



# Human Optimization

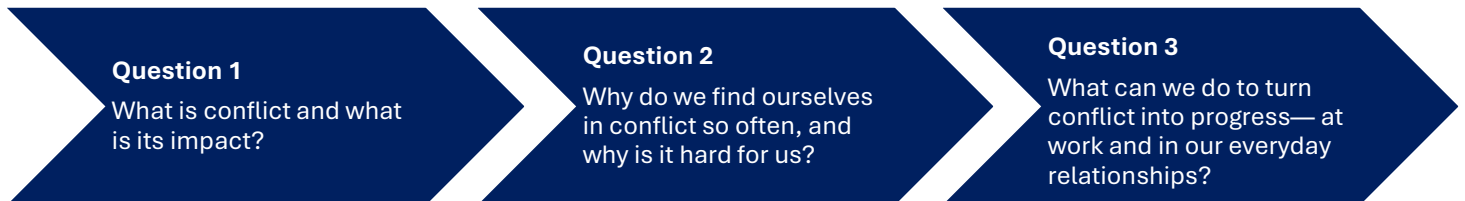
## Pod Club Discussion Questions



### E33 Managing Conflict: Sorting Facts and Feelings to Turn Disputes into Progress

Guest: Erica Martin, PhD, SPHR, Development Programs Director – Department of Development – Mayo Clinic

*The three big questions explored in the podcast:*



### Discussion Questions:

1. Dr. Martin defines conflict as a "misalignment of basic needs, values, or goals" between two or more parties. Think about a recent conflict you experienced. What was the underlying misalignment?
2. As discussed in this episode, conflict at work often has higher stakes (job security), but we tend to "take the mask off" and be less guarded in personal relationships. How does this difference in psychological safety impact your approach to conflict in these two settings?
3. Dr. Martin emphasizes that unresolved conflict can lead to decreased confidence, lower performance, and missed opportunities for growth. Think about a time when unresolved conflict had a negative impact on you or a team you were part of. Discuss with your pod club: what would you do differently now to try to resolve that conflict?
4. The discussion suggests that conflict can be positive and productive, especially when seeking diverse thought or managing complex problems. Can you recall a situation where conflict, managed respectfully, led to a better outcome or strengthened a relationship?
5. Dr. Martin explains that our human nature and past experiences (even childhood trauma) can contribute to an "unhealthy fear of conflict." Take a moment to reflect on your own personal history or worldview and how it influences your current reactions to conflict. What is one thing you hope to change?
6. The three-step framework for managing conflict involves: 1) pre-conversation reflection, 2) curiosity during the conversation, and 3) post-conversation self-reflection. Which of these three steps do you currently practice most effectively? Which one will you practice improving this week?

7. The podcast advises using "maximizers" (e.g., "this is going to be very uncomfortable") rather than "minimizers" (e.g., "this is just a quick chat") when setting expectations for difficult conversations. How might this shift in language impact the tone and outcome of a challenging discussion you anticipate?
8. Based on this episode, what is one small change you are going to make to help improve in this area. How are you going to keep yourself accountable to that and measure your success? (Be sure to keep it simple, start small, and make it very clear).