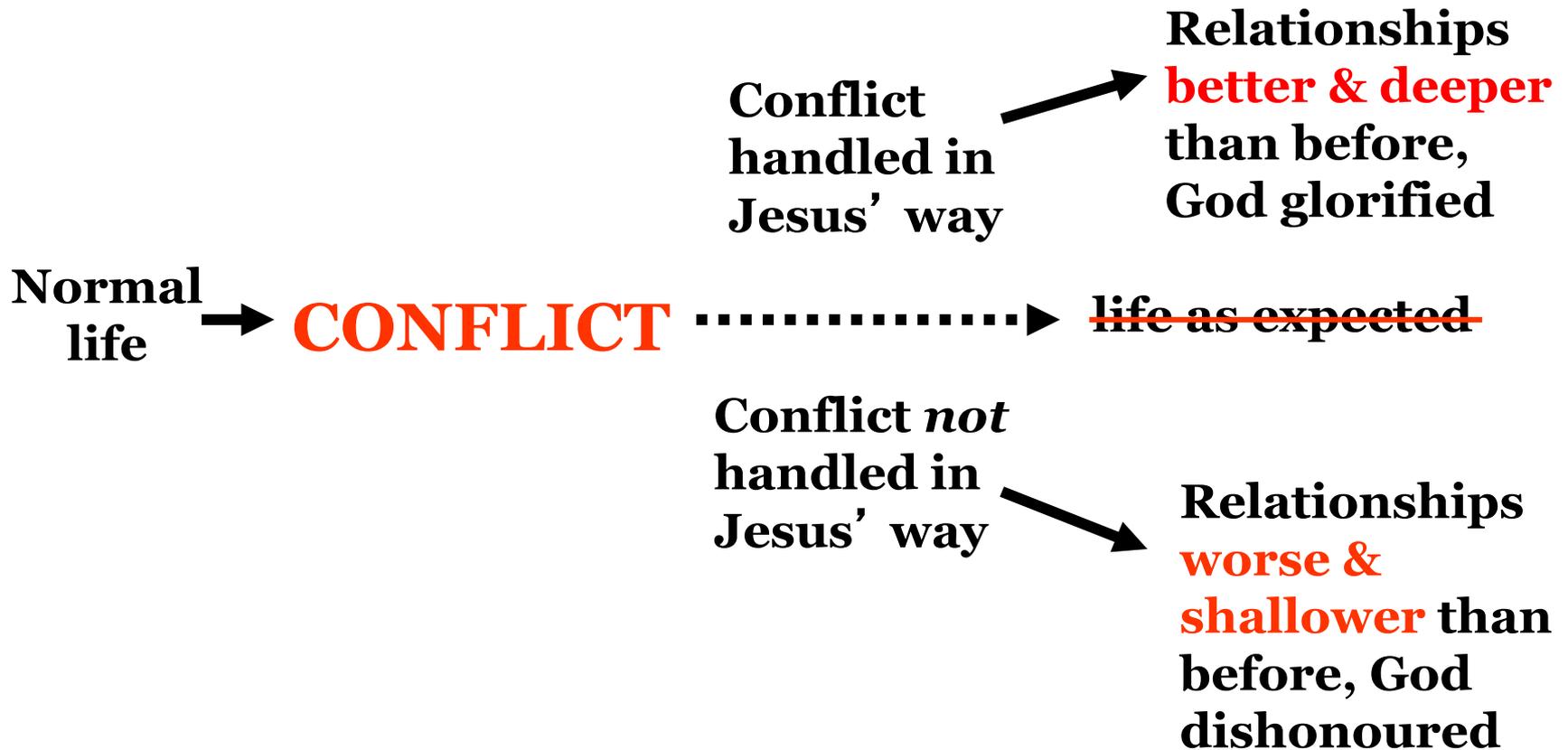


Healthy Conflict Resolution

Introduction

- Conflict is inevitable
- Conflict in Christian organisations is also inevitable
- Conflict in our culture tends to be denied / swept under the carpet
- The Apostles deal with conflict and seek reconciliation (e.g. 2 Cor.)

