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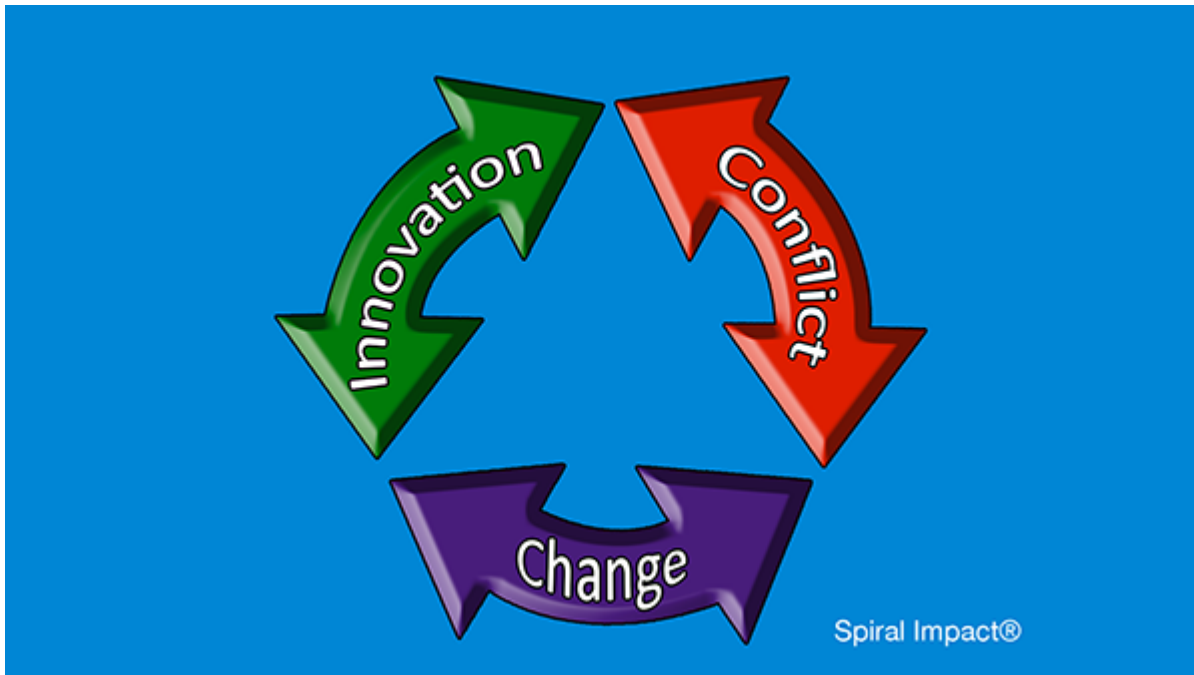
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The Art & Science of Conflict & Collaboration

A guest article by Karen Valencic, author, speaker and founder of Spiral Impact

Often people want innovation, though they avoid conflict, and resent change. Unfortunately, you can't have one without the other two. They are symbiotic.

Typically, conflict causes innovation and growth. Then, innovation begets change. And this change often creates more conflict. It's a cycle!



For example, the pandemic (conflict) inspired many innovations. In mental health, one example is the expanded use of virtual platforms allowed for more access. Another example is long-overdue corporate initiatives to accept and address mental health challenges (innovation). But now we see that virtual care can lead to loneliness and isolation (new conflict). New corporate mental health initiatives also spawned conflicts around privacy, ethics, professional identity, cultural sensitivity, and social-economic disparities.

The antidote?

While innovation and change are inevitable, the skill of conflict mastery can be cultivated and strengthened. This leads to authentic collaboration, bringing out the best in everyone involved. Collaboration improves everyone's mental health.

The beautiful Japanese martial art - aikido - eloquently demonstrates how to transform conflict into authentic collaboration in a way that honors all the people involved. Aikido finds its power in position rather than force. Aikido, literally translated, means the way of life through the blending of energy. Witnessing the art visually and physically is a living illustration of applied physics.

Delve deeper during the **mhca Summer Conference** in Kansas City where I will guide attendees in applying a method inspired by aikido and physics that transforms conflict into collaboration. The session will impart practices addressing internal, interpersonal, complex and large group conflicts. I will also explore how different personalities tend to react to conflict.

Conflict mastery and authentic collaboration open the door to optimal innovation and ease the pain points of change.

Best-selling author and speaker Karen Valencic founded Spiral Impact®, a company specializing in leadership and team development. Her work is memorable - uniquely grounded in martial arts and physics. Three decades of developing high-performing teams inform her content. Thirty years of martial arts practice add an artist's flare to her presentations, she has a 2nd degree black belt; the practicality of her content comes from her tenure as a degreed engineer.

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1876 Eider Court, Suite A

Tallahassee, FL 32308

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1876 Eider Court, Suite A
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