

## Leadership That Reduces Conflict

Sometimes leaders unwittingly exacerbate conflict. This often results from insecurity that reveals itself in being: 1) unable to make wise and timely decisions, 2) too eager to please everybody, and 3) unwilling to acknowledge conflict--in other words, withdrawing.

What kind of leadership behaviors serve to reduce conflict?

- 1) **Participatory leadership.** This style provides an essential ingredient in that the overall environment lends itself to conflict reduction and resolution.
- 2) **Effective leadership.** In a sense, we define leaders by **who they are** as we focus on character, honesty, and vision. We also define them by **what they do** when we add competence, problem-solving, and decision-making.
- 3) **Celebrative leadership.** Discouraged people are more likely to be drawn into conflict episodes; we encourage people by rewarding their individual achievements and celebrating team accomplishments.
- 4) **Vulnerable leadership.** We will all make mistakes. When we fail, when we cause hurt feelings, embarrassment, or pain, admit it and confront the effects. If we run and hide or pretend it didn't happen, we only intensify the conflict.
- 5) **Communicative leadership.** Operate on the "need to know" principle. Don't let your leadership style look bureaucratic, secretive, or military.