



HELPS

Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students

Conflict Management: *Can We Agree on One Thing?*

Conflict is a fact of life. No matter how agreeable a disposition you have, you are bound to run into conflict. Instead of backing away from it or letting it deter you from your educational and career goals, you can learn to deal

with conflict in a positive, healthy way at school, at work and at home.

Pick your battles

Whether you are working with fellow students or business colleagues on a project, dealing with

Conflict Q & A

Attorney Jerry F. Childs at the Kabn, Soares law firm in Hanford, Calif. offers tips for students learning to deal with conflict.

Q: Why is it important to acknowledge and deal with conflict instead of trying to avoid it?

A: Because conflict is a normal part of relationships —much like a scrape on your knee. You'll want to acknowledge it and take care of it. If you just let it go, it can grow into something far worse.

Q: Are there some specific steps students can learn to improve their ability to resolve conflict?

A: The best thing a person can do is identify the interests. Figure out what the other person hopes to achieve or get. Instead of going into defensive mode, ask yourself "What is this person's goal in this?" You can also accomplish this by simply asking the other person.

Q: What conflict "land mines" should people be especially attuned to?

A: One of the most important and damaging is to criticize the person instead of the act. This involves name-calling, or more subtly, criticizing the other person's motivation or accusing their character. For example, saying "You didn't put the toilet seat down because you are lazy." This turns the topic from "putting the toilet seat down" to an argument about the person's laziness.

professors, or discussing issues at home, the focus should be on fostering ongoing relationships.

If conflict arises, it's essential to learn how to deal with it in a positive way instead of ignoring or avoiding it, says Jacksonville attorney and former U.S. Marine Michael M. Giel.

"At the same time, you need to consider which issues are most important to address. Pick your battles by asking yourself if resolving the issue is important for building and maintaining a long-term relationship. Know why you are having the conversation. Ask 'Will sorting out this issue be good for us in the long run? Or do I really need to spend 15 minutes talking about it?'"

"A fleeting situation may not be worth getting into," Giel notes. "However, a 'repeat offender' issue that affects the relationship time after time will need to be resolved."

Respect is essential

"As much as you can, keep your head when conflict arises," says Giel. "It's easy to let things get heated. You may be irritated. Your primary concern may be to prove yourself right. But stay cool."

How-to books on negotiating and conflict resolution, such as those by William Ury and Roger Fisher, based on the work of the Harvard Negotiation Project, offer some standard ground rules: Address the issue, instead of attacking the person. Focus on interests instead of positions. Explore common ground to develop solutions that will satisfy both sides.

"As you are working to resolve a problem, handle the discussion in a respectful way that won't leave either one with hard feelings down the road," adds Giel.

Seek areas of agreement

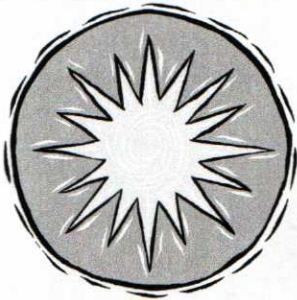
Look for opportunities to trade off or show you are open to solving the situation. Hear the other person out and maintain a respectful tone. Calmly ask them to show the same

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Strategies for Resolving Conflict

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respect if it's not reciprocated.

Do say: "What I'm understanding is..." or "Did I understand correctly that..." Then listen and repeat your response until you're both on the same page. Don't say: "Whatever."

Find areas of agreement

"As you negotiate your way through a conflict, look for areas of agreement," says Giel. "You may say, 'OK, I see your point about X and

Y. What I have an issue with is Z.' If someone has attacked you personally, you might respond by saying, 'I appreciate your critique, however, it is a little discouraging that it is all criticism. Can you tell me where I am on the right track?'"

Keep your perspective

Remember that conflict resolution is part of fostering a relationship. "There will always be personality conflicts, so

remember to be considerate of people's feelings," says Giel. "Putting your need to be right over the relationship can just cause more problems. Never fight a battle in which you gain nothing by winning. The most important lesson to learn is when you need to fight and when to let the other side have their way. By letting the other side win a battle or two, a leader marshals energy to win the war, or successfully resolve disputes."

Resources

Make Peace With Anyone: Breakthrough Strategies to Quickly End Any Conflict, Feud, or Estrangement, by David J. Lieberman, Ph.D., St. Martin's Press, NY (2002)

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, by Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton, Houghton Mifflin, NY (1991)

The Power of A Positive No: How to Say NO and still get to YES, by William Ury, Bantam Books, NY (2007)

Getting Together: Building Relationships As We Negotiate, by Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, Penguin Books, NY (1989)

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most, Douglas Stone, by Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen and Roger Fisher, Penguin Books, NY (1999)

How to Win Friends and Influence People, by Dale Carnegie, Simon and Schuster, New York NY (1936)

Avoiding Bank Overdraft Fees

The best way to avoid overdraft and bounced-check fees is to manage your account so you don't overdraw it.

Keep track of how much money you have in your checking account by keeping your account register up-to-date. Record all checks when you write them and other transactions when you make them. And don't forget to subtract any fees.

Pay special attention to your electronic transactions. Record your ATM withdrawals and fees, debit card purchases, and online payments.

Don't forget about automatic bill payments you may have set up for utilities, insurance, or loan payments.

Keep an eye on your account balance. Remember that some checks and automatic payments may not have cleared yet.

Review your account statements each month. Between statements, you can find out which payments have cleared and check your balance by calling your bank or by checking online or at an ATM. Be sure to find out the actual amount in your account—your account balance not including any funds available to you through "courtesy overdraft-protection," or "bounce coverage," plans.

Sometimes mistakes happen. If you do overdraw your account, deposit money into the account as soon as possible to cover the overdraft amount plus any fees and daily charges from your bank. Depositing money into your account can help you avoid additional overdrafts and fees.

Source: www.federalreserve.gov