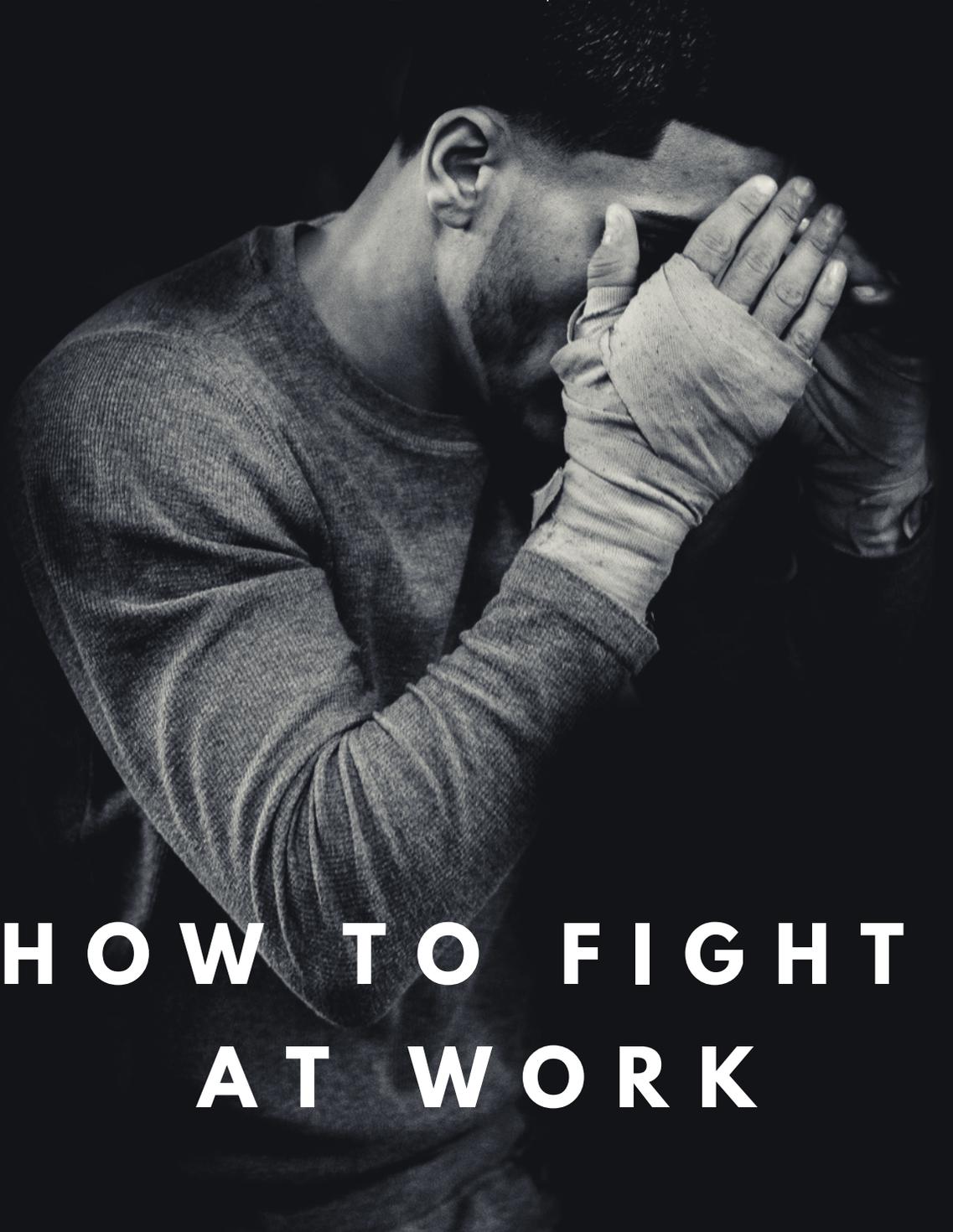


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TIP DIGEST

ISSUE NO. 1 | 2018



HOW TO FIGHT
AT WORK

FROM THE CORNER



EVERYBODY NEEDS A MICK

John W. Bailie, Ph.D.

