

# Freed from Fear

Session Five

Regional All Day Gathering



 Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA

Courageous, resilient, and faithful leaders for the sake of the world

# Freed from Fear

## Session Five Participant Outcomes:

1. Describe a difficult situation in which forces were at work inwardly and outwardly.
2. Recall situations in which you used the fight/flight/freeze behaviors to cope with difficult situations.
3. Describe more appropriate strategies you would use to deal with a conflict situation you've experienced.
4. Engage spiritual practices to help you center in challenging situations.

## Preparation for this Session:

- Read this section of the Manual
- Finish reading *Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, Chapter 10 by Ron Heifetz

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## Becoming Free from Fear

*“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” Isaiah 43: 1b – 3a.*

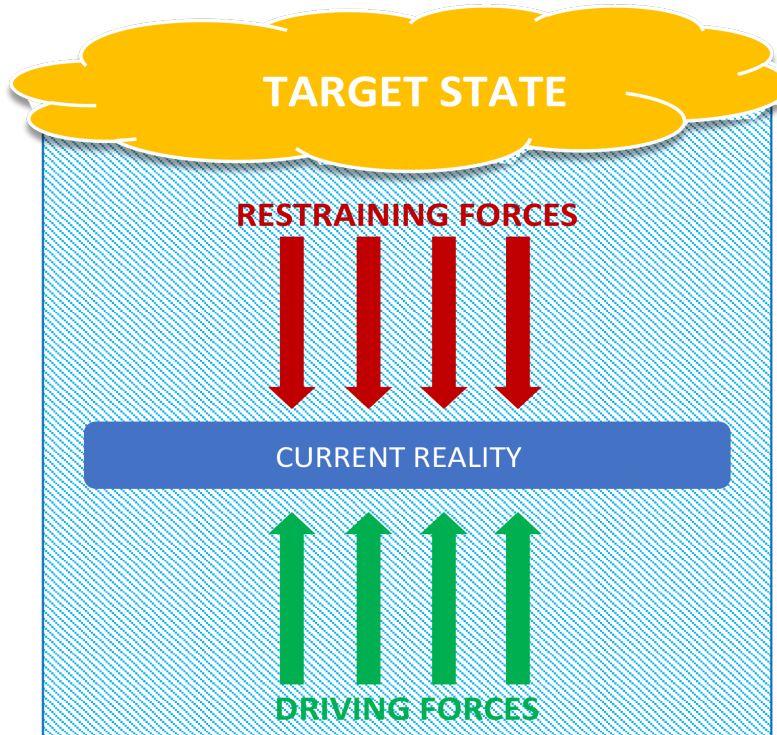
Fear and anxiety are part of the human condition and is a byproduct of being mortal. We are limited in scope, knowledge, foresight, insight, space, and time. When we don't know what we don't know, we become anxious. We fear death, the future, and the unseen forces at work which could threaten us. Fear reduces us to fight, flight or freeze mode and paralyzes us so that we are not able to utilize our high brain functions of reason and compassion. We might use several coping mechanisms such as, over/under functioning, blaming, herding, or starting a fight to relieve our anxiety. Living in fear and anxiety keeps us from being the people God has created us to be. No wonder “fear not” is one of the constant messages throughout Scripture. Jesus came to show us another way— free from fear. Trusting in the God's love for us, the resurrection, and in the Holy Spirit to guide us, we can be free from fear. What Good News! We also know that building this trust is a life-long spiritual journey that involves a deep look into our hearts and souls to the places that cling to this bondage of fear. Threatening situations and conflict still push our buttons and we need to find healthier ways to manage our anxiety and center ourselves once again in the Good News of God's love and abundant life.

As we have discovered through our work in family systems, anxiety is very present in the faith communities we lead. We need ways to better understand the forces at work that bind us. We need to be free from fear as a people of God, to move into the God's future for us: embodying and proclaiming God's unconditional love for the sake of the world around us that needs this Good News. In this session, we hope to gain some tools to help us with this work.

## Force Field Analysis

Force-field analysis is a qualitative tool used to summarize diagnostic data and enable strategic planning. Derived from Kurt Lewin's force field theory and model of change theory, this particular analysis organizes data into two major categories: those supporting change and those resisting change. The tool works effectively with groups, as it provides a process that is easily understandable and highly graphic to engage members in a way that is both visual and practical.

