

Reframing Conversations

I am in the midst of mentoring startups. In addition to journeying with them on Customer Discovery, Job to be Done and creating Customer Value Propositions, I am spending time helping startup teams work out their conflicts.

Many over-relied on Telegram and Whatsapp and that either caused misunderstandings or poured oil on fire. Some chose the easy way out by walking away, missing the precious chance to hone skills on conflict resolution. Others tried and were able to smile at each other after hard conversations.

One of the conflict resolution tools I shared with them is *Reframing* - useful when emotions are in the way and the conversation is getting to move off-track.

Here are some examples of *Reframing*, picked from "Making Conflict Suck Less", by A Nichols, Director, Conflict Management Program at Boise State University:

- Instead of saying, "You misinterpret everything!", say, "*We must be misunderstanding each other. Can you help me understand what you meant?*"
- Instead of "Can we just keep talking about this one detail?", explore, "*If you are okay with it, can we make sure we have the big picture figured out before focusing on details? Maybe the details will become more clear then.*"
- Instead of "That seems really petty! Can you believe that keeps happening?", try, "*That sounds irritating. What do you need to move past this moment and look for a solution.*" (*I think this is quite American....it might backfire for some Asians*)

Keep this article; you might find it useful someday, as I said to a young venture builder, "Ventures come and ventures go. My prophecy on this has a hundred percent accurate track record - in time to come you will have conflicts; with your future husband, with your in-laws, with your bosses, with your customers, your suppliers and definitely with your children - build the conflict resolution muscles."

An important tip: when someone overreacts or reacts irrationally, you might be the cause of it or it could just be a raw nerve that you touched. This is a wonderful opportunity to help the person.

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