Every Conflict Offers an Opportunity



Small Group Discussion

- Tell a story you've experienced where a conflict brought about a situation that was better than before. (Note: avoid gossip, leave out names)
- Tell a story about conflict handled badly (or not handled at all) bringing about a worse situation. (Again, leave out names)

Conflict situations usually have several things in common:

There are high stakes and potential consequences

There are opposing viewpoints

There is uncertainty about how the conversation will play out

There is often historical baggage

There are powerful emotions involved

Risk

What are the main reasons for putting off difficult conversations

- Didn't want to create a bad atmosphere 29%
- To avoid confrontation 18%
- Didn't know how to say it 16%
- Worried about the reprisals 11%
- Thought it might make the situation worse 11%
- Didn't want to upset someone 8%
- Lack of time 7%

Did the issue:

- Resolve itself 4%
- Get worse 43%
- Stay the same 49%

The other 4% reported that someone else had tackled the issue

Normal
life



CONFLICT



~~life as expected~~

Jesus' way:
Pure peace-
loving
Considerate
Submissive
Full of
mercy
Full of good
fruit
Impartial
sincere



**Life becomes
better:**
"a harvest of
righteousness"

**Not Jesus'
way:**
Envy
Selfish
ambition
Denial,
Deceit



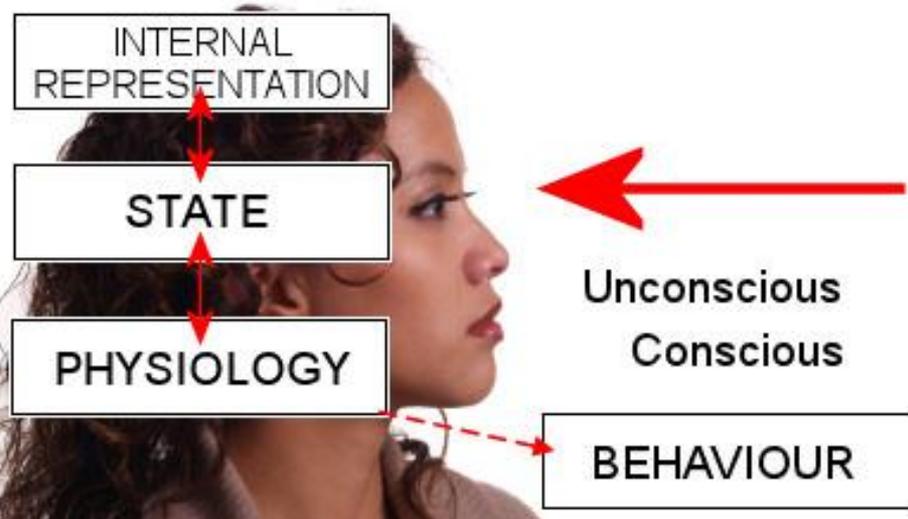
**Life becomes
worse:**
"Disorder &
every evil
practice"

A Helpful Communications Model

The human sensory system sends the brain **11 million bits** of information per second.

The actual amount our **conscious mind** can handle is approximately **16 - 50 bits per second**

This data filter is a survival instinct.



