



# Taming Conflict Tool

A key to productive conflict is to put yourself in the shoes of your counterpart in order to stop seeing each other as adversaries. When you are in a conflict situation, ask yourself, “What is the temperament and style of my counterpart?” Use this tool to bridge the divide.

BEFORE	Anyone	<p><b>Breathe:</b> Deep breaths help reduce stress, preempt fight-or-flight responses, and increase mindfulness. No matter who your conflict is with, taking time to breathe will set you up to better tame it.</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> What do you want to get out of the conflict? If you know this going in, you will stay more focused and prevent the conflict from ballooning.</p>
	Introverts	<p><b>Schedule:</b> Introverts prefer to have time to prepare for conversations, especially difficult or fraught ones. Rather than confronting introverts in the hallway, ask via email if they can meet — and let them know what you want to discuss.</p>
	Extroverts	<p><b>Make Needs Explicit:</b> Extroverts usually prefer to talk face-to-face, and hash things out as quickly as possible. If you would prefer to communicate digitally, or meet and then follow-up after consideration, make it clear to your counterpart.</p>
DURING	Anyone	<p><b>Acknowledge:</b> Constructive conflict happens when both parties understand each other’s point of view and explicitly acknowledge that there is validity on both sides. If you do not understand your counterpart’s point of view, acknowledge that too — and take the time to understand them.</p>
	Introverts	<p><b>Slow Down:</b> Introverts often feel uncomfortable in conflicts with extroverts, because extroverts tend to speak faster and louder in these situations.</p>
	Extroverts	<p><b>Process Out Loud:</b> Extroverts can be left feeling in the dark while introverts process internally. Although it may be a stretch, make an effort to give a step-by-step explanation of your thinking.</p>
AFTER	Anyone	<p><b>Reflect:</b> How did you leave things with your counterpart? Did you handle yourself in a way you feel proud of, or is there room for improvement? What will you change next time? What else needs to be addressed now?</p>
	Introverts	<p><b>Check In:</b> Introverts tend to ruminate even after extroverts might consider a conflict resolved. Let them know you are open to reconsidering earlier decisions, and make space for them to share further thoughts with you.</p>
	Extroverts	<p><b>Let It Go:</b> Extroverts prefer to move on to the new task at hand — unlike introverts, who often continue mulling over conversations. Good partnership with extroverts often means trying to move on with them.</p>