

50 WAYS

**TO EFFECTIVELY
DEAL WITH CONFLICT**

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Conflict is healthy it's just HOW we deal with it that is NOT. Have you ever had to have a difficult conversation, as a manager, leader or parent you know those conversations that could go the wrong way and people might get angry?

Conflict is a normal part of any healthy relationship. Life is problematic and wherever there are groups of people whether it is at work or in a family, you will find conflict. After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything, all the time, especially when each has a different personality style that has different needs, motivations and fears. Learning how to deal with conflict—rather than avoiding it—is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged, it can cause great harm to a relationship, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between two people. By learning to apply these tips for dealing with conflict, you can keep your personal and professional relationships strong and growing.

There are those of us that handle conflict better than others. And there are those of us that avoid it like the plague! However sometimes you just can't avoid it and will need to face it head on. So here's how you can deal with conflict and come out the other side with your friendships intact. I am not saying that these tips work 100% of the time, but they will give you a way in which to facilitate the process of conflict in a more effective way. Apply them in the order that you read them and you just might surprise yourself at how effective you will be.

Conflict arises from differences of style. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences appear minor, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem, or a fear has been triggered. These needs can be a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy.

Within the content of the tips you will find ideas and insights that you can apply when having to deal with conflict.

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Speak what you are committed to first



Before diving into the conversation **get really clear and speak about what you are both COMMITTED** to in the relationship. If you are talking with a manager **speak about what common commitments you both have**, such as team or project objectives.

If you are a parent share with your son or daughter what you are committed to as a parent **speaking in a POSITIVE way**. It might be that you are committed to supporting them to be the best they can be in life, or simply that you want to be there for them no matter what.

Be willing to have fierce conversations to get clarity



Be willing to have fierce conversations to get clarity and for **bringing “moments of TRUTH”** - what the reality of the situation is.

Remember what is true for you may not be true for others.

And always remember that people have absolute **CLARITY** about what it is they **DON'T want! And never assume anything about the situation or the person.**

So keeping these things in mind, **ask open questions** that start with...

“What... Tell me... How... When... and Where”

This is to gain CLARITY about the situation and for bringing out those “moments of truth. Or put another way for uncovering those BFO’s, those **blinding flashes of the obvious!**

And use **“I” statements** such as...

“This is not working for me” and...



“When you... I feel...”

Find out what is happening for the other person



Use the word “because” to keep a conversation going for gaining understanding about **what is ACTUALLY happening for the other person.**

Sometimes we waste time solving and asking the wrong questions.

For example if you ask, “how come you felt like that then?” and they say, “I felt like that when John said...” And then you would ask... “You felt like that because...?”

Discuss a plan of action for change



When speaking to a manager **DISCUSS** their professional development plan and if you are a parent discuss a personal plan of action.

If they are unwilling to change then you need to **CLARIFY** the **WHY** of why they can't. If they won't then a strategy to use is to "box" them in using closed questions.

Give them nowhere to move to by speaking **ONLY** your movement (action), when it comes to agreeing with what to do – *I understand that, however this is how it will happen, or I request that you.*

Ask questions to start the change conversation

- “We are not getting what we want here are we” **or...**
- “What would be three things that you need to work on right now that would solve the problem?” **or...**
- “What does the future hold if nothing changes?” **or...**
- “You cannot control what happens to you, you can **ONLY** control how you respond, so how are you going to respond?” **or...**
- “Did you or didn’t you?” (When you here *if’s, and’s or but’s*) **or...**
- “Where are we going and how are we going to get there?”

Be creative...give reflection time... AND give strategies



Give them **STRATEGIES to shift** who they are BEING (their BEINGNESS Quotient) and for adapting their style – observable behaviors. Speak and give them a brightness of the future. Ask **WHAT QUESTIONS** such as “what is it that we want?”

Everyone needs to **feel understood, nurtured, and supported**, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely. Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most difficult conflicts in our personal and professional relationships. The needs of both parties play important roles in the success of most relationships, and each deserves **RESPECT** and consideration.

