

ANALYSIS OF SOME OF THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE
TO MARITAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

by *579*

PHILIP J. WYCKOFF

B. A., Dartmouth College, 1963

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1971

Approved by:

Stephen Ray Bollman
Major Professor

LD
2668
74
1971
W87
C.2

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to his major professor Dr. Stephan R. Bollman, whose guidance, encouragement, and resourcefulness aided this study.

The writer also wishes to thank Dr. George R. Peters and Dr. Carroll E. Kennedy for serving on the writers committee. Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. Paul Smock for aiding in the development of this thesis.

The writer should also like to express a sincere debt to his wife Jennifer for the countless hours she has spent at the typewriter, and the constant support she has rendered during the writing of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The problem	
Purpose	
Propositions and Assumptions	
The Study	
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	5
Models of Conflict	
Functions of Conflict	
Dynamics of healthy Conflict Resolution	
III. FRAMEWORK ON MARITAL CONFLICT AND MARITAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION	21
Self System	
Interactional System	
Conflict Resolution	
IV. ILLUSTRATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF THE MODEL	34
Marital Environment	
Marital Interaction	
Individual Behavior	
V. IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION	46
Discussion and Evaluation of Thesis	
Hypotheses	
Further Research Steps	
REFERENCES	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Areas of Awareness of the Self	24
2. Communication System	26

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Marriages which last full term are becoming increasingly less prevalent in modern American society. The rate of divorce has steadily increased throughout the last decade. From 1961-1967 the percentage of divorced individuals in the total marriage population has increased from 23.2% to 25.6% (U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1967). When this figure is increased by the number of desertions (3% of all marriages), marital murder, and the approximately 15-20% of all marriages that are judged unhappy (Saxton 1968: 303-304), one observes a rather significant number of dissatisfied marriages in American society. These figures point to a seeming inability of a large percentage of people to live together in marriage.

In studying the interactional problems created by marriage, one sees many of the interactional problems of man in society, and in studying how these problems can be resolved in marriage one can offer solutions for the "larger" problems of man. One might assume from the divorce statistics that a sizeable population never finds consistent satisfaction in the area of intimate human interaction.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is: (a) to explore conflict resolution in marriage; (b) to gain a greater understanding of the problems that face married couples when they come into conflict; (c) to delineate those factors conducive to constructive conflict resolution behavior. From this can come

the means to explore methods of counseling marriage partners to handle their conflicts more efficiently and healthily. The focus will be on creating a model of conflict resolution. Information derived from the model will have implications for both couples who are attempting to deal with marital conflict, marriage counselors and family life educators.

Proposition and Assumptions

The general proposition of this thesis is that a major reason for marital failure is the individual's inability to live with conflict. The second proposition is that it is not conflict itself that creates dissolution in marriage as much as the inability to live with it. Thirdly it is proposed that conflict needs to be approached for its potentialities to create intimacy. It is assumed for this study that human interactions produce conflict and always will. The study of how these interactions can be approached, so that conflict can be resolved, is the purpose of this thesis.

People are taught to either control conflict, ignore it, or avoid it rather than face it. According to Coser (1956):

There is a tendency to suppress rather than to allow expressions of hostile feeling. In close-knit groups, feelings of hostility tend, therefore, to accumulate and hence to intensify. If conflict breaks out in a group that has consistently tried to prevent expression of hostile feelings, it will be particularly intense (P. 308).

Man is ill at ease with many of his basic needs and drives. Most difficult for him is the handling of his aggressions, as they have great anti-social aspects, and their expression has taught him to be wary of them, as they can cause great social disapproval. However, in seeking strict control of the aggressive needs of man, society has neglected

their healthy aspects. The purpose of this thesis is to explore in part some of the healthy aspects of conflict.

The Study

The thesis approaches conflict solution from a psychological point of view. Theoretical propositions from motivation theory, communication theory and interactional theory are all cited. The approach is not limited to one theoretical framework as marriage lends itself to more than one approach. It is necessary to attempt a fusion of multiple theories or use an eclectic approach in studying marital interaction if only in the argument that new approaches cannot be achieved until they are tried. In approaching marriage one is faced with two individuals in continual interaction with each other. Their interaction is however dependent on the personalities of the two individuals and the motivational behavior they pursue in the marriage system, within their social context.

