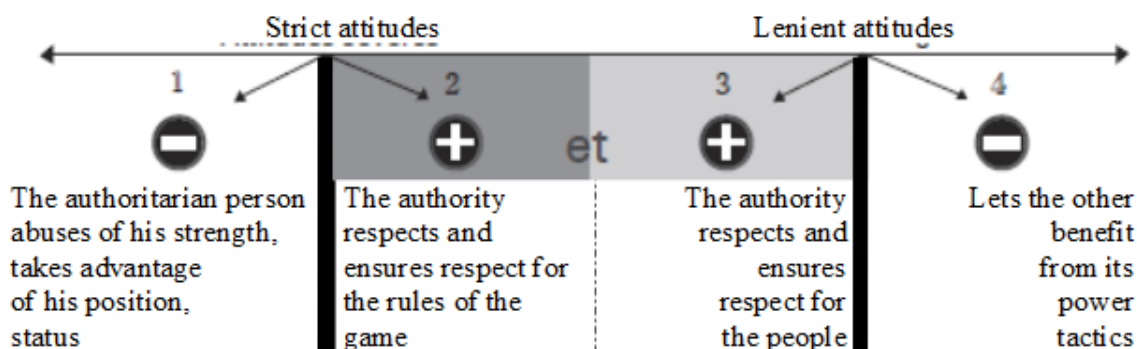
*On the one hand, the violent conflict, sign of the relationship failure* | *on the other hand, the lack of conflict, which is synonymous with peace, tranquillity*

We added a third option since avoidance of conflict can be detrimental, though less damaging than a conflict out of control which turns into violence, but still more harmful than a successful confrontation without power games between the parties.

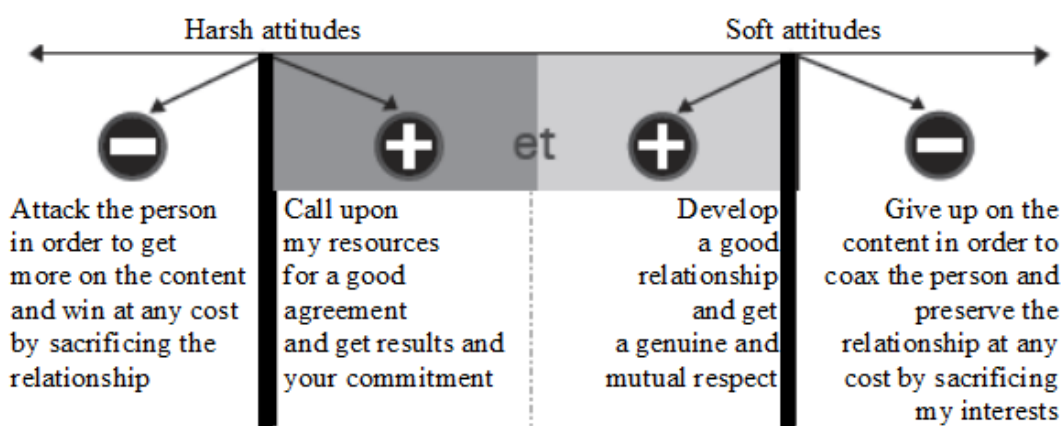
1) the mishandled conflict that destroys | 2) the well-managed conflict that builds up | 3) the avoided conflict that gives a semblance of peace.