This group process identifies a current state or condition that needs change, names a target state, then brainstorm/prioritizes all driving forces that support movement to the target state and all restraining forces that resist movement to the target state. The group then rates or ranks the competing forces of each type.



The data, captured on newsprint as shown above, allows the group to see the new target state as a higher plane, and to see driving forces (drawn as upward arrows) for preferred reality or target state, and how the reduction of restraining forces (drawn as downward arrows) will unleash the energy of the driving forces towards positive performance improvement. Wisely, Lewin points out that the inertia of the status quo exerts a restraining force of its own. A change effort that focuses on *reduction of forces maintaining the status quo* is likely to result in organizational change with less tension or conflict typically accompanying change caused by *increasing the forces of change*.

Force-field analysis allows for greater understanding of how system thinking can enhance strategic plans by including both internal and external forces that may impact the congregation's strategic goals and vision. Studying the relationship between both driving and restraining forces invites a deeper dive into understanding and working with a system. Becoming more aware of why some people want the change and why some people are fighting the change allows leaders to more respectfully and compassionately address the whole system.

### Steps for using force field analysis:

**Step 1:** Gather the members of the group conducting the analysis; define the situation and general goal. Include all stakeholders\* and persons with the authority to make decisions. Planning teams often make decisions based on intuition or a limited view that would not be made if the stakeholders most affected by the decisions were consulted.

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\* Stakeholders are the people who will be most affected, positively and negatively, by the proposed change.

**Step 2:** Name the target state or ideal situation and describe what that would look like.

**Step 3:** Describe the current situation, adding notes about why it is working and why the change is being proposed.

**Step 4:** Clearly define the gap that exists between the target and the current situation.

**Step 5:** Brainstorm the **driving** and **restraining** forces that create the status quo. Involve each participant in naming at least one item using two colors of sticky notes, to separate driving and restraining forces. On each note, the force is named and ranked high, medium, or low impact. These notes are then arranged on a larger representation of the force field. Limit the forces to only those currently acting on the system.

**Step 6:** An action plan is developed, focusing on reducing the restraining forces. Pay less attention to strengthening the driving forces. Be aware of the possible relationship between resisting and driving forces. Note the groups insights and wonderings. Include finding answers to some of your questions and assumptions in your action plan.

#### Important Notes:

A facilitator is needed to manage this process. During Steps 2, 3 and 4, in which the target state or ideal situation versus the current reality are defined and the gap between them named, the facilitator role is critical in terms of prompting questions and capturing and testing consensus. Groups tend to rush to problem solving too soon. Allow enough time for a creative, adaptive analysis to occur.

When complex issues are analyzed, the force field analysis can be used as a nested technique. If a driving or restraining force has multiple elements to it, take the time to break down the specific elements by naming the driving and restraining forces embedded in this particular insight.

## SWOT

### (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

A SWOT analysis is another tool for leaders to use to observe a community or system. This tool uses two axes at the same time – positive/negative and internal/external. The four resulting areas are:

- Strengths – internal positives
- Weaknesses – internal negatives
- Opportunities – external positives
- Threats – external negatives



1. To use this tool with a group or committee, hang two pieces of newsprint. Label the first “Internal Realities” and the second with “External Forces.”

Internal Realities	
Strengths	Weaknesses

External Forces	
Opportunities	Threats

2. Start by identifying your internal realities, positives and negatives. Write them in the appropriate columns. Prioritize the lists. Remember that specific items named can be both strengths and weaknesses at the same time, depending on how you frame it.
3. Identify external forces that impact the group being assessed, both positive and negative.
4. Prioritize these forces. What forces are having the greatest impact?
5. Identify possible opportunities (O) or threats (T) related to the top forces and prioritize.
6. Discuss possible strategic issues based on top S/W, O/T.

Additional Steps (if time allows, if appropriate for this team’s work):

8. Change top strategic issues into strategic goals.
9. Possibly incorporate into larger vision statement.
10. Develop a plan for addressing the strategic goals.

## Under the Tip of the Iceberg

Managing community relationships is concerned with the total system: those aspects of the community’s life and work that are easily seen (the tip of the iceberg) and those that are often hidden (below the surface of the water). All elements of a community’s life are interrelated.

