

# League of American Orchestras

## Conflict, Communication, & De-escalation

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General Managers & Operations Leaders

July 12, 2025

A large, light-colored boulder sits in the middle of a paved road with yellow double lines. The background shows a hilly landscape with trees under a hazy sky. The entire image has a brownish-orange tint.

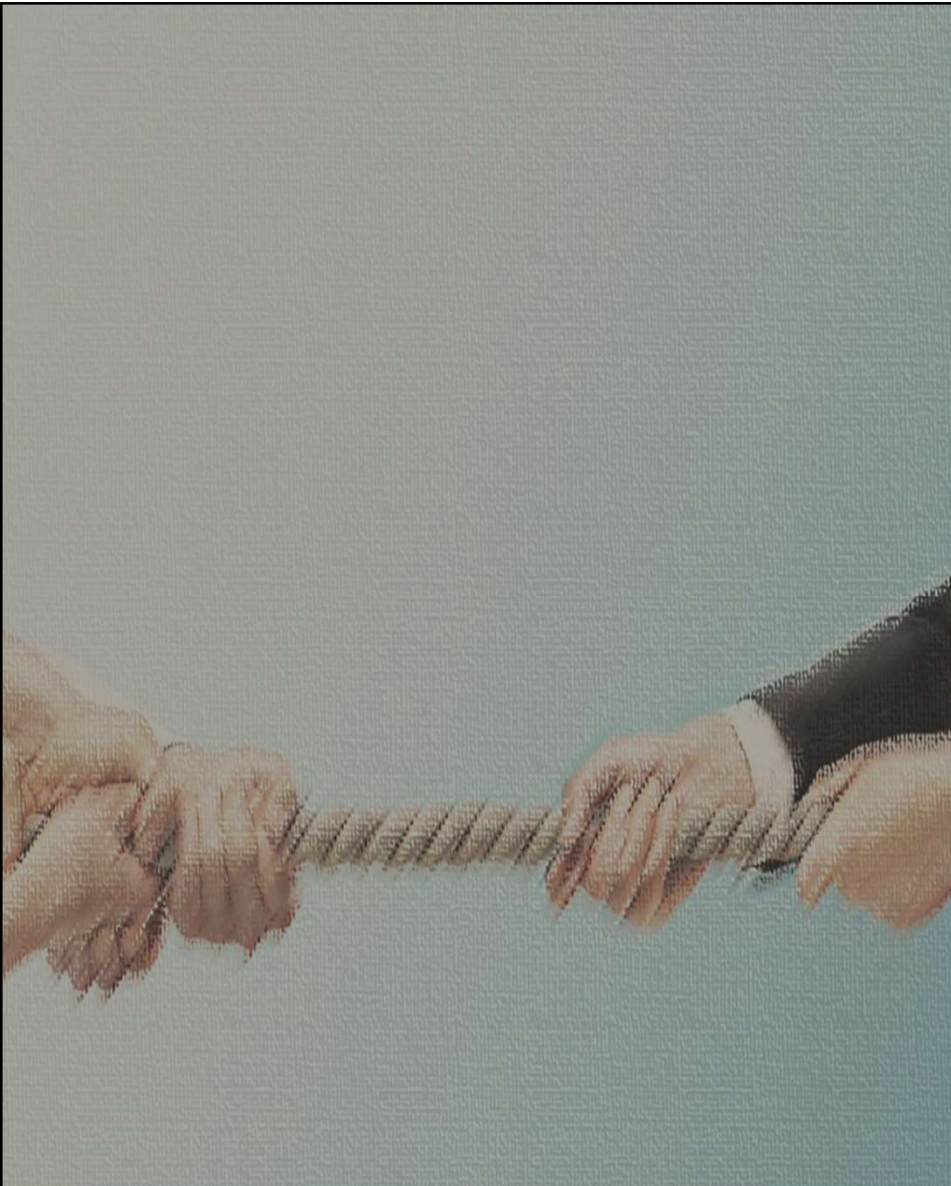
Thinking about conflict...

What slows you down?

What stops you in your tracks?

What takes it out of you?

And what puts it back?



What is happening? Where is it coming from?

What's underneath and why is this an issue?

What does the other person want? or What do the parties involved want?

What are the absolutes around a path forward, *informed by your leadership lens*?

What do the desired solutions have in common? What is actually possible?

What are the opportunities?

What will actually happen and what steps can get us there?

When might I need to step away?

# Planning and Prep

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# Before: Thinking and Preparing

Consider all you know about the situation – context, timing, parties involved (including power differentials, etc.)

Clarify what you hope/need/want to know and what you hope/need to convey

Identify the specific goals and outcomes (Inform? Negotiate? Defuse?)

Define your “floor” and “ceiling”

Check for any biases you might bring into the conversation

Think about what might be triggering for you and how you can prepare

## During: Communicating and Respecting

Listen and paraphrase, while conveying respect and reinforcing safety  
Share observations – not judgment (*"I saw," I heard"* not *"that was terrible"*)  
Acknowledge emotions and personal risk  
Share your/organizational stance and what is possible  
Summarize as you go and especially at the end

## After: Showing Accountability

Follow up with summary of understandings  
Allow for input and endorsement  
Act on action items (*This is what builds trust via accountability!*)





What are practices you have tried (or witnessed) that you have found to be effective in communicating and addressing conflict?



Actions You  
Plan to Take

Tactics You  
Can Implement



*Feel free to be in touch...*

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