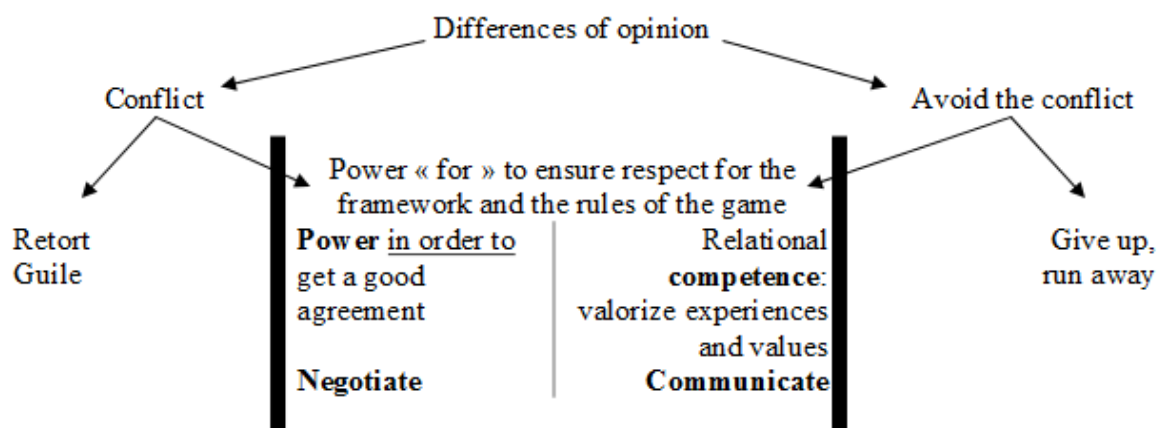
Thanks to a study on power relationships within a hierarchy, the figure shows up to four notions (p. 51). The middle column has been subdivided: a parent/educator/boss manages a conflict properly when they show both a **fair and firm authority** (respect and ensuring that the rules are respected) **WHILE** at the same time showing a **deep feeling of empathy** (respect and ensure that people are respected). On the contrary, they show poor management of the disagreement if showing authoritarianism (obtaining results by maintaining a stronghold of power *over* others) or by being submissive (suffering under the power of others).



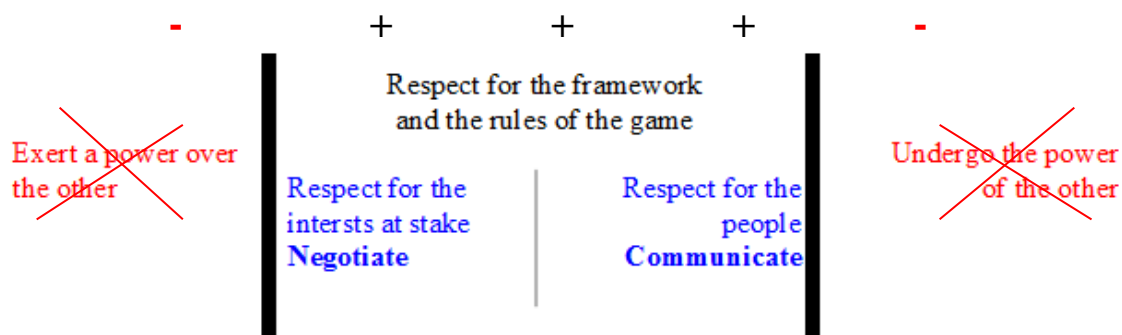
Those who attend the *CommunicActions* sessions learn how to deal with their daily conflicts just like one learns how to juggle. Nobody starts with three balls at once; the movements have to be broken down and the coordination mastered with two balls, first from right to left and then from left to right. In the second part about authority and comprehension, the combination used was mainly between framework of law and authentic communication. In the third part about the power-play in equal relationships, the combination used was between authentic communication and effective negotiation (reaching a good agreement **AND** improving the relationship), as well as between the framework of law and effective negotiation (how to put power strategies offside). In the fourth part, we were immersed in controversial dialogues. We deepened the combination between authentic communication (expand the emotional intelligence when facing J-R-E: Judgments, Reproaches and high Expectations) and effective negotiation (make use of rational thinking to detect the interests at stake and solve the related problem efficiently). On page 106:



These two by two series taught us how to juggle with the three creative powers "for" which their alchemy produces 1) a good agreement **AND** 2) a good relationship 3) within a quality framework, enabling a secured dialogue (p. 164):



We obtain the following figure by identifying the three creative powers "for" which take root in « respect » and refer to powers other than those held « over » individuals:



The more individuals can secure a framework of law, communicate authentically and negotiate effectively,

- the less they are willing to give up (column 4),
- the less they resort to plans to gain control over others (column 1),
- the more they succeed in defeating tactics to gain the upper-hand, the more they can obstruct violence,
- the more they develop relationships based on truthfulness and mutual respect (column 3),
- and the better will be the outcome in terms of finding solutions and reaching a wise agreement (column 2).