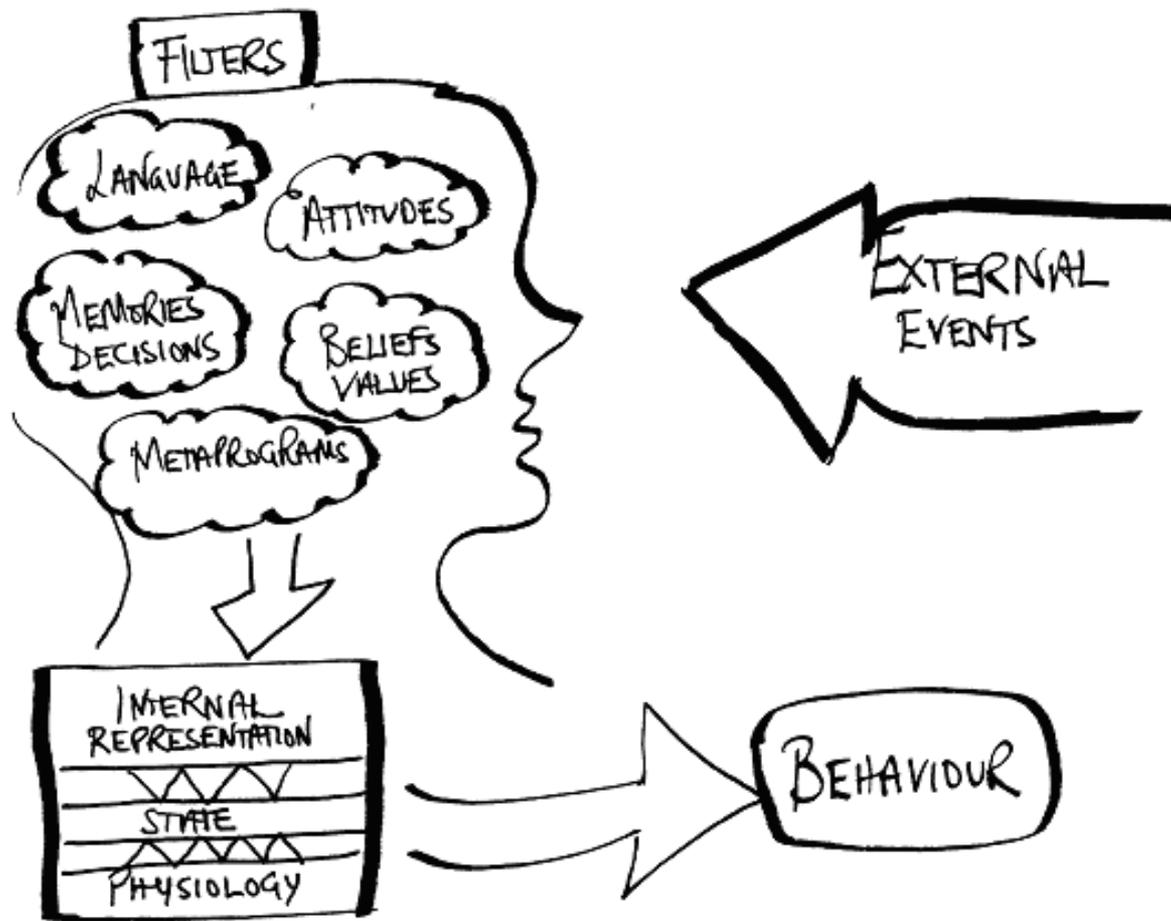
THE FILTERS WHICH

Delete, Distort & Generalise

- Meta Programs
- Values
- Beliefs
- Decisions
- Memories

EXTERNAL EVENT

A red arrow points from the 'EXTERNAL EVENT' box towards the filters.



Our Basic Problem

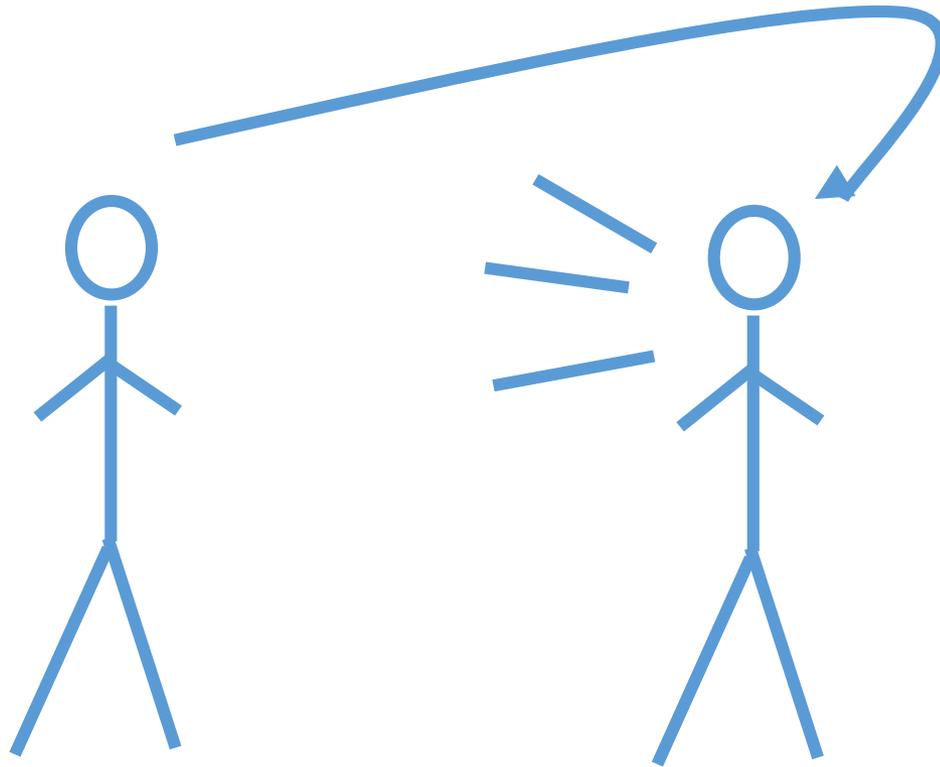
- **‘I’ (not ‘i’)**
- Always right
- The standard of what’s good and best
- Worthy of praise
- Deserving of honor and respect
- Greater and more important than those around me
- **James 4:1; Gal. 2:20**



