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Fractured relationships and rebuilding them

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When faced with acrimony and bitterness, lateral thinking can salvage the situation

I was at a seminar where the lead speaker presented the audience a model of creative and lateral thinking, with the acronym SCAMPER, which when expanded read as 'Substitute,' 'Combine,' 'Adapt,' 'Modify,' 'Put to another use,' 'Eliminate' and 'Reverse.'



I read the acronym as defining for me what I employed when my relationship with a significant person in my life faltered and fractured, resulting in our parting bitterly.

I shared this thought with a friend. He elaborated it in relation to his partner in business of many years, from whom he had also recently parted and bitterly at that.

When the two of them fell out, he said the first attempt by each was to 'sabotage' the other; exemplifying the 'S'; following this, the attempt on each other's part was to 'compensate' the absence of the partner, by aligning with those who supported each individual. The 'C' played out here.

'Attack' or the 'A' of one another at the slightest opportunity became the norm. 'Maligning' one other, the 'M,' with other stakeholders became a way to exonerate oneself. 'Putting down', the 'P', each other in public became a practice. Desire to 'eliminate' the other, the 'E', was attempted in many ways.

Finally, when all that is said above hurt business, an aggressive search was made to find a competent 'replacement' for the lost partner, the final nail or 'R' in the coffin.

Where lateral thinking would have salvaged the situation, was if the actual acronym was acted upon and where all the acrimony and bitterness could have been dialogued through, asking one another how they could 'Substitute' their anger with better intent, how they could relook at and 'Combine' their strengths, how they could 'Adapt' to one another, how they could 'Modify' their relationship, how they could 'Put to another use' their strengths, how they could 'Eliminate' their distress and finally how they could 'Reverse' the wrong they had done to one another.

Lateral thinking, I recognise, can thus even be employed in rapprochement. If intent to rebuild is there, a lateral and creative approach may help.

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