For example, the presenting issue in a community may be a problem or tension in financial management. The tip of the iceberg could be that financial statements are not being shared with the Council in a timely and consistent way. Under the surface of the water, there might be several independent or interrelated concerns.



EXAMPLE:

- The bookkeeping process is outdated and no longer an appropriate method of tracking financial records.
- The person tasked with creating the official records isn't equipped to do the job the community is asking the person to do.
- Trust levels are low and therefore people are withholding critical information.



Using the model of the iceberg can give leaders a lens to view and discuss what is really going on. This model can be helpful in determining if the problem needs a technological fix or is an adaptive challenge to the culture of the congregation.

## Meditation and Centering Prayer

Listening to God and resting in God are primary ways in which we can be freed from the tyrannies of this world. Often our prayer times are filled with our concerns and chatter to let the Almighty know what is on our hearts. While this allows us to unburden ourselves, it often doesn't allow us to quiet ourselves and be present to what God wants to give us.

**MEDITATION** allows us to specifically focus on a passage of scripture, part of God's creation, or some other inspirational text or experience giving space for God to talk to us. The practice of **Lectio Divina** specifically focuses on reading a passage of scripture several times and listening in very intentional ways for God to speak to us. Generally, the first reading focuses on what is going on in the text and any words or phrases which capture our attention. In the second reading, we are to listen to what God might be trying to say to us through those words or phrases which caught our attention. In the third reading, we are to listen for a call to action— what is God calling us to do in response? The same general outline can be used in meditation on an object, piece of art or music, an aspect of creation, etc.

**CENTERING PRAYER** is a prayer of silence and resting in God. Over time, we discover ourselves transformed in the "fruit of the Spirit", in the ways of God's wisdom, and in inner healing/freedom. Centering prayer is usually about 20 minutes of silence in a relaxed sitting position. It often begins with a brief meditation or chime to bring us into the presence of God. Often a "sacred word" is used to center the mind in a state of quiet rest whenever a stray thought or disruption occur. The mind, heart, and will rest in openness to God. At the end of the prayer, the Lord's prayer is often recited to bring us back to our daily lives.





## Reading the Political Landscape

Religion and politics do not mix. This has been an axiom of our society for some time. Yet, Jesus was very politically minded as he practiced his ministry. Being politically minded means that we are aware of all the relationships within and without the congregation and we work to leverage these relationships and our leadership to accomplish God's call for us.

Heifetz says that being politically minded means using our awareness of our own limits of authority, our awareness of stakeholders' interests and needs, as well as the networks of relationships in the system in managing community relationships. We need to be able to leverage awareness to forge alliances, diffuse opposition, and give people a place to voice their concerns. Heifetz offers six guidelines to help us.

1. Expand your informal authority by strengthening your relationships, scoring some early wins, addressing interests unconnected to the adaptive challenge, and offering small pieces of the change at a time.
2. Find allies by finding stake holders who are in alignment with the adaptive change and will partner with you.
3. Stay connected to the opposition by listening to their concerns and values letting them know you care about them and their perspective and continue to share your own motivating values with them. This compassionate practice keeps people from becoming labeled as resisters and they remain "real people" instead of the enemy.
4. Manage authority figures. Matriarchs and patriarchs have political and cultural authority and need to be managed carefully in order for the adaptive change to become a reality.
5. Take responsibility for casualties by paying attention to them and finding ways to be present with them and help them endure their loss and difficulties with the change.
6. Protect and engage the voices of dissent by listening to what their concerns might be and valuing their participation in the community.



## Worksheets for Reading the Political Landscape for an Adaptive Initiative

Description of your adaptive change initiative: \_\_\_\_\_

How your stakeholders might respond:

Stakeholder Individual or group	Relationship to the issue	Preferred outcome?	Noblest values?	Loyalties?	Potential losses?

Mapping the Political Landscape:

### 1. Allies

Who might be allies?	Why might they be allies?	What are their objectives supporting initiative?	How can this ally help successfully implement?

### 2. Opponents

Who might be opponents?	Why might they be opponents?	What do they stand to lose with initiative?	How might they be neutralized or be supportive?

### 3. Senior Authorities

Who are senior authorities most important to success?	Why are they important?	What signals are they giving about the initiative?	How might their support be secured?

#### 4. Casualties

Who will be casualties of the initiative?	What will they lose?	What new skills would help them and how could those skills be acquired?	Who might need to leave and how might they be helped to be successful elsewhere?

