

Hexagram 6 Conflict

	<i>Conflict.</i>
	<i>Possessing accord between inner and outer.</i>
	<i>Blocking respect for other.</i>
	<i>The center significant. Conflict without end.</i>
	<i>Harvesting: viewing the inner spirit, wisdom.</i>
	<i>Not harvesting: completing one's larger purpose.</i>

Structure

- Strength ☰ over danger ☵. Dangerous use of strength.
- The Creative above moves upward. Water below moves downward. The two trigrams move apart.

This hexagram describes the dangers we cause for ourselves when we use conflict to impose our will upon another. When opposing forces frame their difference in the realm of right and wrong, people move away from each other and conflict.

Conflict violates harmony and marks the limits of our capacities to connect affectionately and beneficially with others. The strong yield to their dangerous willingness to harm others to have their way, while the weak wish that harm might befall their contender. Acting out of anger leads to greater danger as we tend to ignore the consequences of our behavior in the heat of the moment. To conflict means not to love.

Conflict provokes self-righteous anger and compulsion to prove the other wrong. We condemn the other and attempt to force our will upon them or the situation. Yet we have learned from regrettable experience that acting on these feelings only worsens the situation and eclipses our greater purpose to free ourselves of what keeps us apart.

The wise avoid the opposing tendencies of conflict by taking everything into careful consideration at the very beginning, especially in situations in which they anticipate opposition might arise. Making the effort to first define rights, duties, and processes on how to come to a decision, allows us to work with differences without moving into conflict. Those on a spiritual path learn ways to avoid conflict by finding ways to recognize our commonality.

The grave mistake of conflict comes from letting a difference go too far. When they cannot have their way, most people allow their poisonous negative side to act. They get excited and contend for victory, plotting and scheming to deprive the other and to benefit themselves. To pursue a conflict to its bitter end creates enmity and turns out badly for both sides.

A clear and deep understanding of the dangers of conflict motivates us to free ourselves of our arrogance. If we seek to punish someone because we deem them wrong, we lose the spiritual path because of a little anger. When we willingly conflict, we hold the differences between us more important than our spiritual path. We become like the ones whom we believe intentionally harmed us.

Conflict emerges from a stressful and difficult situation that marks the limits of our capacity to respond well. If the conflict focuses on something unimportant, we can simply drop the issue. If we find ourselves struggling with reactive feelings, then we need to withdraw from the situation immediately to avoid impetuously acting out of anger. If we mirror the behavior of our contender, they have won as we have lost ourselves.

When we first become aware that we have fallen into the realm of right and wrong, at that moment we simply pause and remember how forcing our will upon others reinforces self-cherishing. Depending upon the level of our awareness, we can see the situation as a relationship knot that needs undoing and use the opportunity to overcome what keeps us apart. By staying in touch with our spiritual path and love for all, we can transcend individual differences through fellowship and subdue others through our love for them and all. The wise remain firmly in control of their arrogance and anger.

Even when in the deeper end of conflict, we can still respond well if we recognize that we must exert ourselves to regain presence through wisdom and to strengthen our willingness to come to terms by meeting the opponent halfway. As long as the conflict has not gone so far as to have poisoned the relationship, we can smooth out the opposition and move through the danger by focusing on what underlies the differences that escalated into anger. Those wanting to extricate themselves from a dangerous conflict situation learn how to compromise or withdraw.

We do not see the others as they are but as we are. Pondering and blaming others who do not let us have our way poisons our relationship with them. We deny the sacred path when we speculate about the wrongness of the other and plot to punish them.

The wise practice seeing through their disturbing emotions within a loving presence to find how they have projected what they do not like about themselves upon the other. We move beyond our self-centeredness by trying to understand how the other understands the situation from their perspective. If we can see the sacred behind what appears, then the way forward reveals itself as we have found the commonality of love.

In the beginning when forming a group, we clearly define rights and duties. By so doing, the group has already removed many causes for conflict. To avoid a possible conflict within an upcoming situation, the wise take everything into consideration, guiding others to a common understanding of underlying values and guiding principles before discussing difficult group problems. If we can agree on how to resolve our differences and remind ourselves of our purpose to benefit all, then the problem becomes an opportunity for cooperation. Often, in the light of the greater purpose, the group decides to drop a conflict that now seems irrelevant and explore inclusive ways to address the situation. A group in conflict need to avoid advancing a challenging effort until it resolves and heals the conflict. A conflicted group has divided energies, which weakens its power to overcome external dangers.

When people and cultures ignore their responsibilities to serve the Earth Interbeing and imagine themselves greater than the sacred, they conflict with the sacred ways¹. When we disregard natural

¹ **The Ways of the Sacred Earth Interbeing:** We worship the sacred through our care for Creation. We interbe with Creation, relating to all with equality, respect, and care so that life continues and thrives on Earth. We know the sacred ways for Creation to continue and thrive and to overcome what keeps us apart. We know and respond to the mutual neediness of life in ways that further the harmony of Earth Interbeing. We know and care for our place as the ground

limits and assume unfettered dominion over the Earth and all life, the sacred creation comes forward to assert its power against those who have violated the sacred ways. In this struggle, people, all life, and the Earth suffer.

The spiritual path avoids conflict at every turn. Through awareness and not harming others, we remove the conditions that lead to conflict. By aligning our efforts with the ways that benefit all, disputes will not interfere with our purpose. If we openly conflict, we fail. The wise do not let anger and self-righteousness cause them to lose the path. Difficult situations do not endanger the hearts of sages as they have moved beyond the realms of right or wrong and victory seeking.

The wise have no purpose of their own beyond fulfilling the will of the sacred. Although they do not comprehend the sacred, the wise have the faith and discipline to allow the spirit to work in the world through them. Rather than seek victory over another, sages inwardly contend with themselves to undo their conditioning to what harms and to return to the path. The line fulfills its purpose to care for the Earth and life. It serves rather than leads

Line 1: The weak line in a low position does not persist in a conflict but drops it. It receives some criticism but avoids much trouble and ends well.

Line 2: The wise line retreats from contesting with someone of greater strength to avoid drawing down disaster upon it and its community. The weak hardly ever win when they contend against the more powerful.

Line 3: The line has the satisfaction of completing the work and lets the credit for it go to those it serves, not contesting with others for recognition. The line feels rewarded from nurturing its spiritual being and practicing its values, its inner treasures. To obey the inner spirit brings benefit to all.

Line 4: The line does not conflict as it diminishes its dignity and its spiritual path. The wise do not press contentions. Rather, they contend with themselves to reduce their victory-seeking.

Line 5: The line contends and subdues others with the ways of Earth Interbeing, transforming others eager to gain power to not conflict. Here the sage contends with itself to transcend the conflict.

Line 6: The line has carried a conflict to the bitter end and gains victory, but it loses the spiritual path and the respect of others. Others attack it again and again, and the conflict never ends. What using force gains, others take back by force. The line gains little and loses much, the fate of those willing to harm others for self-benefit.

upon which we preserve the balance of Earth Interbeing by reciprocating for what we take through our stewardship of the Earth Interbeing. We live within interbeing's moral boundaries and Earth limits and learn from our life lessons how to overcome what keeps us apart. We live as unique beings in the ways of the Earth Interbeing to preserve Creation's harmony and balance and to overcome what keeps us apart. We respond to whatever we experience in the ways of the Earth Interbeing and hold ourselves accountable for our actions. (12/23/24)