It is the judgment of the author that at the current time there is a greater need for the formulation of analytical models of marital conflict and conflict solution than for empirical studies. Therefore, this research will attempt to build models of both marital conflict and marital solutions and generate hypotheses for testing. The hypotheses will not be tested but will be presented for use as the next step of research on marital conflict and conflict solutions.

The second chapter will consist of the review of literature. This will be followed in chapter three by a presentation of a theoretical model of marital interaction and conflict. In chapter three conflict behavior will be studied from a psychological interactional view. In chapter four

a discussion of factors relating to healthy conflict resolution will be presented. This chapter attempts to analyze aspects of resolution behavior that are of therapeutic interest to marriage counselors, who must help couples with marital conflict. In chapter five, hypotheses will be put forth for future testing and the thesis as a whole will be evaluated for aspects that lend themselves to added research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of the literature deemed pertinent to the study of marital conflict and its resolution. The major aim of the thesis is to present a study of factors involved in marital conflict resolution rather than causes of marital conflict. The causes of conflict will be designated a lesser priority than resolution.

The following section will cover several models of conflict from the sociological and psychological perspectives. The second section will look at the functions of conflict. The third section will involve a delineation of the dynamics of healthy conflict solution. The final section will be presented on the goals of conflict.

Models of Conflict

One of the most celebrated analyses from the psychological perspective of marital conflict and its resolution came from Spiegel (1957). Using a social role concept, Spiegel postulated the family as existing along an equilibrium-disequilibrium continuum. Complementarity of role fulfillment and expectation between marital partners affects the position which they occupy along the continuum. Complementarity of role fulfillment occurs when the expectation each partner has about the fulfillment of roles within the marriage is in agreement. Should complementarity be disrupted, disequilibrium occurs. Stability or equilibrium is brought back by a restoration of complementarity. This restoration does not imply a failure to change as the restoration of complementarity may come about due to a change in the expectancies of role fulfillment of either individual. Resolution

of conflict comes about either by role induction or role modification. Either a person's role behavior is induced or it is modified to unite both partners needs and expectancies.

Lewin (1948), the field theorist, sees marriage as an intimate group of two individuals each with his own field of existence. The interaction between them involves not only their individual fields but creates a new "marriage field" for both of them. According to Lewin (1948): "The essence of a group is not the similarity or dissimilarity of its members but their interdependence " (p. 84). Conflict or its absence depends on: (a) need satisfaction within the group; (b) territorial freedom within the group; (c) symmetry and complementarity of goals and empathy within the group; (d) freedom to leave the group. When these conditions work against individuals in a marriage, tension will result and build up over time (Lewin, 1948: 89-90). Marriage is a group that satisfies needs. The extent to which these needs are not satisfied gives potential to the extent to which conflict will arise. Not only is conflict seen as caused by internal pressures from the individual but from the outside pressures of society. The three aspects of needs in marriage are: (a) role fulfillment needs; (b) sexual needs and; (c) security needs (Lewin, 1948: 91-93). Needs become central when they are unsatisfied and peripheral when they are satisfied. Unsatisfied needs tend to dominate, thus increasing the chances of conflict (Lewin, 1948: 92).

Landis (1968), sees the resolution of conflict dependent upon the maturity of the marriage partners. How conflict is created and handled depends on the variables of the individual personalities involved in the

marriage and the interaction of the individuals with the marital environment. The personalities of the individuals contains their needs and their means of fulfilling them. Landis adds a new dimension to conflict as he brings in personality and examines its role in the social interaction between two people.

Three main methods of handling conflict are presented by Landis (1968): (a) Accommodation; (b) Compromise and; (c) State of Hostility. Conflict is seen as a difference between individuals, and resolution as adjustment to those differences.

A more interactional approach is that used by Hayley (1958) and Jackson (1957, 1968) based on communication theory. Communication behavior defines a relationship into either: (a) a symmetrical relationship or; (b) a complementary relationship. A symmetrical relationship is one in which the participants attempt to be equal to each other. It therefore tends to be competitive although in varying degrees of intensity. A complementary relationship is one in which the participants are on different levels; one dominates and the other is subservient. A third form of relationship is the parallel relationship. This consists of an alternation between symmetric and complementary relationships. No relationship within a healthy family matrix is constantly either symmetric or complementary, as relationships are in a constant state of flux, depending on the situation or context of that relationship. Healthy relationships within a family matrix are considered to be those which are parallel. The members vary at any given time in their modes of relationship, but they have no difficulty in adjusting to the constant ebb and flow within the system. Maneuvering takes place in

order to establish a relationship. The extent to which this maneuvering is successful determines whether conflict will result. Jackson (1968), classifies families by the maneuvers they use into four categories: (a) stable-satisfactory; (b) unstable-satisfactory; (c) unstable-unsatisfactory; (d) stable-unsatisfactory.