As a kid who grew up near Philadelphia in the 70's and 80's, the Rocky movies were a big deal. Even if you didn't like boxing or thought Stallone's "Italian Stallion" character was a bit over-done, the ethos of those movies was a part of your life. During the obligatory elementary school field trip to the Philadelphia Art Museum, you likely ran the iconic steps to the top, raised your arms in victory and danced around like the champion of the world. Especially for poor and working-class kids from a city with a perpetually down-on-its-luck personality, Rocky was the reminder that with enough grit, hard work, and faith; we all could

be somebody. However, just like every hero, Rocky needed someone in his corner who could help him find the champion that lived deep down inside an unknown palooka from South Philly. That guy was his trainer, Mickey Goldmill. Mick had already been where Rocky wanted to go and knew all about the pain and sacrifice that lay ahead on the path to greatness. Most of all, Mick knew that the toughest opponent that anyone can face isn't in the ring, but in the mirror. Everybody needs a Mick. If you're ready to become the leader you were meant to be, I'm in your corner. Let's get ready to rumble. 🥊



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How to give gossip and toxic conversations a serious beat-down.

A man wearing a grey beanie, glasses, a black jacket with white stripes on the sleeves, a white t-shirt with 'HONEY' visible, black pants, and tan boots is sitting on a dark brick wall. He is looking to the left. In the background, there is a building with a tiled roof and a small plant with red flowers. A white coffee cup is on the wall to his right.

**EVERYTHING WORTH
HAVING IS ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF FEAR**

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FEEDBACK SANDWICHES

TASTE TERRIBLE

In the article, [There's No Nice Way To Poke Someone In the Eye](#), I said:

“Feedback often fails to make an impact or change behavior because its overly diluted. Wrapping feedback in cautious niceties only helps the giver, not the receiver.”

Some of you might have been taught the “sandwich” method of giving feedback. This

This method was popularized because it helped people feel like less of a jerk for confronting someone, not because it was an effective feedback method.

Instead, just tell the person what they need to hear and get it over with. If necessary, it's sometimes helpful to lead with, “I need to talk to you about the meeting yesterday (or whatever the issue is...), this is hard for



JUST TELL THE PERSON WHAT THEY NEED TO HEAR AND GET IT OVER WITH

method attempts to put something critical (the meat) between two compliments (the bread). As I said above, strategies like this only help the giver, not the receiver.

In fact, what will happen over time is that when you give a colleague a compliment, they are likely to think, “Uh oh, here it comes...” – because you’ve trained them to think a criticism or confrontation will follow. Bad practice. Doesn’t work. Even if you do this unconsciously, stop.

me.” Just acknowledge that this is hard for you if you need to. Then give the undiluted feedback.

Be humane. Be empathetic. But be direct. Let your criticisms be critical. And let your compliments be complimentary. 🍷



NEVER USE EMAIL

The article, [Lead Conflict like the GOAT](#), covered some tips on how to become a world champ at leading conflict.

While you're on your way to being able to float like a butterfly and sting like a bee at work, here's a bonus tip for subscribers.

When you need to confront someone, the medium makes all the difference. Many years of experience helping leaders and colleagues learn how to confront one another has proven to me that you should:

Always... Meet with the person face-to-face if at all possible. It's scarier at first, but much more emotionally satisfying and likely to go well if you stand toe-to-toe. Most communication is non-verbal. You'll get a much better read on what the other person is really feeling if you are both in the same room. Plus, people are more likely to be reasonable in person than at a distance. Go the extra mile and show up. They'll know you're serious and that you care that much.

Sometimes... Meet via video or phone. Understandably, today's dispersed digital workforce and incredible videoconferencing technology makes this "sometimes" mode of communication more necessary. Go for video over phone if at all possible, even if you have to insist.

Never... And I mean never, confront someone (or a group) via text, social media or email. No exceptions. All digital text formats are entirely tone-deaf to emotion. Receivers are likely to "hear" the worst possible tone in your writing.

