



# *Strategies and Resources for Conflict Resolution*

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*Sometimes all you need is someone to point you in the right direction.*



**It's human nature to avoid conflict and hope that the situation goes away.**

Understanding the underlying causes of conflict and trying to intervene early may prevent a difficult situation from escalating and consuming your time and energy. In this workshop you will learn about conflict, and how you can develop confidence and strategies to address an uncomfortable situation *with inquiry and compassion*. There will also be a brief, anonymous conflict quiz, videos for review and discussion.



1 : [fight](#), [battle](#), [war](#) an armed conflict

2 a : competitive or opposing action of incompatibles : antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons) a conflict of principles

b : mental struggle resulting from [incompatible](#) or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands His conscience was in conflict with his duty.

3 : the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction The *conflict* in the play is between the king and the archbishop.

SOURCE: MERRIAM –WEBSTER DEFINITION



## CONFLICT QUIZ

1. Conflict will eventually go away if ignored.
2. The presence of conflict can be a sign of poor management/leadership.
3. Conflict is a win or lose proposition.
4. Conflict is inevitable.
5. Conflicts are limited to battles between interests and desires.
6. Conflict is the same as disagreement.
7. Personalizing conflict is the first step in relationship breakdown.
8. Conflict provides an opportunity to learn about oneself and grow.
9. All conflicts can be resolved.
10. Nothing complicates conflict resolution faster than “sharing your feelings.”



## CONFLICT QUIZ

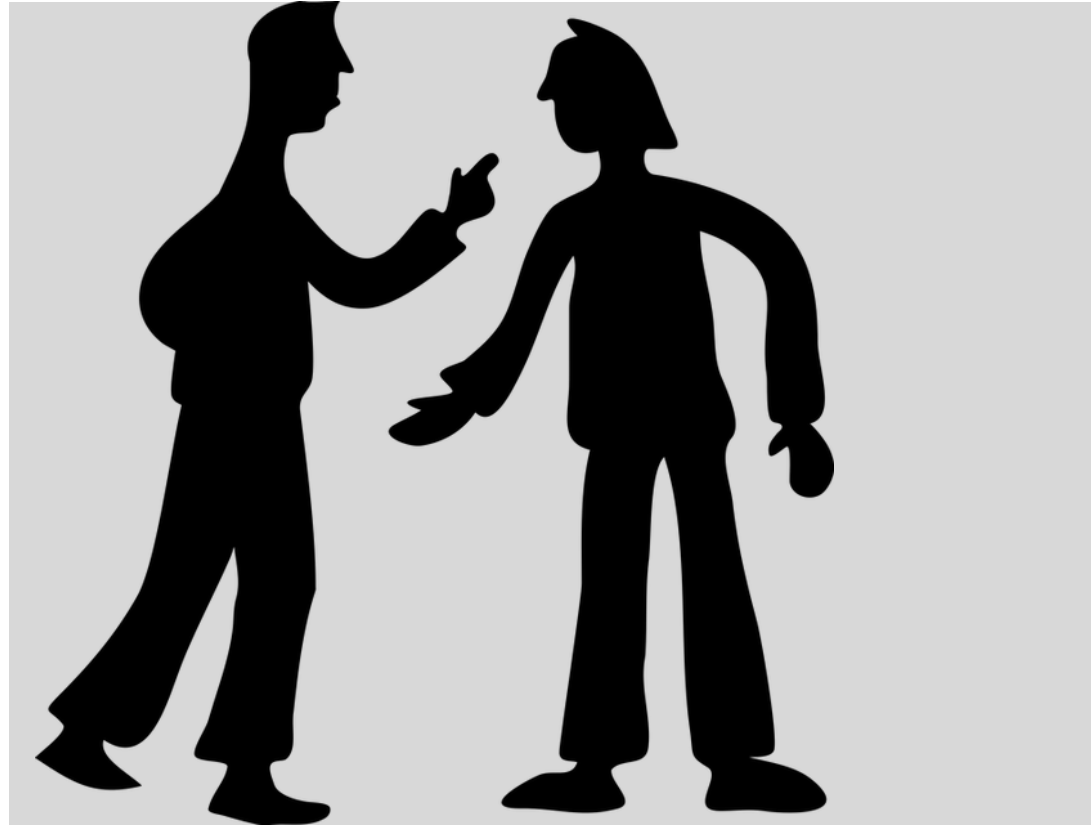
1. Conflict will eventually go away if ignored. **False**
2. The presence of conflict can be a sign of poor management/leadership.  
**Both (True & False)**
3. Conflict is a win or lose proposition. **(False)**
4. Conflict is inevitable. **(True)**
5. Conflicts are limited to battles between interests and desires. **(False)**
6. Conflict is the same as disagreement. **(False)**
7. Personalizing conflict is the first step in relationship breakdown. **(True)**
8. Conflict provides an opportunity to learn about oneself and grow. **(True)**
9. All conflicts can be resolved. **(False)**
10. Nothing complicates conflict resolution faster than “sharing your feelings.” **(True)**



