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July 2016 Newsletter

Key Conflict Resolution Skills

Managing and resolving conflict requires emotional maturity, self-control, and empathy. It can be tricky, frustrating, and even frightening. You can ensure that the process is as positive as possible by sticking to the following conflict resolution guidelines:

- **Make the relationship your priority.** Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your first priority. Be respectful of the other person and his or her viewpoint.
- **Focus on the present.** If you're holding on to old hurts and resentments, 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.
- **Pick your battles.** Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worthy of 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 spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it.
- **Be willing to forgive.** Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can never compensate for our losses and only adds to our injury by further depleting and draining our lives.
- **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.



Four Essential Skills That Will Help You Resolve Conflict

The ability to successfully manage and resolve conflict depends on four key skills. Together, these four skills form a fifth skill that is greater than the sum of its parts: the ability to take conflict in stride and resolve differences in ways that build trust and confidence.

1. **Quickly relieve stress.**

The capacity to remain relaxed and focused in tense situations is a vital aspect of conflict resolution. If you don't know how to stay centered

and in control of yourself, you may become emotionally overwhelmed in challenging situations. The best way to rapidly and reliably relieve stress is through the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. But each person responds differently to sensory input, so you need to find things that are soothing to you.

2. **Recognize and manage your emotions.**

Emotional awareness is the key to understanding yourself and others. If you don't know how you feel or why you feel that way, you won't be able to communicate effectively or smooth over disagreements. Although knowing your own feelings may seem simple, many people ignore or try to sedate strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. But your ability to handle conflict depends on being connected to these feelings. If you're afraid of strong emotions or if you insist on finding solutions that are strictly rational, your ability to face and resolve differences will be impaired.

3. **Improve your nonverbal communication skills.**

The most important information exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally. Nonverbal communication includes eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice, posture, touch, and gestures. When you're in the middle of a conflict, paying close attention to the other person's nonverbal signals may help you figure out what the other person is really saying, respond in a way that builds trust, and get to the root of the problem. Simply nonverbal signals such as a calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or a concerned facial expression can go a long way toward defusing a heated exchange.

4. **Use humor and play to deal with challenges.**

You can avoid many confrontations and resolve arguments and disagreements by communicating in a playful or humorous way. Humor can help you say things that might otherwise be difficult to express without creating a flap. However, it's important that you laugh with the other person, not at them. When humor and play are used to reduce tension and anger, reframe problems, and put the situation into perspective, the conflict can actually become an opportunity for greater connection and intimacy.



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FREE ASSESSMENT

What is Your Conflict Management Style? Are you a Fox? A Teddy Bear? A Turtle?

Click here and take the Conflict Management Style Quiz and find out.

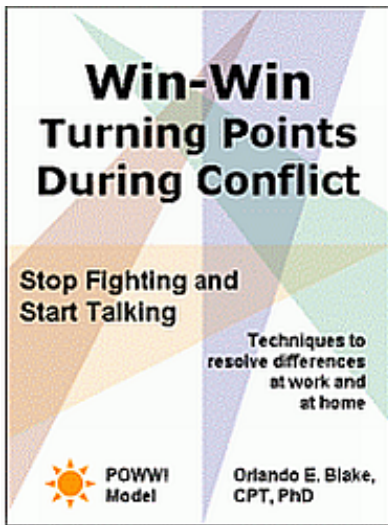
What's My Conflict Management Style

FEATURE BOOK

POWW! Win-Win Turning Points During Conflict: Stop Fighting and Start Talking For Managers

By: Orlando E. Blake PhD CPT

Conflict is a fact. However, conflicts can be managed and resolutions are possible, if you know how to start talking and stop fighting. This book gives you



researched techniques proven to move intractable toward mutually acceptable resolutions. POWWI! Start Talking & Stop Fighting for managers includes:

- The three ways to communicate to create turning points in conflict situations
- The SIMPLE approach to uncover needs and interests
- Cases that will help you learn how to apply what you learn

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TESTIMONIAL

Promptly brought parties together ... correctly identified critical issues ... actively intervened in negotiations... still have very fond memories of the excellent, highly skilled and quite professional mediating you did between Stuart Wiener and Western University.

- Donald Snider, Baer, Marks & Upham

For any questions related to your business, please contact me. I would be happy to learn more about your organization.

Sincerely,

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