#### 5. Dissenters

Who are the dissenters?	What ideas are they bringing that might be valuable?	How might they have a constructive hearing for their ideas?	How do they need to be protected from being silenced?

## Conflict Can Be Healthy

*“No meaningful change takes place in the absence of conflict.”*

In any given group of people there will be disagreements. If there are no disagreements, one has to wonder if there is honest engagement in the group. To be alive is to see and experience the world from one’s own perspective which will be different from another person’s perspective. How we deal with those differences matters. In Christian community we want to think about three aspects of conflict: levels of conflict, our preferred style of conflict and our theological grounding for handling conflict.

The word conflict is derived from the Latin word *confligere* which is to strike together, conjuring up images of sparks and fire. Expressions such as “boiling mad”, “simmering under the surface”, and “a heated discussion” capture this meaning. The Eastern sense of conflict is a bit different. It entails the symbols of both danger and opportunity. The danger side of this definition has to do with personal antagonism and escalation, which if left unmanaged, is exceedingly destructive. Conflict, however, can also be an opportunity to explore relationships with more intentionality and purpose.

**“More suffering comes into the world by people taking offense than by people intending to give offense.”**

*Richard Rohr, in *Falling Upward**

The speed in which conflict can spiral out of control, especially in our social media world, is mind boggling. Problems get personalized quickly. Differences over specific problems get translated into charges against the other person and inferences about their character, intentions and motives. People then respond to the reaction from the other side, increasing mistrust, miscommunication, and out-right hostility.

The task of leaders is to develop the community’s capacity to solve problems and manage the “rubs” that are a normal and useful part of life. Leaders build Christian community by helping people to avoid assigning assumptions, motives, and blame. True Christian community integrates building trust, increasing communication, developing negotiating skills, and establishing processes to manage concerns and new ideas. Leadership development gives people the ability to keep conflict to healthy levels so that the community can focus on mutual problem solving and discerning a way forward giving opportunity for growth, learning, and maturity.

Recognizing different levels of conflict can be helpful. The concept of conflict levels come from the work of Speed Leas.

LEVEL	SYMPTOMS	STRATEGY
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROBLEM TO SOLVE</b></p>	<p><b>Objective of those involved:</b> fix the problem.</p> <p><b>Tone/behaviors:</b> optimistic, collaborative, problem not person focus, rational; people understand each other and disagree.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitate decision making by <u>collaborative problem solving</u>, or if not possible, by <u>negotiation</u>, or if not possible, by <u>formal authority action</u> (by voting or leader decision).</li> <li>2. <u>Methods</u> – establish meeting norms, use a facilitator and a disciplined process, brainstorm and prioritize, use communication skills, etc.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>II</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DISAGREEMENT</b></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> self-protection, not getting hurt; solve the problem.</p> <p><b>Tone/behaviors:</b> cautious, not hostile; general language to protect people and self, e.g., “there is no trust”, “we need more openness”; hostile humor, distancing comments; withhold information that might serve the other side or damage your side.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Reduce tension and facilitate people’s work together</u> – the need here is to keep people close enough to work though their differences and not engage in withdrawal or begin to get aggressive. Encourage people to be assertive, help people fully express their concerns and to listen to the concerns of others; provide ways to build relationships, ways for people to know each other as people, to speak with each other about common interests and needs.</li> <li>2. <u>Methods</u> – role reversal, expectations clarification, paraphrase and itemized response, brainstorm and prioritize, use facilitator, etc.</li> <li>3. <u>Establish ground rules</u> – get agreement about how we will work on the issue.</li> <li>4. <u>Make decisions</u> – collaborative problem solving – negotiation – formal authority.</li> </ol>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>III</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTEST</b></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> win, not yet at level of wanting to hurt the opponent.</p> <p><b>Tone/behaviors:</b> win/lose dynamics, threatening, difficult, resistance to peace overtures, hanging back waiting for others to show weakness, personal attacks, emotional appeals, limited social contact; language is distorted - overgeneralized, exaggerated, making a case, expecting magic or rapid change, expecting others to read your mind, extreme, only two sides, lose the shade/gray.</p>	<p>The overall need is to reduce fear and distorted thinking; to provide a sense of order.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All the strategies mentioned for Level II, as possible.</li> <li>2. <u>Structure the process</u> – work out a clear process; dates of meetings, timelines, etc.</li> <li>3. <u>Use an external consultant</u>.</li> <li>4. <u>Contact between parties to the conflict needs to be carefully managed</u> – opportunities for people to express feelings and clarify their interests need to be provided for each side; when they are ready to work together, then have a carefully facilitated meeting.</li> <li>5. <u>Decision making</u> – the same sequence as at other levels.</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IV</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIGHT/FLIGHT</b></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> hurt/get rid of the others; being “right”.</p> <p><b>Tone/behaviors:</b> factions inflexible, clear lines, strong leaders emerge; language becomes ideological - about principles, truth, rights; parties detached, causing each to lose sense of the pain they cause; attempt to enlist outsiders in the cause, parties will not speak with each other, self-righteous, cold.</p>	<p>More tension will require more structure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Use an external consultant/mediator</u> – this cannot be someone from the central office.</li> <li>2. <u>Follow the book</u> – legal issues may be involved, trust is very low; follow the organization’s standards.</li> <li>3. <u>Communicate through third parties</u> – seek an agreement for third parties to serve as “go-betweens” to carry messages, look for possible areas of agreement, most likely to be useful when the issue is clear.</li> <li>4. <u>Be tougher about the ground rules</u> – enforce expectations about personal attacks, loaded language; might have a group that monitors agreements and gives feedback to violators.</li> <li>5. <u>Decision making</u> – likely to be by formal authority. Some are likely to leave.</li> </ol>