These mediums are a cheap and easy confrontation cop-out that create more problems than they solve. You can use email to set the meeting, but not for the content. You cannot lead conflict from a keyboard.

Be exceptional. Be a fearless confrontation champ. Walk down the hall and knock on the door. 🚪

PLAN TO BE SPONTANEOUS



In a recent article, I talked about the importance of learning how to [Move Toward Fear](#). I recommended that you take one or two immediate actions to move closer to the situation, rather than run away from it.

One way to do this more strategically is to plan to be spontaneous.

A contradiction? Not really.

**MOST ISSUES THAT YOU
HAVE WITH COLLEAGUES
ARE NOT ISOLATED
INSTANCES. THEY RECUR
AGAIN, AND AGAIN... AND
AGAIN.**

Since you know your colleague will likely repeat the same behavior in the future, have a clear plan of action and commit to following through with it the next time the behavior is repeated.

It is important to plan actions that you can take right there in the moment when the behavior occurs. Your response is likely to have more impact the closer it is in time to the actual incident.

Consider sharing your plan of action with another trusted friend or colleague. This accountability will help you follow through (i.e. not chicken out). Promise to process with them afterward.

This way, you get to plan ahead and react "spontaneously" in the moment. 🙌

SAY THAT THING

In the article, [Against Caution](#), I recommended several practical ways to model creative risk-taking.

One of my favorites is... Talk to a colleague about a problematic and persistent behavior that you've complained about to everyone but them (or just kept to yourself). Sounds intriguing and very healthy, right?

Tell them what it's about. Don't leave the person wondering about the topic of the meeting. If it is going to be a difficult conversation, just tell them what you plan to talk about. For instance, "I want to talk about what happened at the leadership retreat last week. I've been feeling upset about it and want to process this with you." Start by admitting this is difficult for you.



IT'S SCARY TO CONFRONT CO-WORKERS THAT YOU ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW VERY WELL

Easier said than done.

For all the reasons I talked about in that article, it's scary to confront co-workers that you actually don't know very well, compared to your friends and loved ones.

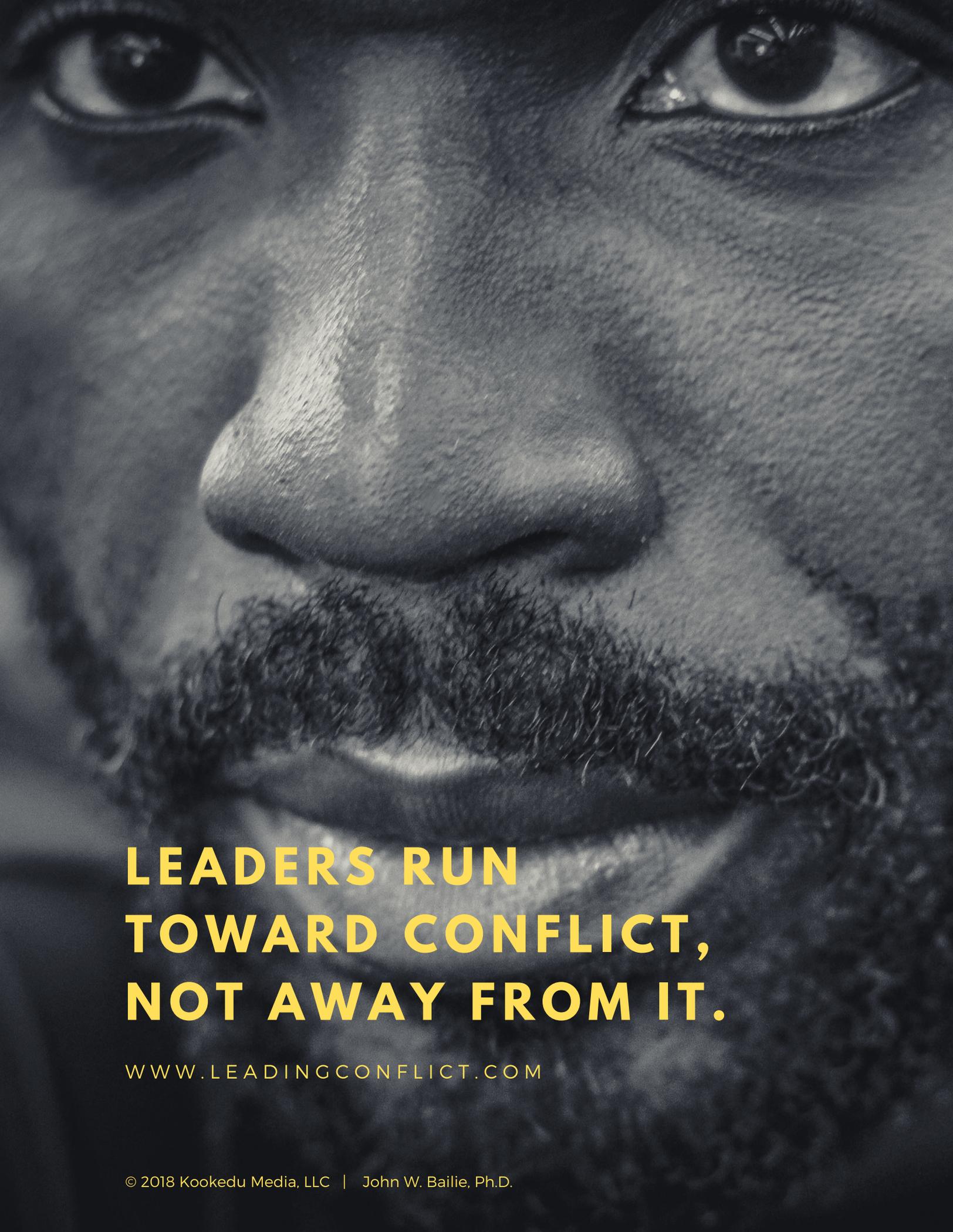
So here are a few steps to help you say that thing that needs to be said:

