

Building Healthy Relationships Across Music, Management and Membership

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And they didn't
live happily ever
after?!?



*Once upon a time there was a chorus...
a Sweet Adeline chorus.*

*It was made up of women who loved each
other very much. They came together every
week to sing beautiful songs in four-part
harmony. They delighted themselves
and others with their music.
Then they chartered...*

In an environment of joy and harmony, in a place where we come to sing... together... it's hard to comprehend that our differences can divide and estrange us from the people we deeply care about. But sometimes they do!

The Seven Big Special Things that we have going FOR US and AGAINST US:

General Sense of Shared Values and Goals	
Going for us...	Going against us...
Culture	
Going for us...	Going against us...
Experientially-Based Relationships	
Going for us...	Going against us...
Inclusiveness and Acceptance	
Going for us...	Going against us...
Shared, Changing Leadership	
Going for us...	Going against us...
A High Commitment to Recruitment and Retention	
Going for us...	Going against us...
A Non-Profit Business Whose Business We Care Deeply About	
Going for us...	Going against us...



It is clear to see how problems can develop, and how those problems result in conflicts which can jeopardize the health of our relationships, our choruses and quartets. When it is expected, understood and managed it can make us better, stronger and healthier than ever before.

So... how do we manage conflict? Easy! 1) Dodge potential problems; 2) Deal with the problems that arise; and 3) Resolve the ones that become conflicts!

1: Dodging Potential Problems

The chorus environment is relaxed and friendly, and thus can become almost TOO casual and family-like. Behavioral expectations called **ground rules** (or "norms") can help create a framework for how we act and how we treat each other within the chorus environment... on- and off-the-risers and in meetings.



Ground Rules for Effective Relationships in our Choruses in Quartets

1. Demonstrate respect, concern and kindness at all times.
2. Value the contributions of others. We are all volunteers.
 3. Keep an open mind.
 4. Assume the best in others.
5. Challenge opinions, ideas or positions, but never people.
 6. Manage by fact.
7. Be professional, especially when serving in a leadership role.
8. Protect personal information and confidentiality. Never gossip.
 9. Listen actively. Communicate openly and honestly.
10. Always remember we came here to sing. And create harmony.

The **ground rules** can serve as a gentle reminder to both ourselves and others, and are criteria for feedback should problems arise.

2: Dealing with Problems While They're Small

We have three choices in any conflict. Each has merit depending on the situation:

Avoid: A **deliberate decision** made to not address the problem.

Accept: A **deliberate decision** made to not address the problem, rather to change your way of thinking about the problem.

Address: A **deliberate decision** to constructively confront and resolve the problem.

Differences handled when they are small and fresh rarely make it to "problem" stage. YAY!

3: Dealing with Problems after They've Become BIG

These steps that provide a **process** and a set of **principles** that will get the job done to rebuild mutually beneficial relationships.



Seven Steps to Solving Problems, Resolving Conflict and Restoring Relationships

1. *Choose the best atmosphere, location and parties to discuss and resolve the problem.*
2. *Define the situation and why the situation is a PROBLEM.*
3. *Listen actively, not passively.*
4. *Agree on shared concerns and needs, including what is most important of all: the need to resolve the disagreement and restore the relationship and the harmony.*
5. *List the solutions that will meet those concerns and needs.*
6. *Seal the deal.*
7. *Purify our hearts. Forgive.*

Summary: Living (and Singing) Happily Ever After!



We are here to sing together, in harmony. It's what we do.

Ironically, those things that we love most about being US are the things that present the challenges as we experience the emotionally-charged music, management and social lives of our choruses and quartets.

Approaching conflict realistically and using strategies to **dodge**, **deal with** and **resolve** can rebuild and restore relationships that will enable us to do what we are here to do. SING. And enjoy a chorus that reflects love, joy and true harmony.