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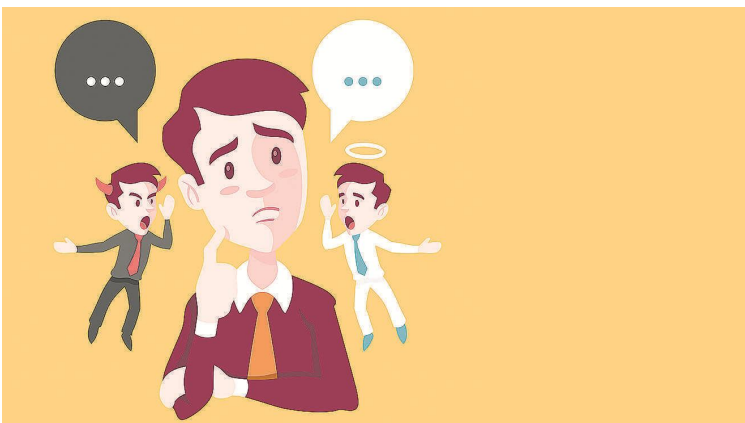
Understanding conflict

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Taking responsibility for our choices is the key to deal with conflicts

In the few weeks leading up to the general election in India and the anticipated outcome of the result, I found myself on a couple of occasions embroiled in conflict with those who differed with my points of view and often left me feeling either guilty or ashamed.

Post the election and results thereafter, I chose to ask myself what had raised so much ire in me and in those I seemed to be in conflict with.



I realised that the conflicts that arose were because each of our values, and perhaps aspirations, were being challenged, ignored or impeded.

Strangely, I also realised that this was true for even the conflict that goes on inside me; my internal conflict.

I seem to carry an image and view of myself as being a just and 'good' person. Yet, when I have found myself flying off the handle, as I did with a colleague of mine recently, I felt conflict within, between the assumption I seemed to carry about myself and my 'in-the-moment experience of myself'. I found it difficult to accept what I had done and attempted to rationalise my action by telling myself that 'my colleague had provoked me'.

A friend who I sought counsel from, told me that by attempting to rationalise my action, I was actually self-deceiving and not taking responsibility for the choice I had actually freely exercised with my colleague.

The learning for me was the recognition that in my being in touch with my internal conflict, and sharing it with a friend, I was able to clarify for myself what I valued about myself, which in this case was wanting to not only be seen as 'just' yet also behave so. I needed to accept that I have the freedom to choose how I wish to act, and having chosen, bear the consequences of the choice I have made.

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