Stable-Satisfactory:

The partners can reach agreement as to who is in control of the relationship, or in control of areas within the relationship. This implies ability to be flexible in arguments or disagreements, so as to return to a stable position rapidly.

Unstable-Satisfactory:

This differs from the above marriage in the length of instability. Stability occurs and is satisfactory, yet periods of instability are present.

Unstable-Unsatisfactory:

Marriages where no explicit or implicit agreement is reached upon the question of who is in control of the relationship or areas within it. Relationships are constantly redefined.

Stable-Unsatisfactory:

The partners agree never to make an issue of who is in charge of the relationship nor of areas within it. Dissatisfaction is kept hidden or ignored. On the surface this family seems stable and satisfactory but underneath it is characterized by the distances between family members.

Jackson (1957), sees families as having homeostasis. That is they seek to maintain the status-quo of the family system. This adds to Spiegel's (1957), hypothesis on family equilibrium the factor of a family need to seek stability.

The majority of authors would agree that marriage is a relationship with conflictual elements. Charney (1969), goes beyond this in presenting marriage as: "an inherently tense, conflict-ridden, interpersonal system whose successful fulfillment demands not resolution of conflict so much as it requires a constructive living out as tapping of conflict for generating energy for creative living in both partners..." (Charney, 1969: 2).

Echoing this viewpoint is Sprey (1969), who also approaches marriage as a system in conflict that needs to seek constant negotiation of its relationship. These authors contend that marriage is conflict oriented whereas more traditional viewpoints approach marriage as a social system that is stable until conflict arises.

Functions of Conflict

The functions of conflict are approached with different emphasis by different authors. At the traditional extreme, writers such as Landis (1968), Burns (1963), and Christensen (1950), look on it as a mostly destructive experience, which does contain some constructive aspects, if handled with discipline. At the other extreme are writers such as Bach (1969), Jackson (1968), Charney (1969), and Ellis (1961), who regard quarreling as a healthy aspect of marriage, as an information producer and tension releaser, a vehicle for the growth of the relationship. They recognize its destructive aspects but prefer to channel the emotion raised by argument into constructive form.

The traditional view sees quarreling as a beginning emotive phase of conflict that in mature attempts at resolution becomes muted and unnecessary. This involved reducing anger and feelings of pain.

The modern view explores quarreling as an honest emotive reaction that needs to be constructively handled, and implicit in this is the view that anger and the need to act aggressively for what one values is healthy. Facing anger leads to a more mature interaction between marriage partners, Bach (1969), Ellis (1961). According to Coser (1950): "Conflicts within a group frequently helps to revitalize current norms, or it contributes to the emergence of new norms." (P.309). Conflict is also seen as useful in defining relationship boundaries: (Duvall & Hill 1953: 239), (Bach 1969: 27).

In relation to Lewin (1948), and the factor of territorial needs of individuals, Bach (1969), further stresses a function of conflict as being the signal of the individual that his territory is being overrun. The aggression that underlies conflict is thus not totally destructive; and, in fact, if used rationally, constructively aids in enhancing the information each partner in a marriage receives about the other.

Landis (1968), sees few quarrels in marriage as being constructive because of their irrational and emotional aspects. Bach (1969), would agree but attempts to rectify this situation by outlining an approach to conflict that enables marriage partners to fight constructively. Basic to this approach is the use of anger as a reliever of tension or as catharsis. This is also seen as healthy by Waller (1938: 311). However, the destructive aspects of conflict are ever present. Coser (1956: 308), views conflict as posing a threat to intimate relationships, since the feelings exhibited are seen as a threat to the individuals in the group and hence the group itself. Consequently hostile feelings tend to be suppressed.

The literature tends to support the presence of conflict as healthy and natural if it is non-destructive, eases tension, and helps delineate issues and personal feelings. Erikson (1959), cited the inability to engage in controversy and useful combat as one of the criteria contributing to a failure to achieve intimacy.

