

CONFLICT & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Identity Conversation

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

- Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). Ground Your Identity. In *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* (2nd ed., pp. 111–128). New York: Viking Penguin.

Questions

1. What three core identities do Stone *et al* identify? In what ways can these be threatened during a difficult conversation?
2. What does it mean to be “knocked off balance” (p. 113) with respect to our identity? Why does that cause problems for us? What attitudes or thought processes make us particularly vulnerable to being knocked off balance during a difficult conversation?
3. What two steps do Stone *et al* give for effectively managing the identity conversation?
4. What suggestions do Stone *et al* make for regaining your balance?