

PHASE 1

Hardening – Debate & Polemics

- Positions sometimes become entrenched and clash
- Awareness of existing tensions creates rigidity
- No rigid parties or camps yet
- Polarisation in thoughts, feelings and intentions
- Black-and-white thinking
- Tactics: pretending to argue rationally; verbal aggression
- Playing to the audience; scoring points
- Temporary alliances form around positions

PHASE 2

Actions, Not Words

- Talking no longer helps – time for action! Creating faits accomplis
- Discrepancies between verbal and non-verbal behaviour; non-verbal behaviour dominates
- Misinterpretations of actions and situations
- Pessimistic expectations
- The group closes ranks; peer pressure, an insiders-only mentality and fixed role patterns
- Empathy is lost
- Recruiting supporters; weakness creates a need for support
- Covert provocations that are difficult to prove: provoking, taunting and irritating

Advice: Mediation is not yet immediately necessary. Cooperation still outweighs competition – the client alternates between cooperating and competing.



Advice: Mediation is strongly recommended. Competition outweighs cooperation.

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PHASE 3

Loss of Face – Threat Strategies – Limited Destructive Actions

- Open and direct personal attacks – moral integrity is lost
- Disgust, exclusion and banishment
- Losing sight of the outside world
- Ideology, values and principles
- Manoeuvring oneself into a forced position; loss of initiative
- Stress intensified by ultimatums and counter-ultimatums
- Turning values and virtues into their opposites
- Human qualities no longer count

Advice: Mediation is necessary.

PHASE 4

Destruction of the Enemy / Into the Abyss

- Isolating “frontline fighters” from their supporters
- Total destruction: physical, material, economic and/or psychological
- No way back
- Destruction of the enemy at any cost
- Willingness to drag one’s own circle down as well

Advice: Mediation is not recommended. The clients and/or parties are already engaged in a “cold war” – recommend other sources of support depending on the situation.