



Resolving Conflict

Conflict is a natural part of every ongoing relationship. Rather than avoiding conflict, see it as an opportunity for personal growth. Here are some tips:

GOAL – The shared goal of conflict must be to achieve a mutually satisfying solution between parties. The goal must NOT be to win. Instead, aim towards the win-win resolution of understanding one another. Both parties get what they need.

Obstacles to Resolution –

“Take no prisoners”: If your goal is to win at all costs, there will be no resolution of conflict.

“Avoidance”: If your goal is to avoid conflict, you will not grow. In the end, you lose, every time.

“Attack!”: If your goal is to attack, this will not result in resolution. This means no attacking:

- Character
- Physical or emotional harm
- Belittling
- Name-calling
- Disrespect
- Threats

“I’m the authority.”: If you cannot stand on equal ground, you are missing the goal

“Well she said...”: Don’t pull others into the conflict.

Stonewalling.

Storming off.

Talking over the other person/ Refusing to listen.

Getting stuck in justification.

Skills towards Resolution:–

The resilient approach sees conflict as an opportunity for personal growth. The goal is mutual understanding and progress forward.

Seek mutual understanding. To do this,

- Take turns speaking while the other listens. Once one side feels heard, switch.

- Use active listening skills.
- Use “I statements” to share real feelings (not thoughts).
 - I feel ___ when ___ because ___ and I need (or would appreciate) ___.

Stay calm. Take deep breaths if necessary.

Identify the obstacle. You may think it is about the dirty dishes, but this is not about the dirty dishes.

Separate the person from the problem. You cannot change others, only yourself. It is the problem that is the obstacle and the removal of the obstacle that is the goal.

Try using VOCAB: - Vulnerability Ownership Communication Acceptance Boundaries

Gather suggestions. Focus on the obstacle/problem and the desire to overcome or remove it.

Work together. Destroy obstacles, not people.

Be creative. There are no bad suggestions. Sometimes the best solutions come from a combination of several less-than-optimal suggestions.

Keep perspective. Disagreeing is a natural part of life.

Move forward towards the future.

Come to Agreement with a mutually satisfying resolution.

- Know when to quit. (The law of diminishing returns!)
- Agree to disagree. No two people in the entire world agree on everything.
- Be gracious.
- Be specific.

Additional Resources:

Stonewalling: <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-four-horsemen-stonewalling/>

The Beauty of Conflict: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55n9pH_A008

Feelings List: <http://www.psychpage.com/learning/library/assess/feelings.html>

Resolving Conflict: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QyXFirOUeUk&feature=youtu.be>