Dynamics of healthy conflict resolution

Handling conflict in marriage has always been intellectualized to the point that few major differences appear in the general review of literature. Most of the difference occurring is related to how the emotional aspects of conflict are handled rather than how conflict is resolved. Underneath his semantic vigor Charney (1969), still advocates essentially the same factors and processes that lead to conflict resolution as do the traditional authors. Even the seemingly novel idea that couples should learn how to fight constructively is not new. The Binkley's (1929), urged that couples learn how to quarrel successfully some forty-two years ago.

Irregardless of the theoretical base used, the approach to conflict resolution contains the basic elements of good sense, empathy and democracy.

The major elements of conflict resolution that are repeated over and over again by Bach (1969), Ellis (1961), Charney (1969), Landis (1968), Duvall & Hill (1953), and Jackson (1968) are:

- (a) Facing conflict and not running away from it.
- (b) Close and functional communication between marriage partners.
- (c) Cooperation and not competition.
- (d) Avoiding of ego-destructive behavior.

Facing Conflict

The problem that faces most partners who live together is the inescapable fact that conflict is painful. For this reason there is a great urge to avoid

conflict. Avoiding conflict, however, is avoiding what Edwards (1954), cites as basic human needs: the need to assert oneself, to defend oneself, and to seek individuality. Thus a dilemma is created which must be faced. On the one hand is a passive existence devoid of any real emotion and on the other is a painful yet necessary human process, that offers the potential for healthy marriage adjustment.

A review of the literature shows a united front in favor of facing conflict rather than avoiding. There are exceptions of course, but they pertain more to conflicts that are trivial in nature. Blood (1960), and Landis (1968), encourage ignoring trivialities, and advocate that minor problems that can be handled individually and internally should be so handled. Bach (1969), however, views trivial matters warily, as he sees the possibility that underlying them can be more serious problems that, if ignored, may lead to conflict later on. Trivial issues need to be properly explored before being ignored.

Persons frequently lie in order to avoid conflict, and the more one is threatened by it the more one tends to avoid it. An interesting study by Goodrich and Ryder (1966), showed that newlyweds who rated themselves as happy, also showed a marked tendency to lie to each other in order to avoid conflict.

In avoiding conflict, however, it seems that couples reduce immeasurably the chance of receiving further information about each other. According to Duvall & Hill (1953): "Marriage partners can come to terms on a basis of reality only when they have felt the heat of each others' hostile feelings." (p. 240). Conflict acts as a catalyst to produce information that may

otherwise remain hidden. This is, of course, both a danger and a boon. Information that is kept hidden from the marriage partner is most always painful if not to the spouse then to oneself. Avoiding conflict temporarily is looked on as a healthy behavior if it avoids a confrontation that may be emotionally painful. Emotion can reach such a pitch that conflict would only destroy. In such cases it is best to allow a cooling off period and then to discuss the issues. This is advocated by: (Duvall & Hill, 1953), (Bach, 1969), (Blood, 1960), (Christensen, 1950). However the danger lies in allowing the cooling off period to act as an escape from conflict with the inevitable result that hostility is suppressed only to reappear again in the future.

There is a time and place for conflict. Bach (1969), advocates setting an appointment for arguments. Times not to carry on a fight are when either of the partners is tired, drunk, or otherwise weakened (Bach, 1969), (Burns, 1963).

The basis of the approach of Bach (1969), and Charney (1969), is that conflict can be taught to couples so that they can learn to face it more readily and handle it more constructively. Bach (1969), in fact conducts marriage counseling along these lines in his version of "fight therapy." Conflict ceases to be merely spontaneous, but is approached in an organized way with rules, goals and strategies.

Communicating effectively with spouse

Communication is the essence of conflict solution. Many conflicts arise out of the assumptions that are made from a spouse's communication; assumptions based on faulty evidence. Learning how to communicate and how

to interpret messages correctly can greatly reduce the incidents that arise in an interaction that need not arise at all.

Satir (1964), describes dysfunctional communication as the incongruence between the two levels of a message: (a) the denotative or content level and; (b) the metacommunicative level. The denotative level involves what is said in a message verbally while the metacommunicative level involves the true meaning of the message. For example, a general greeting such as "good morning" contains the content message which is as stated and the lower level message which projects what is really being said, which is dependent on voice tone, facial expressions, and the context of the message. Dysfunctional communication can be performed by both the sender and the receiver of the message. The failure to clarify a message and the failure to seek clarification both result in false information.