Schedule it. If you waited this long to be honest with your colleague, it's not just going to happen. Get the conversation on both of your calendars - today.

Even if you are an expert at faking unshakeable self-confidence, these conversations are always hard. Start by telling the person that you're taking the risk because you care about them (or at least their performance), which is why you are making the time to talk directly.

Tell them they are worth it. This builds empathy and should help you feel more comfortable. Honesty about emotions de-escalates feelings of fear and apprehension.

You can do it. Say that thing. 🗨️



**LEADERS RUN
TOWARD CONFLICT,
NOT AWAY FROM IT.**

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WATER COOLER COUNTERMEASURES

In [The Submarine: Toxic Workplace Behavior Profile](#), I warned about the stealthy threat posed by the office submarine.

As discussed in the article, the submarine will use informal settings (water cooler, parking lot, at the coffee shop, texts, etc.) as opportunities to criticize ideas, plans, coworkers and leaders through gossip and innuendo.

So, what should you do if you are engaged by a submarine?

If approached with toxic conversation in an informal setting, how do you handle it?

Here's an easy way to remember water cooler countermeasure for waging effective anti-submarine warfare.

When the submarine shares a gossipy criticism or complaint with you about

someone else, leadership, or a larger organizational issue, use a version of one of the following statements:

"I hear that you are upset about this. You really need to share it directly with (insert name of person under discussion)." Or...

"I hear that you are upset about this. You really need to share this with the person who can do something about it (i.e. the one who makes those decisions)."

That's it. Don't engage further. You heard them. You made a healthy suggestion. Now you're done with this conversation.

Walk away and enjoy the rest of your day.

Be consistent with responses like this every time you are approached. Eventually, they will stop trying to engage you in toxic conversation. 🙏



ABOUT ME

I'm the president of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Graduate School and teach leadership and conflict resolution at Columbia University.

Leading Conflict turns my experience as a senior executive, mentor, and educator into helpful resources for you.

... All so you can learn to love conflict and build the skills you need to lead it.

**BE BOLD. BE BRAVE. AND ALWAYS...
BE READY TO RUMBLE.**

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