

Handling conflict begins with you.

Conflict is an opportunity for something or someone to change – and that someone might be you. Look at conflict as a good thing and be the one to find the courage to step into it.

Definition of conflict:

“A struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even values.” Or “a serious disagreement or argument.”

We all have struggles and fears when it comes to conflict, depending on how it was modeled by parents or caregivers.

Regardless of how you were raised to respond to conflict, the best news is those learned behaviors can be changed.

Decide to resolve conflict differently.

Confront a situation when things are at a level 1 instead of waiting until things have escalated to a level 8 or 9 when emotions are high. At that point people are unable to hear anything.

To resolve conflict, all parties involved must want to fix it. If one person is willing and the other is not, there will be no resolution.

Unresolved conflict can lead to unhealthy dysfunction within the relationship, and even possibly to abuse.

Unhealthy conflict crosses into areas of abuse, with hatred and violence. If the kind of conflict you are facing is abusive and you don't feel safe, get out and seek help.

Examples of conflict:

- Conflict can begin due to selfishness.
- A hurtful conversation you can't stop thinking about.
- A misunderstanding, which could be cleared up with a question.
- A difference in opinion or way to do something.
- A personality difference. We are all so different!
- A lack of strong communication skills.
- Frustration because things didn't go your way.
- When there is no trust, or the intentions are misinterpreted.
- An offense – someone has done or said something that offends you.

Living in fear of conflict and avoiding it will hinder you.

4 things that contribute to conflict:

1. **AVOIDANCE.** If you avoid conflict, what would it look like to find a bit of courage, step into it, and seek to find solutions together?
2. **FEAR.** At times there is an instant fear that arises as soon as conflict happens. If you live in fear of conflict, what are you afraid of?
3. **PRIDE.** During conflict, are you only focused on yourself, or are you able to be a little humble and see the other person's point of view?
4. **CONFUSION.** **When conflict happens, try to step outside the emotion and look at the situation with a clear mind.** If things are confusing during conflict, take a deep breath, step back, and try to figure out what the conflict is all about.

4 stages of conflict (the 4 C's):

***1* CONFLICT** – The first stage is when conflict appears. Everything is great, until it's not. It is important to identify what's going on, and your role in it, and it's not always easy.

Here are 4 things to DO when conflict shows up:

1. Know yourself and become self-aware – Have the self-awareness to realize what is going on inside of you and how you may have contributed to the conflict.
2. Remain humble. If wrong be quick to admit it, swallow your pride, and apologize.
3. Beware of what you say, and to whom. **It's best to go directly to the person we are having conflict with, instead of going to someone else for support or help.**
4. Recognize if this is a repeating pattern. **The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting things to be different.**

***2* Clear up any CONFUSION** – To clear up confusion do these 3 things:

1. Identify what's going on and be specific. **Gossip is one of the most destructive elements in relationships and brings out conflict faster than almost anything.**

Gossip: "One who runs from house to house, tattling and telling tales."

2. Contribution – Know how you may have contributed to the situation.
3. Seek help if needed – Talk with a neutral party if necessary.

***3* CLARITY** – 3 things that will help you clarify what's going on:

1. Confront with LOVE and KINDNESS – And humility.
2. Communicate clearly – Communicate expectations clearly with courage to speak up.
3. Make a plan – Have clear steps. **A general rule is to listen more and speak less.**

***4* CALM**. Remember these 2 things:

1. It may get harder before it gets better. **If you value the relationship, overcoming the conflict is worth it.**
2. Look to the future. What may need to change in YOU that will help you successfully handle conflict into the future?

Dealing with conflict takes some work and time, but it is worth it to save and heal relationships.

Resources include:

1 Patrick Lencioni, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. Retrieved 12/5/23 from https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/11503.Patrick_Lencioni

2 "conflict." Webstersdictionary1828.com. Retrieved 04/01/23, from <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/conflict>

3 "conflict." OxfordLanguages. Retrieved 4/15/23, from <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

4 "The Four Loves", C.S. Lewis, Retrieved 12/06/23 from <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/14816053-the-four-loves>