



# *Defining Conflict*

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# Fascination for conflict

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*“ Except God and love, no theme has received more attention in world literature than conflict... ”*

*(Anotol Rapoport)*

... And 75% of literature is about a combination of those three...

*What do you find fascinating about conflict?*

# Defining conflict

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- Many different definitions from many different perspectives.
- Main differences:
  - intrapersonal versus interpersonal (social)
  - objective versus subjective
  - behavior or experience

# Intrapersonal and Interpersonal conflict

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Intrapersonal or Inner conflicts

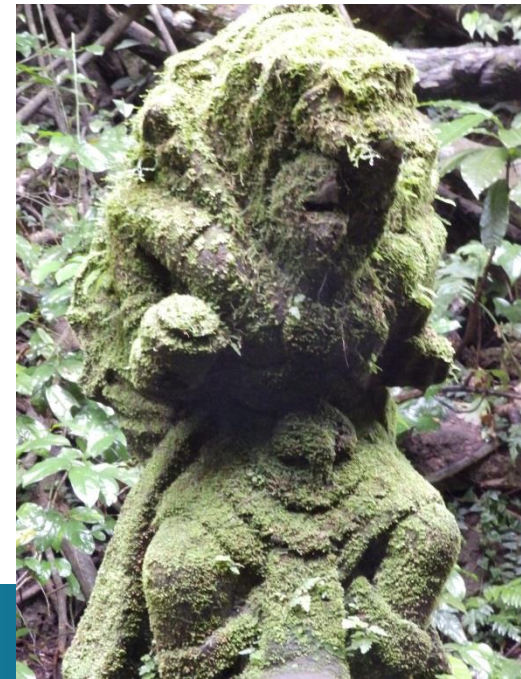
*Decisions you have to make*

*Conflicting roles*

*Conflicting feelings*

*Evaluations of your life*

All can create *inner* tensions  
and (self)destructive thoughts  
And behaviors



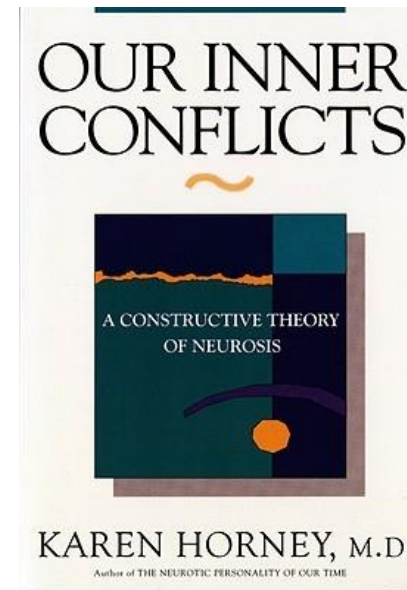
# Intrapersonal and Interpersonal conflict

Interpersonal or social conflicts are conflicts between two or more persons or parties

There is a strong link between intrapersonal and social conflict

Intrapersonal  interpersonal

Stress  social conflict



# Intrapersonal and Interpersonal conflict

Difference between intra- and interpersonal conflict is attribution

Who do you see as root cause for

Frustration, fear, misery?

Yourself or the other?



# Objective versus Subjective conflicts

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- lawyers economists and sociologists often define conflicts in terms of an 'objective' analysis and 'objective' outcomes
- A classic approach is the Marxist perspective of class conflict'. Different Neo-Marxist theories (workers, women, black) elaborated on that; the repressed group internalizes values of the dominant group, and therefore is not aware of conflict, that does exist
- Most psychologists focus on the subjective experience: cognition, perception, and emotions

# Conflict as Behavior or Experience

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Conflict can be described as manifest in antagonistic behaviors

Conflict starts with experience of frustration



# Conflict: working definition

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- There is a Conflict between two or more parties if at least one of the parties is frustrated or hindered by the other.
- Conflict Management: Any *behavioral* response to the frustration, and response on that response.
- Cognitive and/or Affective
- Subjective: there doesn't have to be an objective ground
- (At least) one party feels frustrated
- Conflict *management* is different from conflict *experience*

