

**THE TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH
TO CONFLICT AND MEDIATION:
THREE DIMENSIONS**

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DIMENSION ONE: THE INTERACTIONAL VIEW OF CONFLICT

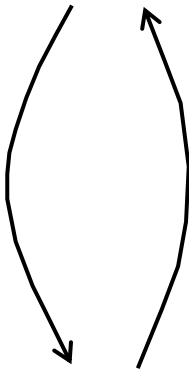
The Transformative Picture: Conflict is a crisis in human interaction.

The transformative approach is interactional, not transactional.

THE NEGATIVE CONFLICT CYCLE: *When conflict arises, we become.....*

WEAK

Unsettled
Confused
Fearful
Disorganized
Inarticulate
Unsure



SELF-ABSORBED

Self-protective
Defensive
Hostile
Suspicious
Closed
Judgmental

So interaction becomes **NEGATIVE/DESTRUCTIVE/ALIENATING/DEMONIZING**

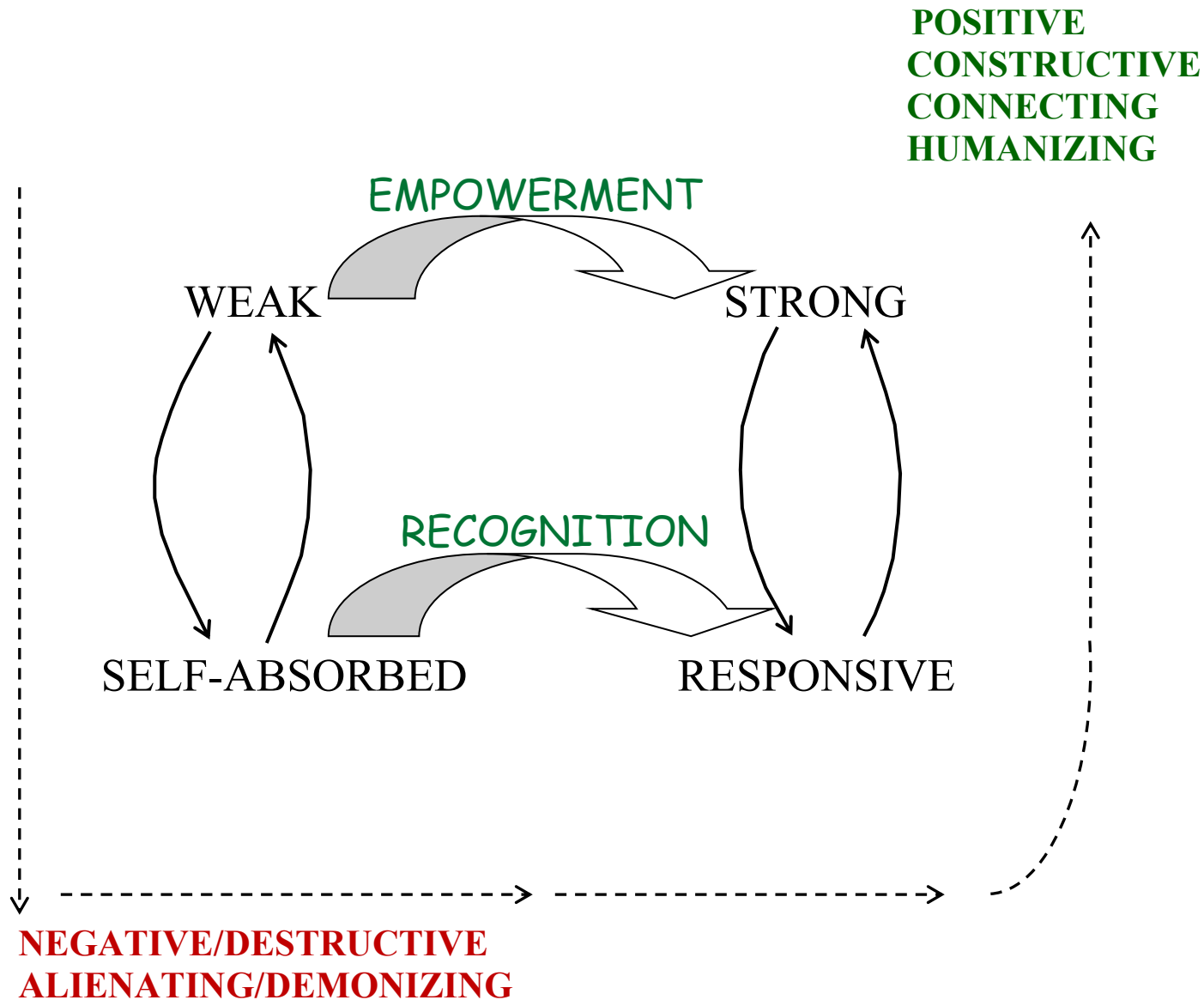
BUT – THERE IS MORE TO THE TRANSFORMATIVE PICTURE!

