

Hello everybody. Thanks for tuning in to Digging Deeper, our blog series, diving into some specific issues in construction. Hopefully giving you some answers you can take home.

Today, I want to talk about conflict. I think of this mostly I guess as job site conflict. I guess in my experience that's probably where I've seen most of the serious conflicts happen. But certainly, they happen in the office and they happen on the phone. Unfortunately, in this world they probably happen a lot by email, which is a terrible place to have conflict, terrible place to communicate conflict. So, try to avoid that as you can. But I was thinking about a simple thing we used to use in consulting to talk about conflict and maybe you'll find this helpful.

So, what we have is sort of a stick figure drawing and it's about resolving conflict. So, what we have is two stick figures, one on each side of a shape. That shape we usually look at as a piece of glass or a mirror. And if you're looking at that shape from one side it's concave. And of course, if you look at the other person looking at this on the other side, it's convex. Now just imagine a stupid political conversation that we might have in today's world. But you have one person on one side saying, "Oh, that's concave." And the other person's saying, "No, that's convex." "Oh, you're stupid. That's concave. Anybody can see that." And the other person goes, "Huh, you must be crazy. That's convex." Well, who's right? Well, in this particular case, they're both right from their perspective or their point of view. And I think if you come right down to the core of conflict, is it's a different perspective, oftentimes on a same situation. You're seeing it one way, the other person seeing it the other way.

All right, so how do you get past this fact that you do have a different perspective and different perspectives come from your realm of experience. Even conversations, you think somebody shouting at you and they think they're being calm and collected. And that's how many of these arguments escalate. So again, how do you solve this problem? How do you solve this issue? Well, I hate to say it, but there are clues in the Bible and in your religious teachings. So, you've probably heard the saying, "Well, you've got to walk a mile in their shoes." Well for you to resolve a conflict, you have to understand their perspective and hopefully they're going to understand your perspective.

Well, how do you get your perspective? Well, as you can see in this diagram, you're on one side there and the other side, it looks different. You have to get off of your side, walk over. Now on this diagram you can imagine that, but really in an argument, you have to walk over, you have to leave your side and you have to look at the issue from their perspective. And you may come with words well like "Tell me how you're seeing this?" And ask for their perspective, "Why are you saying what you're saying? Why are you thinking what you're thinking?" Now once you've done that, perhaps you can invite them over to see your perspective. And again, the words that come with are, "Well, do you mind if I show you what it looks like from my perspective?"

All right, now boy, this sounds all touchy feely and nice, right, instead of two people shouting at each other over something silly. But, but really, oftentimes that's what you need to do. You need to get off of your side and you have to think about it from the other person's perspective and you have to get them off their side to come see your perspective. And you've probably also heard the saying that people don't care what you know until they know what you care.

So, you show your empathy by your willingness to get off of your side, travel to their side, and see what it looks like from over there. Then once they know you actually care what they think, they have more willingness to come over and see it from your side. So, the next time you're caught in a situation where there is a conflict of perspective, you see it one way,

they see it another way, try that simple, simple plan. Get off of your side, see it from theirs, then invite them over to your side and then see if it isn't much easier to find a resolution.

Again, thanks for tuning into Digging Deeper.