

Pinch Crunch model Based on the Role Renegotiation model

Managing Expectations and Conflict

A relationship is not a thing, not a static state, it is a process of mutual influence.

A relationship isn't something you have; it's something you do.

Have you ever asked yourself questions like these?

1. How can I maintain better long-term relationships?
2. What can I do when a relationship is strained in some way?
3. I struggle to hold on to long-term professional/personal relationships. How come?

How to prevent differences turning into problems

This communication model is based on the Role Renegotiation Model developed by Dr John Sherwood and adapted by Dr John Savage. It demonstrates how to deal with differences before they escalate into problems.

As we have seen in previous videos that misunderstandings and assumptions are at the core of communication breakdown.

This model shows you how to maintain and develop healthy long-term professional and personal relationships.

Fuzzy expectations

Many relationship failures are caused by vague, unclear, woolly expectations. So, it stands to reason that if relationships started with crystal clear expectations, they would remain healthy and productive.

Most professional and personal relationships go through the same predictable 4 step process.

Sharing data

If courtship were more conscious, people would pay more attention to the quality of one another's listening 180

Stage 1 - Courtship

Every relationship has to start somewhere and, as the most common are personal and they start with courtship. In a professional relationship, this is the negotiation of contracts and employment conditions etc.

Defining expectations

Clearly defined expectations at this point will result in a more committed relationship by those involved.

What do you expect of the business?

Regular hours and weekly pay

What if they pay late? Is that going to be ok?

What if the business wants to change your holidays without notice? Is that ok?

What does the business expect of you?

The business wants you to work from 9 to 5. If you leave early to pick up the kids every second day will that be ok with the company?

What are you looking for in a personal relationship?

1. What if you want to buy a home and start a family, but your partner wants to travel the world. Is that going to be ok with you?
2. If they want total financial control and you don't even get to see the statements. Is that ok?

When you have clarity of expectations, the relationship moves to the next stage.

Commitment

The mutually negotiated expectations are agreed and formalised. Contracts are signed, and wedding vows are exchanged.

There has been a formal commitment to the negotiated expectations.

We have committed to the relationship, and we celebrate and look forward to a perfect rosy future.

When things are stable people do not tend to change.

Ok, some expectations are still a little fuzzy, but we can sort those out as we go. It won't be a big deal. In this state of euphoria, we only seek evidence that supports this rosy outlook. We are blind to reality.

The trouble is that fuzzy expectations result in an unclear commitment. We see the result of that vague commitment soon, but for now, everything is perfect.

We wear rose coloured glasses and only see the positives. Everything is perfect and will remain so indefinitely. I mean, really, what can go wrong?

Which brings us to the next stage the honeymoon.

The Honeymoon

Yes, now is the time for celebration.

This is an exciting time. Everyone is keen to get started on this brand new thrilling adventure.

The relationship is stable and usually productive. 80% of the available energy is going to productive activity, and 20% is spent on maintaining the relationship.

People are still wearing rose coloured glasses and what you expected to get you are getting and what you are supposed to give – you are giving.

Things are running smoothly ... Everything is perfect ... Until it isn't!

And that is when the trouble can start. One of the parties has done something that upset the other. This is the Pinch stage, and we have three choices.

We explain those in the next video.

The pinch – guaranteed

Team conflicts are unavoidable. Someone at some time will violate an expectation.

The pinch is when one or both people experience a little bit of disconnect. What you expected didn't happen or what you didn't expect to happen did happen.

That is guaranteed.

When things are flowing well, people do not tend to change. But, like it or not, change happens.

Work conditions change. People grow, and change, beliefs change, attitudes change, and the relationship itself changes.

Nothing remains the same forever. Life keeps flowing around us.

Clarity

The more clarity you gained in the negotiation stage helps, but the reality is that pinches will happen. What you didn't expect to happen has happened.

Choice point

So what happens now?

Well, this is a choice point. It is the cry for help stage in the journey to the Departure Lounge, and there are three alternatives.

Deal with the pinch

The first choice is to deal with it as soon as possible. Communicate with the other person.

1. Deal with the pinch immediately

If you deal with the pinch now, it is like getting stung by a single bee. If you fail to deal with the pinch, you will experience another and another and another forming a cluster.

You can talk to the person responsible for the pinch, accept their apology and move back to a stable and productive relationship.

In the early 2000s, my wife and I sat down and renegotiated our expectations. We agreed that when one of us experienced a 'pinch', we would talk about it within 24 hours.

Renegotiate expectations

2. You can return to the beginning and renegotiate your expectations.

When you have done this, the process starts again, and you move through the commitment, honeymoon and stable and productive stages.

