

Dealing with Conflict in Your Personal and Work Life: Handling and resolving conflict

How you handle conflict affects your relationships with others and your overall wellbeing. This series includes tips on how to handle conflict with friends, family, co-workers, and others.

This is the second in a six-part series of articles on dealing with conflict. Read the previous article, "[Understanding conflict](#)."

Handling and resolving conflict

Once you understand that you are experiencing a conflict with someone, it's best to work on resolving it. Here are ways to handle common types of conflict:

Make an effort to understand the cause of the conflict. Ask yourself what the problem is really about. Is there a deeper issue than the one you've been arguing about that needs to be addressed?

Stay calm. If you are feeling angry, hurt, or fearful, it will help if you take three deep breaths or count to ten or walk away for a few minutes before you speak out of anger.

Give the other person the benefit of the doubt. Keep in mind that they may be going through something that no one knows about. Don't assume that the person was deliberately trying to aggravate or dismiss you.

Stick to the subject. Don't get sidetracked by issues that aren't related to the conflict you're trying to resolve.

Listen to the other person. Let the other person tell their side of the story without interrupting them. Then reflect back what you heard to check your understanding. For example, you might say, "It sounds as if you are saying . . . Do I have that right?" Accept that there may be facts you don't know or that the other person interprets differently than you.

Speak from your own experience. It will help if you use "I" rather than "you" statements. Saying that "you" did or said something will make the other person feel blamed and on the defensive. Instead, describe your feelings by saying, "I think" or "I feel," and keep the focus on how you experienced the situation.

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Be willing to compromise. Finding a solution to a conflict usually involves give and take. Remember that your goal isn't always to get 100 percent of what you want—it's to maintain good relationships with the people who are important to you, whether they are family, friends, or others. Showing flexibility will help you stay on good terms even if you have conflicts.

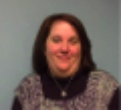
Always apologize if you were wrong.

Get help if you have continual conflicts that you can't solve on your own. Depending on the type of conflicts, you may want to get help from a manager, counselor, trusted friend, relative, or spiritual adviser.

Take steps to limit or avoid conflicts on social media. Conflicts on social media can escalate with frightening speed. A disagreement between you and one or two friends can morph quickly into a full-scale “pile-on” as others join the fray. To limit or avoid problems, don’t post when you’re upset, angry, or overtired. Apologize quickly, and delete any post that you wrote in the heat of the moment and is causing unintended conflict. Don’t jump into irrational arguments on others’ pages. And limit the potential for future conflicts by adjusting your privacy settings so your posts can be read only by trusted contacts who express themselves in a respectful way. Unfriend or unfollow people who continually stir up trouble on your page.

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