Empathy

This involves seeing and trying to **understand** where the other person's coming from.

God sees their point of view (whether he agrees with it or not).



Mediators?

Esther 5 – 10; 1 Sam. 25; Phil. 4:2-3

1. Why is a mediator less threatening and thus more effective in resolving problems in some cultures and situations?
2. Why does a mediator sometimes have more credibility or authority, thus greater effectiveness?
3. What's the difference between gossiping and asking for assistance from a mediator?
4. What are some real life situations you can envision in which a mediator is more effective at resolving a problem than a direct, confrontational approach

Luke 6:41-42

The first conversation to have is with yourself:

- **What is the issue?**
- **Why is it bothering you?**
- **What are your assumptions?**
- **What emotions are attached?**
- **What is your purpose in having the conversation?**
- **What will happen if have or don't have this conversation?**
- **What is your own part in the conflict? How have you sinned in similar ways at other times?**
- **Am I remembering my own sinfulness and forgiveness? (Matt. 18:21-25)**

When to overlook and when to confront

- Matthew 18:15-20
- Proverbs 19:11
- 1 Corinthians 5 & 6

Tool #1: Make it Safe



- Embrace a mutual purpose
- Offer mutual respect

Tool #2: Listen

Listen

“Seek first to understand...”

- Listen with curiosity and care; not judgment
- Ask open-ended questions
 - “Tell me more...”
 - “Help me understand...”
- Reflect back to make sure you have understood

