

# PINCH/CRUNCH THEORY

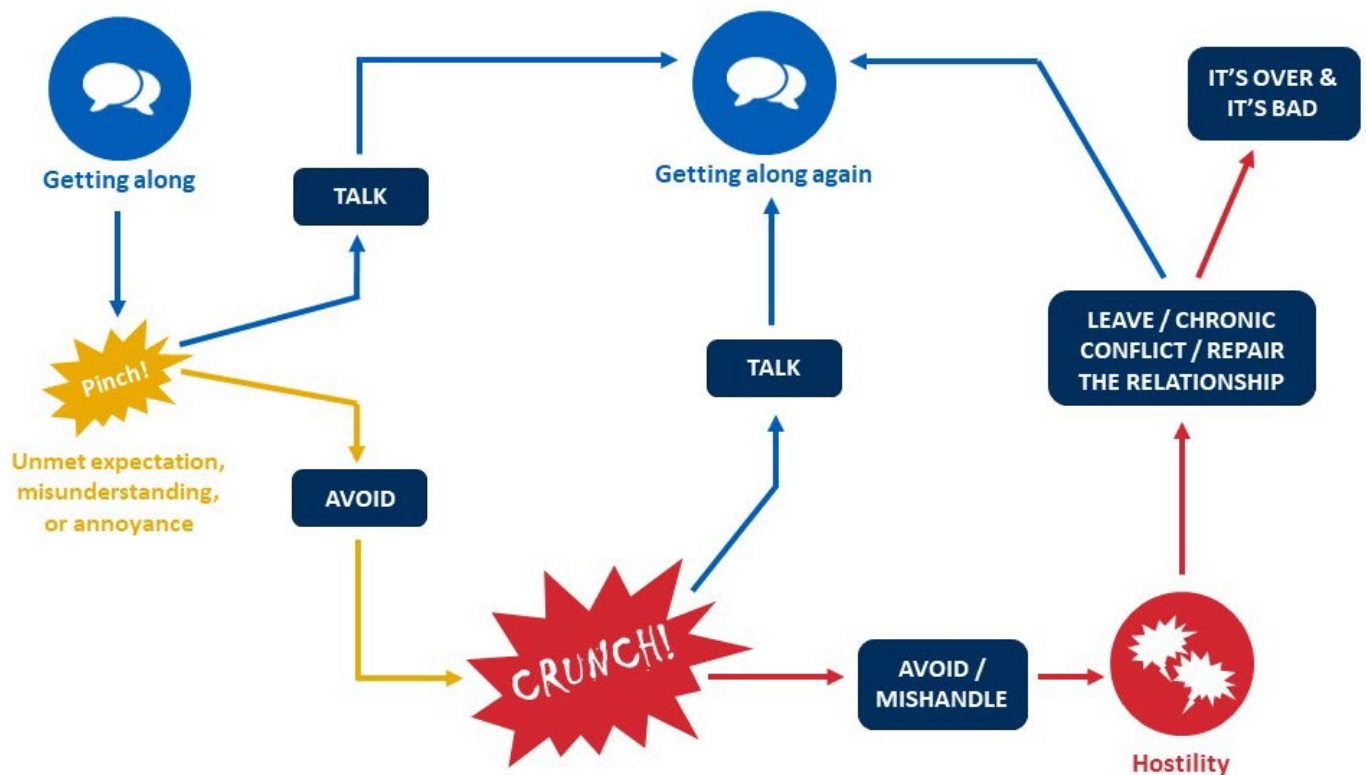
## ADDRESS CONFLICT BEFORE THE CRUNCH

It is inevitable that people on teams will find themselves in conflict, or at the very least, annoyed, or frustrated with each other. This is normal, and happens even in *great* teams. The difference between a good team and a great team is not in the amount of conflict, but in the way it is handled.

The Pinch-Crunch model helps us understand the importance of tackling minor issues (pinches) before they become major conflicts (crunches). If you address the pinch skillfully, it can be resolved in the moment without lasting impact. When minor-issues are ignored and repeated over time, they can develop into a crunch. Once it becomes a crunch, it takes a lot more skill and effort to address it.

At the core, pinches are disruptions of our expectations. Usually, the other party has no idea that they have caused the rift that has you seething.

*Most difficult conversations can be traced back to an easy conversation (a pinch) that should have happened, but didn't.*



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## RISKS/ROAD BLOCKS



*Often when we ignore holding a difficult conversation with the person directly, we turn to talking about the issue and triangulating with third parties. Avoid making the pinch even bigger through gossip and triangulation.*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS TOOL WITH YOUR TEAM

### Sample Activity (20 min):

- Watch the YouTube Video We Love Conflict: [Pinch Crunch](#)
- In pairs, discuss “what holds us back from having the pinch conversations?”
- Share your insights and discoveries with the larger group.
- Collectively, brainstorm ideas to overcome these barriers. \* Sometimes, by extending permission to receive feedback, we pave the road to give it as well.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What holds me back from having pinch conversations?
- What underlying norm, agreement or expectation was violated here? (Do they know?)
- Why am I failing to voice my concern? (If I was doing something that ‘pinched’ someone else, would you want to know?)

## RESOURCES

Pinch Crunch Model, John J. Sherwood & John C. Glidewell (1973, 1975)