Hereafter is a synopsis of these three powers and their different aspects. Think of three colourful balls you roll between your fingers so that you can see them from various angles.

<b>The power of law.</b> Legal sphere, based on ethics. Standard process (Legislative and judicial power) based on an inflexible <u>severity</u> , on the principles of law and on basic rules.	<b>The power of empathy and love.</b> Psychological and spiritual areas (grease in the machinery, the « soul » of any positive approach): be unconditionally <u>open</u> to others.	<b>The power of cooperation.</b> Can lead to a long-lasting agreement for parties to commit to. Socio-political and economical spheres (executive power): <u>strong</u> determination to succeed.
Obstacle: The <b>might</b> of those on top of the social pyramid ( <b>temptation to rule</b> ).	Obstacle: <b>ideologies</b> and the belief that you alone possess the absolute truth ( <b>temptation to know-it-all</b> ).	Obstacle: <b>rivalries</b> , competitions, strict profit-orientation and selfishness ( <b>temptation to possess</b> )
<b>Punish</b> the misdemeanours. Resort to law against acts of violence that fall under statutory violation, without any arbitrary power nor emotional interference.	Detect the « <b>violent-ways-to-say-something</b> », the aggressiveness resulting from an inability to manage one's emotions and to express one's needs	Clearly thwart the « <b>violent-ways-to-earn-more</b> », the power games, the strategy boasting. Remain focused on the fundamental issues.
<b>P</b> oncer - Scrape (scrape off the façade before redecorating).	<b>P</b> anser - Heal (pay attention to past experiences).	<b>P</b> enser - Think (create, innovate).
How to take advantage of space, to transform the playfield and its environment.	How to create an atmosphere promoting a respectful dialogue where everyone has a place.	How to promote an effective <i>win-win</i> cooperation: and.... and...., rather than.... or....

The group process is dynamic, with everyone participating, thanks to the quality of the status, the roles, the functions and the decision-making procedures: the ability to create structures that will facilitate an individual assumption of responsibility.	People feel accepted. The relationship grows thanks to the quality of the bond, the acceptance of suffering and joy, the feelings, the complicity: everyone is unique and has a sacred story...	Each party finds the discussion worthwhile as profit grows bigger. Problems raised are solved. A task and production-orientated operational rationality generates results.
In the absence of the two other powers, there is a blockage risk.	If not coupled with the two other powers: risk to become naive.	In the absence of the two other powers, risk of die-hard opportunism.
Stick <b>objectively</b> to the law, to its rules and procedures. Should an injustice be spoken out, seek the truth within the structural situation. Reassess the framework of law through a standard process. Should an unfair law be maintained by those in power, challenge it in a non-violent way.	Be totally lenient with everyone's experience. Do not be afraid of mere <b>subjectivities</b> since « everyone has their own absolute truth». Feel comfortable with the depth of experiences and with the backgrounds that influence people's attitudes (gender, education, beliefs, story, culture, etc.).	Make more <b>objective</b> assertions. Start with objective goals and equate the interests. Solve the dispute thoughtfully, step-by-step, rationally, as if it was x equations with x being unknown. Refocus on the problem; come up with an effective solution. And then implement it.

Interconnect powers that do not lead to power **over** people.

Gather these powers together **against** all attempts of interpersonal domination.