<b>V</b>  <b>INTRACTABLE SITUATION</b>	<b>Objective:</b> destroy the others.  <b>Tone/behaviors:</b> attempts to do serious damage to the other's reputation, position, well-being; attempts may continue after the parties have been separated.	- Unless de-escalated, the conflict is no longer manageable.  - Outside authority will need to make difficult decisions.  - The parties need to be separated.  - Some people may need to be asked to leave.
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## Styles for Dealing with Conflict

Thinking about the preferred styles of conflict is used extensively by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center which is a wonderful organization that provides workshops for leaders of faith communities.

There are different styles of dealing with conflict for various modes and levels of conflict. Each style is a valuable tool, essential for particular situations we all face. The goal is flexibility and to use each style well.

- Directing – getting the job done
- Harmonizing – flexible, affirm
- Avoiding – withdraw, walk away, delay responding
- Cooperating – agree to talk things through
- Compromising – bargain, strike a deal

Style	Strengths	Limits
<b>Directing</b>	Accepts difficult challenges  Avoids failure and loss  Gets results  Keeps things moving  Inspires higher level of performance	Forceful, pushes too hard  Wins regardless of cost  Hard to recognize another's ability to lead  Unwillingness to listen  Over-extends, over-commits, driven

<p><b>Harmonizing</b></p>	<p>Has a light touch, situations not overly serious</p> <p>Quick to forgive/forget</p> <p>Pleased when others are satisfied</p> <p>Uses social skills and personal charm</p>	<p>Can be silly or inappropriate</p> <p>Agrees to anything to get pressure off</p> <p>Loses track of personal goals in deference to others</p> <p>Wishy-washy, unreliable, inconsistent</p>
<p><b>Avoiding</b></p>	<p>Doesn't make a mountain out of a molehill</p> <p>Keeps things in perspective</p> <p>Flexible, revise plans with ease</p> <p>Not ego driven, self-centered</p>	<p>Procrastinate</p> <p>Don't follow through</p> <p>Defensive pattern, lose self, avoid confrontation</p> <p>Sacrifice task and relationship</p>
<p><b>Cooperating</b></p>	<p>Both task and people are considered</p> <p>Two heads more creative</p> <p>Works for win/win</p> <p>Honors and respects the whole</p>	<p>Time and energy consuming</p> <p>Solutions may not be the best for the particular situation</p> <p>Easy for individuals to get fed up with the process</p>
<p><b>Compromising</b></p>	<p>Everybody gets something</p> <p>Respects both situation and the people</p> <p>Middle ground acknowledged</p> <p>Takes commitment to work solutions</p> <p>Need team effort</p>	<p>No one gets all they want</p> <p>Solution may depend on lowest common denominator</p> <p>Creativity may suffer</p> <p>Time and energy consuming</p> <p>Problem solving may become paralyzed</p>

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