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**PSYCHOLOGY OF CONFLICTS: THE CONCEPTS "CONFLICT",
"CRITICAL LIFE SITUATION", "CRISIS".**

In everyday life, people are dealing with a variety of situations, the totality of which forms our living space. Throughout life we will see a series of events, circumstances, situations that make up and create a common human life path.

Among all these situations there are the ones that can be designated as critical life situations. Under them, psychologists usually understand significant problematic or difficult situations that need to be addressed or overcome; this does not mean usual situations, with all problems or difficulties they are associated with (as they are recurring, we use the usual ways to overcome them), but those ones that require finding a new solution, quit or unusual resources experience.

In order to understand a person's behaviour, the reasons of his actions, his emotional well-being it is not enough to know the objective circumstances and factors of his life, it is important to know their perception and interpretation by the person. A student who seeks to continue his/her postgraduate education and research career and who did not receive the grade "excellent" in the final exam may perceive this as a failure of all his/her hopes, and his/her classmate who dreams of graduating from the institute and who has put very little effort into all this years of study, considers the lowest point of "passed" as a gift of fate.

A person does not simply exist in any situation, but interprets the emerging events and circumstances of his life. All this determines his attitude to them, the emotional experience and their meaning in his life. In doing so, the influence of his subjective perceptions is often stronger than the objective factors.

Thus, in interpreting external circumstances, we attribute to them a certain value, that ultimately becomes the decisive factor in our attitude to these circumstances.

The more specific the external situation, the more similar reactions it causes. In case of fire in a public building, different people, regardless of their individual characteristics, attitudes to life, beliefs and tastes, etc., are often panic-stricken, fleeing, experiencing emotional upheaval. Although individual behaviours can be seen in their behaviour, the situation in which they find themselves is so straightforward that it does not actually leave space for different subjective interpretations. But if the external situation is less certain, its perception shows the individual characteristics of its participants in larger scale.

For example, the boss fluffs his subordinates. For one of them it is "fair criticism", for the second - nothing meaningful "air shake", and the third "boils" with indignation and hardly restrains in order not to respond to the unacceptable behaviour of the boss.

Thus the situation is external circumstances in the perception and interpretation of the person from a psychological point of view.

Accordingly, a critical life situation is an emotionally experienced life circumstance, which in human perception is a complex psychological problem that needs to be resolved or overcome.

In psychology, stress refers to the state of mental tension that occurs in a person under the influence of complicated, difficult adverse circumstances of his activity and daily life or in special, extreme situations. As stressors (factors that lead to the occurrence of short-term stress conditions in a person, and to the development of severe, long-lasting experiences),

adverse environmental effects, extreme situations, physical and mental trauma, etc. may be involved.

Mental stress arising from stressors can be a useful adaptive value, mobilizing a person's efforts to overcome difficulties. This phenomenon, for example, is well known to athletes or actors whose "pre-start excitement" performs the function of tuning in to future activities. However, if the stress is very high due to the intensity of the action or its unexpectedness, human resources may indeed be insufficient to overcome the stress that begins to affect the person in a destructive way until the manifestations of physiological disorders and the complete disorganization of person's life.

One or another degree of experience of stress is characteristic of any critical life situations of a person, as a result they are often called stress. From a psychological point of view, however, it is advisable to distinguish between the stresses caused by physical or other short-term actions (such as an injury from tumbling on a slick road or a squabble in transport) and the relatively long-lived experiences of a person associated with significant psychological problems.

Conflicts and crises are typical life situations of this kind.

Conflicts are first of all associated with all kinds of contradictions, disagreements, clashes. Indeed, the conflict is a contradiction, but not every contradiction becomes conflict.

The following conditions are required for a conflict to occur: first, the contradiction must be realized by the person; second, it must be perceived as a significant problem that needs to be resolved (this crucial feature of conflicts gives rise to emotional experiences accompanying them); thirdly, conflict is characterized by the activity aimed at finding a way out, overcoming or solving a problem.

Thus, **conflict** is a *contradiction that is perceived by a person as a significant psychological problem requiring a solution and triggering an activity aimed at overcoming it.*