The power <b>to</b> ensure the framework of law is a structural and normative dynamic which succeeds in withstanding someone else's upper hand <b>over</b> me by means of a quick response, however not synonymous of me having the upper hand <b>over</b> the other.	An authentic communication prevents the poisonous words about people (judgments, putting the blames on others, making someone feel guilty) by using a power <b>alongside</b> people, so that confrontation may turn into a side-by-side and fight into a duo.	Effective negotiation resists wars of position and demands by exerting power <b>to</b> refocus together on the problem and tackle it instead of attacking each other.
<b>Law is not negotiable.</b> No one has the right to change the rules during the game. Should the rules be inadequate, the decision-making authority alone is allowed to improve them. The process may otherwise be interrupted until an agreement is reached.	Listening to distressing experiences, to needs and worries of others will be all the more successful when it happens outside any power strategy, <b>without any decision-making issue, with no intention to change the other person</b> , and away from any pressure.	Flexible and mobile negotiation requires <b>freedom and responsible behaviour</b> from both parties. They hence get involved in an agreement to which they commit themselves. It short-circuits power game and stubbornness where one tries to impose his word as law.
<b>A piercing and watchful eye</b> prevents us from unresponsive and collusive behaviours each time we turn a blind eye.	<b>A warm heart</b> that makes life flow from head to stomach softens our hardheartedness.	<b>A cool head</b> that thinks clearly and a spirit determined to reach a solution.

The ideal of <b>equality</b> , the requirement of institutional consistency.	The ideal of <b>fraternity</b> , channelling love and beginning with tolerance.	The ideal of <b>freedom</b> , in a political struggle respectful of the democratic rules.
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War begins when **law**, **kindness** and **imagination** are defeated. War is the desertion of civilization, heart and spirit. Civilization strengthens institutional peace areas; the mind’s creative brightness keeps grinding away; the heart brings the required grease to the gears.

**Managing** conflicts by using the framework of law, **transforming** conflicts by using authentic communication and **solving** conflicts by using effective negotiation are three different but essential processes with each other, so that the C-R-I-T-E-R-E<sup>1</sup> “mayonnaise can set”. At each step, I explained how confusion between these three fields generates inefficiency on our part. We have learnt how to detect them in their own fields. We have also learnt how to combine them since resorting to one competency without the others leads to a dead-end.

As the **three levels of deadlock** are mixed up in open and latent conflicts, the first challenge is to untangle what results from **inadequate structures**, **undervalued experiences** and **conflicting interests**. The three steps to open a double locked door are: a) locate each lock, b) find the right key for each one and c) find the right way to open each one. The lock « violence used as a dramatic way to express experience » requires delicacy. Forcing through it will not make the empathy-key turn: this key has to be inserted appropriately in the lock, not too much nor too little. On the other hand, the lock «power game to obtain something » requires a confident power management key: this one has to be turned firmly, while lifting the handle and pressing strongly against the door.

Too often the door remains closed because we use the wrong key. Not only are we sceptic about having the right key, but we are ignorant of its properties: how to operate this bolt? It requires dexterity to put pressure in the right place, at the right time and in the right way! Some manage to open the door after fifteen minutes of effort. Others give up after having feverishly shaken the bunch of keys, grumbling about «this lock having a problem, or perhaps is it the right key that is missing». After having called the locksmith to the rescue, they are flabbergasted to see him open it instantly. It is difficult for them to hear: «What are you talking about? The lock works very well! »

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter the main schools of thought C-R-I-T-E-R-E draws its inspiration from: The language of change according Jesus in the Gospels, that of the Palo Alto school (Gregory Bateson, Paul Watzlawick, systemic therapy, brief therapy), school of nonviolence (Gandhi, Martin Luther King...), institutional pedagogy (Fernand Oury, Jacques Pain), NLP, assertiveness introduced in France namely by Dominique Chalvin, Carl Rogers' person centered listening, Thomas Gordon's No-Lose Conflict Resolution method, Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication, Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis, Jacques Salomé's E.S.P.E.R.E. method, Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence, Isabelle Filliozat's emotional and relational/social intelligences, Roger Fisher and William Ury's well-argued negotiation and their *Harvard Program on Negotiation*, the European Negotiation Centre (Michel Ghazal and Yves Halifa), the Institute for Research and Education on Negotiation in Europe, Patrick Audebert-Lasrochas' negotiation-creativity (LEARN in ESC- Lille).

No wonder the door remains closed when:

- we try to solve the problem logically in front of an interlocutor who can hardly swallow or with a stomach tied in knots,
- we use the empathic communication instead of whistling an offside,
- we conversely punish an offence by underestimating traumatic experiences,
- we try to open the door of power with the key of love or vice versa,
- we mix up respect of the rules with confidence.