Be willing to show compassion and have understanding and show forgiveness

When you can recognize the legitimacy of conflicting needs and become willing to examine them in an environment of compassionate understanding, it opens pathways to creative problem solving, team building, and improved relationships. Be kind and forgiving to those that have hurt you.



Start to become comfortable with your emotions

Conflict is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real). **We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions** of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts.

Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.

Conflicts can cause strong emotions. If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully. So see **conflicts as an opportunity for growth.** When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust.

Healthy ways to respond to conflict

Do you fear conflict or steer clear of it at all costs? If your perception of conflict comes from frightening or painful memories from previous unhealthy relationships or early childhood, you may expect all present-day disagreements to end badly.

If you view conflict as dangerous, it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you go into a conflict situation already feeling extremely threatened, it's tough to deal with the problem at hand in a healthy way. Instead, you are more likely to shut down or blow up in anger.

Become aware of your feelings, be courageous and do what is right for BOTH parties. It is admitting your mistakes. **Courage is the strength in your heart.**

Choose to be courageous and believe that facing conflict head on is the best thing for both sides

1. Choose to recognize and **respond to the things that matter** to the other person...
2. Use a calm, **non-defensive and considerate** reaction...
3. Have a commitment to seek compromise and avoid punishing the other person...
4. Have “**adult to adult**” conversations – not parent to child attitudes...
5. A readiness to **FORGIVE** and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding onto resentments or anger.

*Be willing to actively listen for what **FEELING** is not being spoken*

Be able to regulate stress and your emotions. Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort.

Get in touch with your feelings and pay attention and understand your own needs, because if you don't understand your own needs, you will have a hard time communicating with others and staying in touch with what's really troubling you.

Be aware of and RESPECT differences

Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm. By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.

And remember that we also REACT to the non-verbal communication, or attitudes of others. Know when you have an attitude yourself, and avoid using disrespectful words and actions. By doing this you can almost always resolve a problem faster.

It's also about having the ability to remain comfortable enough with your emotions and being able to adapt your approach even in the midst of an argument or a perceived attack. Every man, woman and child deserves respect. Treat people with dignity and know that everyone is deserving of your respect. See the potential in every one and every situation.

Don't STRESS... Stay Peaceful and Calm



Psychologist Connie Lillas uses a driving analogy to describe the three most common ways people respond when they're overwhelmed by stress:

Foot on the gas.... *is this YOU?*

Is an angry or agitated stress response, you're heated, keyed up, overly emotional and unable to sit still.

Foot on the brake... *or is this you?*

Is a withdrawn or depressed stress response, you shut down, space out, and show very little energy or emotion.

Foot on both gas and brake... *or maybe this is you?*

Is a tense and frozen stress response, you "freeze" under pressure and can't do anything. You look paralyzed, but under the surface you're extremely agitated.

Stress interferes with your ability to stay present

When you are stressed it is difficult for you to:

- Accurately READ another person's nonverbal communication
- HEAR what someone is really saying
- Be AWARE of your own feelings
- Be in TOUCH with the needs of your style
- Communicate your NEEDS clearly

Is stress a problem or is it you?



You may be so used to being stressed that you're not even aware you *are* stressed.

Learn how to beat stress in the moment

The best way to rapidly and reliably relieve stress is through the senses:

- **SIGHT** – Sit in a quiet space that is pleasing to the eye
- **SOUND** – Listen to music that relieves tension
- **TOUCH** – Be creative by painting or doing a craft
- **TASTE** – Cook your favorite food
- **SMELL** – Learn to smell the roses along the way

But each person responds differently to sensory input, so find things to do that are calming and peaceful to you.

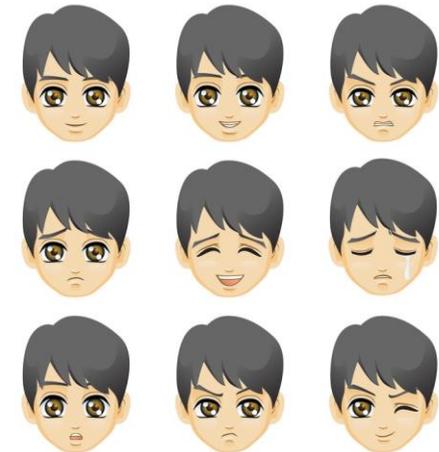
Emotional awareness is the key to understanding

Definition:

Emotional awareness is the consciousness of your *moment-to-moment* emotional experience, and the ability to manage all of your feelings appropriately.

