

Conflict & Dispute Resolution

The Persistence of Escalation

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Dean G. Pruitt & Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict*, chapter 8 (only pages 151–161 & 164–67).

Questions

1. How do the examples of the tail of Cerberus and the rubber band illustrate the persistence of heavy escalation?
2. One factor contributing to the persistence of escalation is the persistence of the structural change that occurs during escalation. For each of the psychological changes we discussed last class, to what extent does it tend to persist and protract escalation?
3. A related factor contributing to the persistence of escalation is entrapment. What is entrapment? How is it illustrated by the auction that we held in class a week ago? What are the four ways to combat entrapment?

When responding to 2, fill out the table posted on the website. I've already done the first row for you. Please print out and bring this table to class, so we can go over it together as a group.