## How have I contributed to the conflict?

*“In our society, we don’t naturally look inside ourselves  
for the source of conflict, we look outside.”*

Theodore Dobson



*Differences can be the sources of creativity,  
or they can serve to divide. --- Craig Runde*



## What causes conflict?

- Divergent goals
- Role ambiguity
- Unclear expectations (performance & behavior)
- Value differences
- Personality differences
- Perceptual differences
- Cultural differences
- Generational differences
- Scarcity of resources
- Power and status differences
- Poor communication
- Attitudes
- Anger/resentment
- Fear of showing vulnerabilities
- Focus on people, not the process or the problem
- Difficulty trusting those who are accountable
- Fierce competition
- Harassment/discrimination
- Lack of trust
- Lack of a collaborative environment
- Indecisiveness
- Clash of egos
- Change





# Causes of Conflict



Adapted from:  
Christopher Moore, *The Mediation Process*, Third Edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 2003.



Finding Confidence in Conflict | Kwame Christian | TEDxDayton

<https://youtu.be/F6Zg65eK9XU> - 11 minutes

**FAR  
BEYOND**

## Disentangle Intent from Impact

AWARE OF	UNAWARE OF
MY INTENTIONS	OTHER PERSON'S INTENTIONS
OTHER PERSON'S IMPACT ON ME	MY IMPACT ON OTHER PERSON



## Interests Behind Negotiating Positions

<https://youtu.be/vdA2wecb4k0> - 3 minutes



## How can we get along?

*“The reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue.”*

The Dalai Lama



1. How do you **prepare** for the conversation?
2. In what **location or setting** will you address the conflict?
3. What are some **skills** that you can use to address the conflict? E.g. listening, feedback, etc.?
4. How will you **behave** in order for the other person to feel at ease or less defensive?
5. How would you bring up the issue with someone? What is your **opening line(s)**?
6. What **questions** can you ask to learn more about the other person's perspective?



## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Separate the people from the problem. Attack the problem, not the person.
- Focus on interests, not positions.
- Search for common ground to prevent an issue from becoming polarized.
- Use “I” statements instead of “You” statements. This helps the other person not to be defensive.
- Generate a variety of options or possibilities before deciding what to do: expand the pie before dividing it.



## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Create a safe environment where people can express their differences, thoughts, feelings and concerns. This is particularly effective if there are emotionally charged issues.
- Listen, do not interrupt each other.
- Don't let emotions drive decisions. Stay calm and focused. Don't take things personally. If the situation begins to escalate, agree on a timeout and return later to the conversation.





## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Address your own feelings; particularly negative ones of hostility or defensiveness. Doing so will relieve you of any negative baggage.
- Maintain eye contact if culturally appropriate.
- Apply conflict communication skills:
  - Reflect
  - Restate
  - Resolve



## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Suggest that the results be based on some objective standard or criteria.
- Use the person's name as you address him/her. Don't use negative or pejorative labels. Speak in a normal tone. Be diplomatic, professional and respectful.
- Stay in the present. Bringing up the past related or unrelated issues serves to muddy the water and fuel the conflict.



## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Meet in a confidential place. If you are concerned that the conversation could escalate, be sure your supervisor is aware of the meeting and is nearby for assistance.
- Avoid being judgmental, accusatory or argumentative.
- Ask questions to clarify anything you might not fully understand.
- Recognize that your “perception” of the situation is just that. Neither right, nor wrong. It’s your view of the world.



## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Remember – it's not about who wins or loses. It's about being able to communicate effectively and to resolve problems. Carefully pick your battle(s).
- Reason and be reasonable.
- Defensiveness is not uncommon. Remember that a more neutral and relaxed tone will decrease defensiveness.
- Model your voice and tone. For example, if the other person raises their voice or is yelling then be sure to speak in your normal tone. In this way the other person will hopefully lower their voice and listen to you. This helps to de-escalate the situation.



## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- People may often focus on the areas of disagreement. Focus the dialogue on areas where there is general agreement.
- Take responsibility for your actions and make a good faith effort to do better. If necessary, apologize and mean it.
- View conflict as an opportunity for growth.
- Do respectfully confront disrespectful or unprofessional behavior. You can do so by saying, I appreciate if you speak to me in a normal tone of voice. If the person does not do so, then suggest that you'll be glad to continue the conversation later.



*“He who has learned to disagree without being disagreeable has discovered the most valuable secret of a diplomat.”*

Robert Estabrook

# RESOURCES

## OMBUDS QUICK TIPS

- [Communication](#)
- [Conflict](#)
- [Difficult Conversation](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Listening](#)
- [Resilience](#)