

Conflict resolution

YouthZone Life Skills



Instructions

Copy and paste all bulleted questions into an email and reply with your answers. There are two videos to watch this week. They are linked below.

Watch [Understanding Conflict](#) with Robin Funsten and answer these questions:

- What are the three roots of conflict?
- Finish this sentence: If your true intentions are to solve for good then _____
- Why should we solve conflicts early?

[Finding Confidence in Conflict](#) with Kwame Christian and answer these questions:

- Why do we struggle with conflict?
- What are the three fear responses?
- Write a paragraph explain how conflict can be an opportunity
- Write a paragraph explaining Compassionate Curiosity.
- Give your own example of a compassionately curious question.

General questions:

- Write 300 words about a time you had a conflict with someone.
 - How did you resolve it?
 - What would you have done differently?
- Write 200 words about a time that you responded in an unhealthy way to conflict

Conflict is a reality of life and is unavoidable. It's part of being human. Everyone has different needs and values and sometimes they clash. If you can learn to effectively manage your conflicts, you will be able to live more harmoniously with those around you and you will ultimately be more content. It is normal to dislike conflict and to try to hide from it, but conflict never goes away on its own. Conflict requires a response and hiding from it will only make it worse in the long run.

It can be helpful to reframe the idea of conflict in your mind. Try thinking of it as an opportunity to have more authentic relationships with people. It is not a competition but rather a cooperation to come to a place where both parties feel heard and respected.

You are responsible for your side of the conflict and while you cannot make someone come to a resolution respectfully and in a calm manner, you can guarantee that you do. People are social creatures and will most often match your energy. If they feel that you are truly willing to hear their side, they will be willing to hear yours.

Some things to consider when thinking about conflict:

- **A conflict is more than just a disagreement.** It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).
- **Conflicts continue to fester when ignored.** Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them.
- **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 trigger 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.
- **Conflicts are an opportunity for growth.** When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

Unhealthy responses to conflict:

Healthy responses to conflict:

An inability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person

The capacity to empathize with the other person's viewpoint

Explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions

Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions

The withdrawal of love, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, and fear of abandonment

A readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger

An inability to compromise or see the other person's side

The ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing

Feeling fearful or avoiding conflict; expecting a bad outcome

A belief that facing conflict head on is the best thing for both sides

So, how do you go about solving conflict in a way that treats all parties with respect? As you have read and heard, so much of conflict resolution depends on the spirit with which you approach the conflict.

The ability to successfully resolve conflict depends on your ability to:

- **Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm.** By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
- **Control your emotions and behavior.** When you're in control of your emotions, you can communicate your needs without threatening, intimidating, or punishing others.
- **Pay attention to the *feelings* being expressed** as well as the spoken words of others.
- **Be aware of and respect differences.** By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, you can almost always resolve a problem faster.

Listen for what is felt as well as said. When you really listen, you connect more deeply to your own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Listening also strengthens, informs, and makes it easier for others to hear you when it's your turn to speak. When listening, try to really listen. It is easy to let your thoughts wander or to even start preparing your response. If both parties are only spending the time when the other is speaking thinking about what they will say, there is really no reason to have the conversation at all. Approach with an open mind, ready to learn something new from the person you are in conflict with.

Make conflict resolution the priority 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 their viewpoint.

Focus on the present. If you're holding on to grudges based on past conflicts, 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. Give the person you are in conflict with some grace. Remember that we judge ourselves on the intention but we judge others on the actions. Keep in mind that the actions may not have been intended. If someone feels as though they are being attacked, they will be unlikely to hear you. If you have a problem, focus on that problem. It is tempting to bring up other unresolved conflicts but stick to the one.

Pick your battles. Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worth your time and energy. Maybe you don't want to surrender a parking space if you've been circling for 15 minutes, but if there are dozens of empty spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it. Think about how you will be affected and what the stakes are. Let's say you decide to argue over the spot, you will very likely be in a sour mood for some time to come and you will have not benefited greatly from the conflict.

Be willing to forgive. The word forgiveness is often used but it is very poorly defined. It seems that everyone has a different idea about what it means. Does it mean that you act like an event ever happened?

It can be useful to think of it as inner peace. When you've forgiven someone, the event no longer stings. You have arrived at a point where you can think about it without getting upset. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself. Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to let go of painful feelings.

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. Throughout your life, you will encounter conflicts that cannot be resolved. Whether you are not being properly compensated at a job or a romantic partner is treating you poorly, sometimes you have to make the assessment that a conflict is not worth your time anymore. Set aside your ego and really try to come to a resolution. If your goal is to resolve rather than preserve your own ego, you will be far more successful.

The Basic Steps of Conflict Resolution

Step 1: Define the source of the conflict.

Each party should be given the time they need to talk through their side of the conflict. Try to not only include where you feel slighted but also what you could have done differently. When the other person is speaking, be sure to focus on what they are saying and try to really listen.

Step 2: Seek Clarity

Be open minded and ask questions to clarify the other person's position. Try to ask without ego and try to not take their responses personally.

Step 3: Brainstorm solutions.

Come up with a way forward that both people can agree on. This can include what behaviors you both will change.

Step 5: Agreement.

Come to an agreement that both of you are satisfied with. This will most likely require that both concede some points.

"Conflict Resolution Skills - HelpGuide.org." 16 Apr. 2020, <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/conflict-resolution-skills.htm>. Accessed 11 May. 2020.

"Use 6 Active Listening Skills to Coach Others | CCL." <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/coaching-others-use-active-listening-skills/>. Accessed 11 May. 2020.

"The Five Steps to Conflict Resolution | AMA." 25 Jul. 2019, <https://www.amanet.org/articles/the-five-steps-to-conflict-resolution/>. Accessed 11 May. 2020.