When facing a difficult interlocutor, some will automatically limit their claims on the content in order to preserve the relationship; others will spontaneously lessen their kindness in order not to lose ground. It is however not recommended to give up on a relationship by giving priority to goals, or vice-versa. The challenge consists in lessening inflexibility on the content and openness to others. Gilbert Cesbron writes: « I believe in mankind. Mud is a misleading mixture of unspoiled water and good soil... It can take quite a lot of sand sifting before finding a speck of gold». In conflict management, it is easy to find a speck of gold (the agreement that rescues a disagreement) as there is no mixing of good soil and pure water, of respect for the rules and respect for the people.

The consolidation of the **framework of law** must take place far from any personalization, any subjectivity and any focusing that turns a controversy into conflict between individuals.

The **authentic communication** goes deep into the subjectivity of experiences. At the beginning of a conversation, empathy is required so as to understand the principles and motivations of everyone. It is a mistake to be tough and inflexible when in the relational sphere.

The **negotiation** runs smoothly when the subjectivity of the stakeholders cannot ruin the rational process of solving the real inconsistency on the profound differences. An agreement is right when it is wise. That is to say, if it satisfies the interest of all involved. To rely on good will and trust could lead to a dangerous confusion with interpersonal communication tools.

Knots will appear if these three strings get mixed up. They must however be braided into a rope. This interconnection without confusion guarantees the success of C-R-I-T-E-R-E. The framework of law without kindness is intolerable. « Because we know how to use a hammer, we believe any problem looks like a nail<sup>2</sup>. » The worker having only the framework of law in his toolbox is a dangerous man. Likewise is the person having only the communication pliers because, as a matter of fact, kindness alone cannot successfully solve a conflict: it would dangerously weaken the person. We saw that a battered spouse showing patience and forgiveness becomes tragically complicit with the violence endured if that spouse does not make any move to condemn the criminal aspect of this domination. They have to learn how to use legal recourse at a domestic level to put off unacceptable behaviours. On the other hand, kindness may do so and deserves to be unlimited if properly combined with the binding law and assertiveness<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> GODET Michel, *L'art et la méthode. Manuel de prospective stratégique*, tome 2, Dunod, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For that reason, the « powers of love » are fundamental but not sufficient. Without the framework of law relying on justice, kindness might be blindness much as this master full of indulgence for his slave, or this kidnapper tender with the little girl he hold captive, or this Westerner who focuses on

The interconnection of productive strengths reminds me of the following challenge: while one hand makes circular movements on the belly, the other hand makes a vertical movement on the head. This coordination requires a little training but motions become very easy as the correct reflex is produced. Conflict management has to be learnt like a foreign language or a sport. A person practising golf for the third time in his life is much less « likely » to get the ball in the hole, than a professional player would. As a matter of fact, it has nothing to do with luck. « Research is 5 % inspiration and 95 % perspiration », said Einstein. Before calling into question the quality of the tools, we must first educate ourselves –for instance by attending the session detailed in this book (cf. [www.communications.org](http://www.communicactions.org)).

« What people commonly call Fate is, as a general rule,  
nothing but their own stupid and foolish conduct»

Arthur Schopenhauer

This book will have reached its target if you feel you wish to deepen its concepts and train daily. « Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever », said Gandhi. It is the only way for true peace in our families, schools, businesses, countries and over the world. All learning processes pass through four steps: unconscious incompetence, painfully conscious incompetence, challenging conscious competence and blissful unconscious competence. The road has its ups and downs, but the most important thing is to be on the way.

Learn to walk before running for a better world. But even before that, when hurt, learn to stand upright, without losing balance, without putting pressure on someone else. At six months, our aim was to sit up before standing up. How far we have come since these first moments! And what a long and pleasant way before us!

« Change yourself and so change the world around you.  
Be the change that you wish to see in the world! »

Gandhi

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humanitarian work only in the South, or this North-African who turns a blind eye to the excision of his cherished daughter.