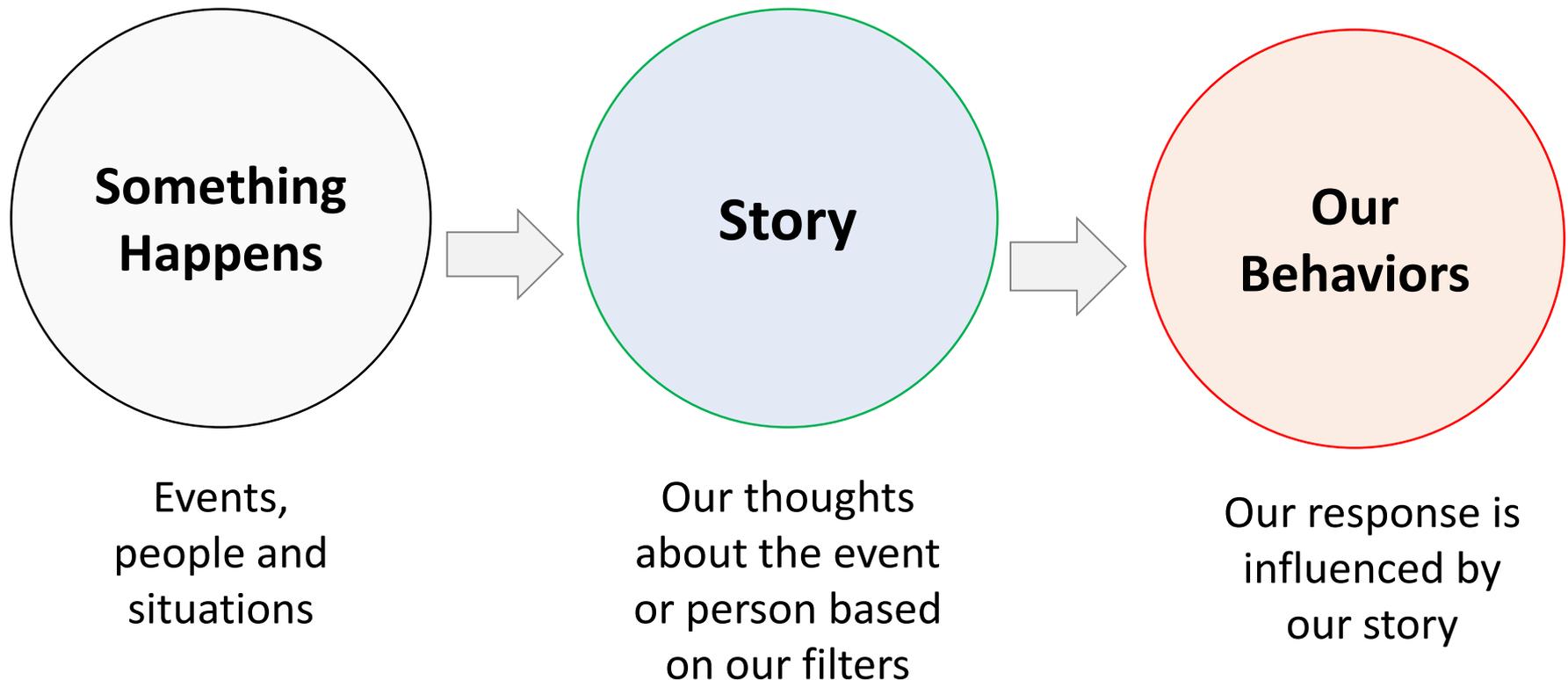


Tool #3: “Yes, *AND*...”

- We all see the world differently
- This is about owning and stating your point of view, *AND* being open and willing to hear and accept another point of view

Tool #4: Recognize Your Stories

- Our stories (the repetitive messages in our brains) come from our personal thoughts and filters... they are quick... they are (often) unconscious... they are automatic



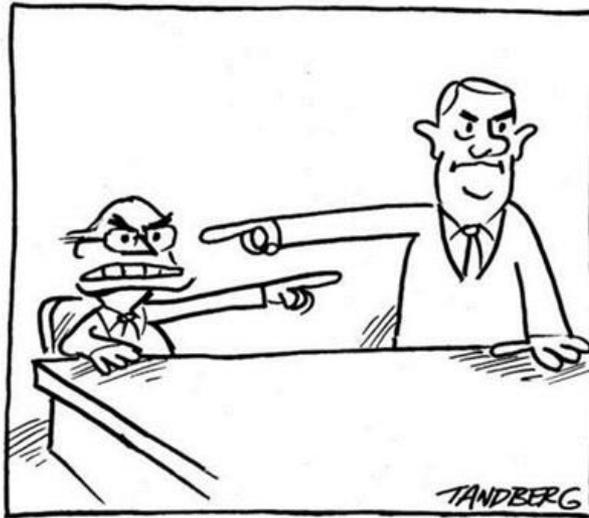
Tool #5: Use “I” Messages

- Start your sentences with “I”
- Sentences that start with “you” sound accusatory and blaming and will likely result in defensiveness

If you are misinterpreted, use a contrasting statement... state the message you're NOT trying to send and then state the message you want to communicate

Tool #6: Own Your Own Stuff

**Focus on personal accountability,
not blame**



- Personal accountability = accepting responsibility for my own actions and non-actions

Forgive as God Commands

- Forgiving someone means releasing the offenses and the results of those offenses, including feelings of bitterness, to God.
- It doesn't mean that your perspective is the only one.
- It doesn't mean that what the person did was right.
- It doesn't mean that they should be trusted.
- It is not the same as reconciliation.

*Follow-up step when forgiving another person: **Pray** a blessing on the person*

Personal Application

Pray and write down:

- Highlights of what you've taken away from this workshop
- Application steps

Further resources:

- [Bruce Burgess, 'The hope of biblical peacemaking as a response to the challenge of conflict', *The Briefing* Nov. 2010](#)
- [Peacemaker Ministries](#)