

Core Concerns: Role

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss how role can be involved in both creating and resolving conflict. The areas of focus include:

1. Role as a Core Concern
 - a. In Conflict
 - b. In Conflict Resolution

1. Role as a Core Concern

In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, a **core concern** is one of five emotional or relational needs all humans feel within relationships or negotiations. All of these core needs fit into the esteem and love/belonging levels on Maslow's hierarchy.

Role, or a sense of owning responsibility or the right to make meaningful contributions in a group or situation, is a core concern that falls on the esteem level in Maslow's hierarchy.

This is because role has to do with our self-esteem and the esteem that we would like to get from others through the meaningful contributions we make.

Whether it's with a group, at work, or within our families, we all want to have a productive role in whatever it is we're doing.



TERMS TO KNOW

Core Concern

One of 5 emotional or relational needs all humans feel within relationships or in negotiation.

Role

A sense of "owning" responsibility or the right to make meaningful contributions in a group or situation.

1a. In Conflict

When we feel that our contributions aren't productive or that we don't understand the importance of our role, this can lead to conflict in a variety of contexts.

- *Professional Work/Management*: You have a supervisor and your supervisor has a manager, there's another manager over that manager, then there's the VP. You like your job, but unclear how your work is

contributing to the big picture. Because you don't see the results of your work, you lose interest and become disengaged. No one is recognizing the importance of what you do, so you call in sick; you think, "It doesn't really matter if I come in today." This could lead to conflict with your supervisor or coworkers because the perceived insignificance of your role has caused you not to care as much as you should.

- *Professional Work/Individual:* You've been working very hard, even taking some weekend time to finish your job. Yet, the productivity of your role is not being recognized. This leaves you unsure of what it is you're working so hard for.
- *Volunteer:* The same thing can happen as a volunteer in an organization. If you feel that your role is not significant, not productive, or not worth recognition from others as contributing to the overall objective, you can lose heart. Perhaps you'll quit volunteering.
- *Family:* You have a three or four-year-old who wants to help. This child wants to have a role, so he comes into the kitchen after dinner. It's up to you to assign the role and make sure that what he's doing is age-appropriate. Perhaps you put your child on a stool, hand him a towel, and tell him that he can wipe some dishes while you stand and supervise.

1b. In Conflict Resolution

As you can see from these examples, all people want to feel that they have a contributing role, whether they're three years old or in the workforce.

Thus, in the conflict resolution process, both parties want to feel that they are participating and that their roles are contributing something of value towards resolving the conflict.

For the process to be successful, it's important that the parties:

- Listen to each other
- Are heard by each other
- Have the importance of their role acknowledged



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the esteem and love/belonging levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs also include core concerns; **role is a core concern** that falls into the esteem category. You now understand that because role involves the right to make meaningful contributions in a group or situation, the perception that one's role is undervalued can result in conflict. This is why it's important for both parties to have the significance of their role acknowledged in the conflict resolution process. Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



TERMS TO KNOW

Core Concern

Per Harvard Negotiation Project, one of 5 emotional or relational needs all humans feel within relationships or in negotiation.

Role

A sense of "owning" responsibility or the right to make meaningful contributions in a group or situation.