EMPOWERMENT AND RECOGNITION SHIFTS: **THE *POSITIVE POTENTIAL* IN CONFLICT**

- Despite conflict's destabilizing impact, people have the ability to rebound and recover from its alienating effects.
- People can and do make dynamic **shifts** along two dimensions while conflict unfolds:
 - **Empowerment Shifts**
Moving back into their sense of strength and confidence
 - **Recognition Shifts**
Moving back into their sense of openness and responsiveness to the other
- As these positive shifts feed into each other, the interaction can regenerate and assume a constructive, connecting, and humanizing character.

CHANGING CONFLICT INTERACTION

THE OVERALL PICTURE OF “CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION”



WHAT IS CHANGED? *THE INTERACTION*

FROM WEAK/SELFISH → *TO STRONG/RESPONSIVE*

FROM HELPLESS/HATEFUL → *TO COMPETENT/CARING*

FROM ANOMIE/ANTIPATHY → *TO AGENCY/EMPATHY*

FROM REACTIVE → *TO DELIBERATE*

FROM REACTING → *TO RESPONDING*

***WHAT WE CARE ABOUT IN CONFLICT IS NOT JUST WHAT WE GET,
BUT HOW WE ACT/INTERACT.***

DIMENSION TWO: TAKING SELF-DETERMINATION SERIOUSLY

THE MEDIATOR'S ROLE: *SUPPORT AND NEVER SUPPLANT*

In general, the goal of the **transformative mediator** is to **support the possibility of conflict transformation** by **supporting** party efforts at self-empowerment and inter-party recognition.

<i>Empowerment</i>	<i>Recognition</i>
The mediator aims to <i>aid</i> empowerment shifts, by <u><i>supporting and never supplanting</i></u> each party's voluntary efforts at <i>deliberation</i> and <i>decision-making</i>,	The mediator aims to <i>aid</i> recognition shifts, by <u><i>supporting and never forcing</i></u> each party's voluntary efforts to achieve <i>new understandings</i> of the <i>other's perspective</i>,

WHY “NEVER SUPPLANT”?

THE IMPACT OF “SUPPLANTING” ON CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

**POSITIVE
CONSTRUCTIVE
CONNECTING
HUMANIZING**

DIS-EMPOWERMENT

WEAK

<<--<<-----STRONG

STRONG

NON-RECOGNITION

SELF-ABSORBED

RESPONSIVE

NEGATIVE/DESTRUCTIVE ALIENATING/DEMONIZING

DIMENSION THREE:

CONNECTING PRACTICE TO PREMISES

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE 3 “P’s”

Mediation practice is always more than a simple matter of “skills.”

Mediator *interventions* are shaped by the mediator’s *theoretical assumptions* about his or her *goals* for the mediation, which are embedded in the mediator’s fundamental value-based premises or beliefs about the nature of conflict and the capacities/desires of human beings in conflict.

Stated another way, *purpose drives practice*. Mediation cannot be practiced competently or responsibly without a constant awareness of this connection.

PRACTICE (HOW)



PURPOSE (WHAT)



PREMISES (WHY)