Emotional awareness is the key to understanding yourself and others.

If you don't know how you feel or why you feel that way, you won't be able to communicate effectively or resolve disagreements.



So why is emotional awareness a key factor in resolving conflict?

Emotional awareness helps you:

To understand what is really troubling other people and to understand yourself, including what you might be reacting to.

When you know you are in reaction you can then choose to own your feelings – No one makes you feel a certain way!

It is about saying, “when you _____ I feel _____ because...”

The following quiz helps you assess your level of emotional awareness. On a piece of paper write down your answers to the following questions with: *almost never*, *occasionally*, *often*, *very frequently*, or *almost always*. There are no right or wrong responses, only the opportunity to become better acquainted with your emotional responses.

- 1. Do you experience feelings that flow...** one emotion after another as your experiences change from moment to moment?
- 2. Are your emotions accompanied by physical sensations that you experience** in places like your stomach or chest?
- 3. Do you experience discrete feelings and emotions**, such as anger, sadness, fear, joy, each of which is evident in subtle facial expressions?
- 4. Can you experience intense feelings** that are strong enough to capture both your attention and that of others?
- 5. Do you pay attention to your emotions?** Do they factor into your decision-making?

What kind of relationship do you have with your emotions?

Communication is not just about the words that we speak and hear. People respond to nonverbal communication as well. The sender of any communication also conveys their ideas through emotionally driven facial expressions, postures, gestures, pace, tones and intensity of their voice.

When in a conflict situation attitudes are what people react to the most – “I don’t like your sarcasm!” or “stop being so righteous!”.

The most important communication is without words



Nonverbal communication and conflict resolution

When people are upset, the words they use hardly ever communicate the issues and what is at the heart of the matter. When we listen for what is **felt as well as what is said** we can connect more deeply to the needs and emotions, of other people. This will allow you to respond in a way that builds trust.

A calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or an interested or concerned facial expression can go a long way toward relaxing a tense exchange.

Listen for the essence of the communication

Your ability to accurately read another person depends on your own emotional awareness. The more aware you are of your own emotions, the easier it will be for you to pick up on the wordless clues that reveal what others are feeling.

Personality Style Tensions

Personality styles that focus on **PEOPLE** and are patient and have a **SLOW PACE** may have conflict with those styles that like to focus on the **TASK**, like to get results and have a **FAST PACE**.

Learning to adapt your style is the key to harmonious relationships. Identify whether a person's focus is on the task and if they are slow or fast paced? Or if they are focused on people and are slow or fast paced? Then increase your directness or openness with them.

- To **INCREASE** your **directness** speak, move and make decisions at a faster pace.
- To **DECREASE** your **directness** talk, walk and make decisions more slowly.
- To **INCREASE** your **openness** share feelings and show more emotion.
- To **DECREASE** your **openness** get right to the task – the bottom line.

Tips SUMMARIZED

Managing and resolving conflict requires the ability to quickly reduce stress and bring your emotions into balance.

Listen for what is felt as well as said. When we listen we connect more deeply to our own needs and emotions, and to those of other people.

Make conflict resolution the priority make it a WIN/WIN rather than winning or "being right." Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your first priority. Be respectful of the other person and his or her viewpoint.

Focus on the present and be committed to a WIN/WIN outcome. If you're holding on to grudges based on past resentments, your ability to see the reality of the current situation will be impaired. Rather than looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the here-and-now to solve the problem.

Know when to let something go. If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.

Be willing to forgive. Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can never compensate for our losses and only adds to our injury by further depleting and draining our lives.



**Would like to find out what DISC style you are to understand
what is driving your behavior?**

Check out our DISC Assessments and Resources by going to...

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