

Conflict Resolution

Imagine for a moment how much more productive and satisfying life may be once you're able to fully and completely resolve the conflicts that otherwise consume your time, energy and resources.

If you're still trying to manage conflict,
YOU'RE NOT RESOLVING IT.

Everyone faces conflict in varying degrees at some point in life. Because conflict happens in any relationship, including those at work and at home, no one is immune to its complexities. How we choose to deal with conflict is unique, as everyone brings his or her own personality and experiences to these difficulties.

CONFLICT OCCURS EVERYWHERE

Conflict erupts at home, in the community, in the workplace and just about anywhere two or more people gather and express their needs, wants and desires. A conflict is a difference of opinions, priorities,

or perspectives, whether friendly or hostile. How you perceive conflict largely determines the role it will play in your life. Those who view conflict as a threat usually experience anxiety and stress, and those who see it as an opportunity for growth can overcome it and even benefit from it.

Conflict in life is guaranteed and often it will be unexpected. When you are able to calmly respond to an individual your viewpoint is more likely to be understood. No one wants to feel like the other person is simply trying to win an argument.

ACTION STEPS

While some complex conflicts may require a third party such as a licensed counselor or mediator, there are a number of strategies that you can use to resolve many of the conflicts likely to be encountered at work, home, the community and just about anywhere else in life.

Define acceptable behaviors

- ✓ Clarify what you consider to be acceptable and unacceptable behavior for others.
- ✓ Demonstrate what's expected from others and reinforce it.
- ✓ Provide a guide as to what is considered acceptable behavior.

Proactively address conflict

- ✓ If you sense tension, take a proactive stance and calmly address it.
- ✓ Calmly address others as soon as it seems like there may be conflict.

- ✓ Recognize there may be circumstances underlying the conflict.

Choose your battles

- ✓ Decide in advance what types of issues or differences really matter.
- ✓ Letting some issues go will not necessarily undermine your position on other issues.
- ✓ When in doubt, address the issue and clarify expectations.

Look for growth opportunities

- ✓ View conflict as an opportunity to discuss, resolve and grow in respect for one another.
- ✓ Listen actively for the assumptions, cultural values, and beliefs behind another's message.
- ✓ Acknowledge the message expressed, and recognize and affirm the other person.

KEEP IN MIND

The long-term effects of unresolved conflict are often far more damaging than the short-term discomfort of resolving them. With the right mindset and a little practice, you will start seeing conflict as a growth opportunity, one that will help you achieve your goals and create healthy relationships.

You're not in this alone. Consider engaging a life coach or counselor for guidance on next steps.

What steps will you take today to start resolving the conflicts in your life?