Navran showed in a study in 1967 that happily married couples differ from unhappy couples in that they:

- (a) talk more to each other
 - (b) Convey the feeling that they understand what is being said to them.
 - (c) Preserve communication channels and keep them open.
 - (d) Make more use of supplementary non-verbal techniques of communication.
- (Navran, 1967: 182).

Schizophrenic families show in microcosm a faulty form of communication that: "creates a state of chronic disequilibrium and discord: communication consists primarily of coercive efforts and defiance, or of efforts to mask the defiance to avoid fighting." (Mishler and Waxler, 1965: 285). Further studies of schizophrenic and abnormal families conducted by: (Ferreira, Winter, 1967, 1968a, 1968b), Friedman, 1970), (Hayley, 1967), (Coe, 1969) have shown: a distorted communication system, overt hostility and conflict,

and an inability to make quick and relevant decisions. Family members do not reveal their feelings to others and have a low knowledge of each other.

What is not made clear in these studies is to what extent abnormalities in the family structure or individual personalities created poor communication, or to what extent poor communication created the abnormalities. This does not detract, however, from the necessity of reducing functional communication in marriages. At the base of what any couple know of each other and the outside world is their method of communication. As marriage involves intimacy the communication of husband and wife must go beyond rituals and games and center on the realities of the situation. Ruesch (1953), states that: "Successful communication with self and with others implies correction of stored up information. Successful communication at all levels is the backbone of mental health." (p. 220).

Cooperation and Competition in Conflict

The need to avoid competition is seen as essential in handling conflicts. Competition between a couple that involves a power struggle may be quite functional under certain conditions, especially if it involves the assertion of self against unfairness and dishonesty. When it seeks to correct a relationship that is not fulfilling the needs of the individual, it can also be seen as healthy. However, in the resolution phase of conflict the feelings of competitiveness invariably result in an inability to come to terms with the issues in a constructive way.

Cooperation does not mean the negation of differences. Horowitz (1962), sees cooperation as: "the settlement of problems in terms of which make possible the continuation of differences and even fundamental disagreements."

(p. 186). The goal of conflict resolution is essentially achieving a mutual fulfillment of needs between the marital pair. Competition can scarcely bring this about. Saxton (1968), delineates "bad" marital adjustment as that action which may resolve an immediate conflict, but the resolution, in only involving one spouse, usually results in a lack of mutual fulfillment, and sows the seeds for further conflict.

An alternative to competition as seen by Blood (1960), is accommodation in which there is an agreement to disagree; but this in itself requires cooperation. In concessions where one partner wins, Blood (1960), sees the necessity of compensating the loser so that the loss is not total.

Bach (1969), feels that both partners have to win in order to achieve a constructive resolution and this is done by ensuring that the relationship gains from the conflict so that neither individual loses in the long run. A fifty-fifty relationship between husband and wife is considered unrealistic by Dreikurs (1968), due to the state of flux in a relationship in which differences of opinion and interest are inevitable. Yet if the conflict is not seen as a common one, and creates competition in which both have a strong stake to win to prevent a loss of equality, emotional issues arise which makes resolution difficult.

Many studies have been conducted to show that democracy and equality in the group decision-making process produces better results both creatively, psychologically and productively. Lewin (1948), in his book: Resolving Social Conflicts, discusses the experiments carried on at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station (Lippit & White 1939). In these studies it was found that children, placed in a democratic atmosphere in which each had

equal voice and were not subject to loss of self-esteem by competition, suffered less hostility and showed a greater willingness to listen to alternatives. In the autocratic atmosphere there was a feeling of low stakes by each member; every child became a potential enemy to each other, struggling to retain status, and scapegoating the hostility of the group on one member.

Similarly Scanzoni (1965), showed that dissolution of lower class marriages was strongly affected by authoritarian attitudes on the part of men and the lack of freedom from parental influence. Hoffman (1964), showed that decisions tend to be more creative and productive in groups in which all members are equal and free to express themselves.

Cooperation between partners thus enables the individuals to assert themselves more freely and to seek more freedom of choice in the marriage, whereas competition tends to restrict and confine members of a marriage to interaction that though basically self-gratifying is also destructive to the relationship.

