

## Conflict & Dispute Resolution

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### Stalemate & Optimism for Problem Solving

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 9.

#### Questions

1. What are the five major sorts of resolution to an escalated conflict? After extreme escalation, why might negotiation and problem solving seem like the only plausible option?
2. What is negotiation? What is the difference between bargaining and problem solving?
3. According to ripeness theory, there are three major factors influencing the parties to shift from escalation to problem solving. The first is perceived stalemate. What is this? What are four major reasons why the parties might find themselves in stalemate? What are two major ways in which the parties may recognize that they are in stalemate?
4. The second factor according to ripeness theory is optimism. What is optimism? What are factors that might cause the parties to have it?
5. The third factor of ripeness theory is being able to thwart the effects of contentious structural changes. What are the three ways in which these effects may be mitigated?