There will be other pinches, and these can be fixed in the same way. It is essential that when you renegotiate your expectations, you work out how you're going to cope with pinches when they happen. And they will.

The pathway to disaster

3. You can ignore the issue and hope that it doesn't happen again. The problem with that strategy is that the person who upset you may be unaware which means that it will happen again. You have set yourself up for a disaster.

Bee stings

If the pinch is treated quickly, it's like a single bee sting, painful but bearable.

The other person in the relationship may have a sense that something is wrong. Still, they can't deal with issues they don't know about, and another sting will occur. If the same strategy of ignoring the problem is followed, then the anxiety will sit there waiting.

The straw that broke the camels back

One day a seemingly minor incident will happen, and the person who has ignored the previous incidents goes ballistic.

People around them are shocked. What brought that on? The response was way above what the incident warranted.

What has happened is that the individual incidents collapse together creating an intolerable amount of pain in the person.

Suddenly the person is stung by a swarm of bees because they get a barrage of complaints that have built up over the weeks, months or even years. You now have to try and deal with when emotions are running hot.

That situation can be fatal to the relationship.

Cry for help

This is the cry for help in the journey to the Departure Lounge.

Disruption of expectations

This is the opposite of the stable and productive stage. The honeymoon is over, and now we have the opposite.

20% of the energy available to the group is productive, and 80% is spent on maintaining the relationship. The relationship has become unproductive. Role confusion abounds as a disappointments mount, increasing tension and anxiety and frustration builds.

Now both parties are experiencing disrupted expectations. It's a mess, and it's when people get hurt.

Children, friends and parents are affected. In the workplace, colleagues are impacted, morale and productivity drop alarmingly.

Everyone around that relationship is affected because the ripples flow throughout the entire company, family, group of friends or the club or church, causing anxiety to increase to unsustainable intolerable levels.

4 options

You now have 4 options.

Renegotiation

You can try for reconciliation and return to step one for another attempt to renegotiate expectations. However, this time the renegotiation is under stress.

Anxiety levels of the parties have risen to high levels.

For this to succeed all parties, have to be realistic and give up unreal expectations. Go back to stage 1 and renegotiate the expectations and roles of each party to gain clarity.

Work out what you can live with and negotiate a compromise where you can.

Re-commit

This recommitment may work for a while, but it's often premature. It's where you Kiss and makeup but don't deal with the issues on a deep level. What you buy back into is the old contract, the old set of expectations.

You may enjoy another honeymoon period where things are sweet and more productive, but it will not last. Another cluster will form, and that will end with another crunch.

If these pinches are ignored, then another cluster is formed. This is a real cause for concern because the other collapsed cluster and all the anxiety it contains is still there. Now we have another cluster building on top of the existing one.

If it isn't dealt with this cluster, the stress inside this group of anxiety-provoking events will become intolerable, and it will eventually collapse and join the other. All of the clusters fuse together, and the stress and anxiety come together, resulting in a complete breakdown.

Ennui

If you are a manager or business owner, this type of employee can be toxic to your organisation.

If a person takes this option person withdraws into a state called ennui, a state of boredom, of apathy.

They are not comfortable, but they live with it. People who withdraw like this prefer to exist in this state rather than face the pain of change.

The subconscious moves us away from pain and towards comfort.

The language they use sounds like this.

"I'll do what I have to and no more."

"I'll do what I'm told, and that's all."

"They arrive bang on time and leave as soon as their time is up."
This is destructive for both the individual and the company. There are no winners in this situation.

They are referred to as a toxic employee. Refer to your lesson notes for more information and links.

Mute termination

The fourth option is mute termination and is the final stage in the Departure Lounge.

Mute termination results in a loss of self-esteem. It is painful for the person and for the people left behind.

Very often, they have no idea as to what went wrong.

It is where the couple divorce. The employee quits.

It is possible to return to the expectation stage and negotiate the termination. This is the least painful, but a lot of the time people just disappear.

Conclusion and more resources

If you follow this model, you can enjoy productive, high-quality relationships.

Productivity remains high, and it gives you the ability to manage relationships in a way that maintains productive, healthy relationships.

Relationships are hard work and will always remain a continual task.

The Pinch Crunch model is also known as The Role Renegotiation Model. It is a tool that encourages people to deal with differences before they escalate into a conflict that damage relationships.

Disagreements and pinches occur in all relationships. They are inevitable.

The Pinch Crunch Model provides a strategy enabling couples and work colleagues to recognise and manage conflict before the disagreement becomes a conflict, before the 'crunch point'.