Avoiding Ego-destructive behavior

When self concepts are attacked pain is inevitable. Yet in conflict pain is almost inevitable if the self-concept of the individual is weak. Negative statements will be taken as personal attacks on the integrity of the individual, and in defense, information that may lead to the growth of the individual is often ignored. Attacks on the person almost guarantees that the conflict interaction will continue in a destructive way by inviting retaliation. Partners who have lived together for any length of time are well cognizant of the others "Achilles heels": areas of the psyche that are best left alone. It is best to learn of the strengths and weaknesses

of the partners ego so that conflict will not result in the painful destruction of the defense mechanisms that may serve to keep that person healthy.

Fairness to Bach (1969), involves keeping injuries within the capacity of the partner to absorb them. This is not to avoid pain but to control its effect on the individual. He believes, in fact, that human beings are much more capable of absorbing pain than is assumed. A total fear of hurting the partner results in fight phobia which is characterized by Jackson's (1968), category of the stable-unsatisfactory marriage.

Painful statements in marriage are seen by Ellis (1961), as necessary for growth: "Both husband and wife in trying to face and get at the root of a difficulty must look at disagreeable things not only in relation to the other but also to themselves." (p. 61). He encourages husband and wife to accept the most awkward and inappropriate expressions of resentment, anger and outright hate from their partner. Both Bach (1969), and Ellis (1961), feel that a certain amount of pain is healthy provided it is not deeply inflicted. However, senseless destruction of the partner's ego to serve the need to win, or to prove the other wrong is not condoned.

Goals of Conflict Resolution

It might seem reasonable to assume that the goal of conflict resolution should be the resolution of conflict, and indeed the traditionalists hold this view. Yet Bach (1969), Ellis (1961), Jackson (1968), and Charney (1969), see the goal in a different light as not so much resolving conflict as living with it healthily. Essentially all writers agree on the inevitability of conflict, it is merely that the "fight-trainers" such as Bach and Charney see conflict not only as inevitable but welcome provided it is handled in

such a way as to become a tool for the growth of the relationship.

Waller (1938), saw destructive quarrels as those which left a relationship with a smaller sum total of assets than it had before.

The process of conflict resolution was seen by Satir (1964), as needing to possess the following goals: enhancement of self-esteem, prevention of bodily injury, creation of closeness, creation of a sense of receiving from the partner and productivity. Thus it is impossible to separate the gains of the relationship from the gains of the individual.

Beck (1966), perceives the goals of conflict resolution as being a marital balance:

A dovetailing of the partner's needs and patterns of reciprocity in meeting them such as will maintain over the long run an equilibrium in gratifications that is suitable to both...the concept does not imply that all needs of each partner must be met, but simply that the core needs specific to a given marital relationship must be satisfied (p.212).

Spiegel (1957), sees the goal of resolution also as a re-establishment of equilibrium although he defines equilibrium as the high complementarity of roles between the couple and disequilibrium as low complementarity of roles. What he refers to as reequilibration would mean a restoration of complementarity.

The growth and stability of the relationship itself is the goal of much of the conflict resolution. Bach (1968), sees the individual as responsible not only for his own role in the formation of the relationship, but in his partner's as well. "It is a partner's legitimate goal to change a specific characteristic of the other, if such a change is incontrovertibly for the other's own good." (p. 76). He does not explain how some action can be

considered incontrovertibly for someone's own good. However, the spirit of the statement is important for it implies that the partner needs to have a commitment to the relationship so that a need to seek change in the other, if deemed necessary for the good of the relationship, is a worthwhile goal.

Finally Bach (1968), lists twelve goals of conflict resolution:

- (a) Less hurt.
- (b) More information.
- (c) Solution of conflict.
- (d) Control over other's behavior (if sanctioned).
- (e) Less fear of fighting and partner.
- (f) Trust.
- (g) Loss of feelings of revenge.
- (h) Forgiveness and reparation.
- (i) Strengthening of individual identity in marriage.
- (j) Strengthening of self concept.
- (k) Catharsis.
- (l) Strengthening of cohesion and affection of couple (p. 103-106).

In the next chapter a model will be put forward that presents an approach to the study of conflict and its resolution. The main emphasis of the thesis will, however, rest on resolution, as it is this aspect that is of greatest interest to the marriage counselor.