

Three-Step Conflict Resolution Mode



Step 1
Research

- Decide if the issue is worth your time
- Clarify the problem
- Determine the facts, frequency, frustrated relationship



Step 2
Presentation

- Host the difficult person in a conversation
- Create a safe zone
- Describe the behavior gap
- Make it easy



Step 3
Take Action

- Create agreement
- Create an action plan together
- Follow up

The Three F's



Facts

What are the facts of the issue? Create a list so that you do not get sidetracked while you plan your conversation. Don't drag in other stories or unrelated issues that have happened previously. If you are talking to someone about tardiness, then stick to that. Leave things like poor report writing, gossiping, or not taking care of equipment out of the conversation.



Frequency

Make sure you have a very clear history of the frequency of the issue. Describe the pattern like this: "This is the second time that I've called this to your attention. You agreed it would not happen again. Now I am concerned that I cannot trust you to keep a promise."

Revealing that you notice a pattern brings the history to the forefront. The history is important because repeated frequency erodes your trust.



Frustrated Relationship

Discuss what is important to you in terms of the relationship.

Comments like the following can be helpful:

- I feel like I cannot trust you to get the work done.
- I feel like I am constantly nagging you and I don't like to do that.
- I feel like I can't trust you to keep the commitments you make.

Defining Conflict



A conflict is more than just a disagreement.



A conflict comes with a threat, and whether the threat is real or not, it must be dealt with in order for the threatened party to be able to move beyond the situation.



Conflicts become more serious when they are ignored.



Perception colors our reactions and triggers emotions. This makes it difficult for us to remain objective, even when we look at the facts.



Our perception is influenced by our life experiences, values, and beliefs.



Conflicts trigger our emotional hot buttons. We aren't always at our best when working through conflict because our emotions can interfere with our ability to remain objective and manage things rationally.



Conflict brings growth. Although we aren't often able to acknowledge it in the heat of things, when we resolve conflict in our relationships, we are also building trust.



In relationships with high levels of trust, we feel more secure, knowing that our relationship will survive and ultimately, get even stronger.

Ways to Deal with Problems

Assess the situation

Meet the difficult behavior head-on

Stay calm and objective

Be up-front

Make it a two-way conversation

Put yourself in their place

Be flexible

Be tolerant

Why Don't People Do What They Are Supposed To?



- They didn't know why they should do it
- They didn't know when to begin and end it.
- They didn't know what they were supposed to do.
- They didn't know how to do it.
- They thought they were doing it.
- They thought your way wouldn't work or that their way was best.
- They thought something else was more important.
- They aren't rewarded for doing it, or they aren't punished for not doing it.
- They are rewarded for not doing it, or they are punished for doing it.
- They didn't think they could do it.

De-Stress Options

Belly Breathing
Loosen your clothes, close your eyes, mentally relax your body, and take ten or more deep breaths. Each time you exhale, count silently: "one," after the first breath, "two," after the second breath, etc., up to at least ten

Visualize
Use positive imagery to boost your confidence. Couple this with positive language for even better results.

Music
Music has the power to soothe or to give us energy. It also has healing power.

Acupressure and Massage
Holding a fingertip to the point of most pain or tension and pressing very hard into the offending muscle for up to a minute can avert a headache or relieve tension.

Laughter
Laughter is the best medicine of all!

Dealing with Negative Feelings

Put yourself in charge of you.
Take a leaf out of Eleanor Roosevelt's book and refuse to beat up on yourself or make yourself a victim in these situations. Be proactive rather than reactive: notice what is going on around you, and when possible deal with potential problems right away. (For example, you can plan team meetings to ensure issues are addressed before they explode.)

Monitor your self-talk.
Become more aware of what you tell yourself both before and after dealing with a difficult situation. Remember the reality of how what we tell ourselves comes true, whether those messages are positive or negative.

Be in control.
Plan how you will handle the situation and visual yourself feeling in control. After a situation has been handled, analyze it, learn from it, and then put it aside. If you still feel angry after you have dealt with a situation, use that anger constructively to clean your office, or let it propel you out the door for a walk.

Work on your sense of humor.
Research tells us that laughter is a proven method for dispelling stress and feeling better about the world. If things are getting heavy for you right now and you can't find much to laugh about, try renting a comedy or watching your favorite comedian.

Have a support team.
This is based on the idea that controls are not set standards. In this way you focus on unacceptable problems rather than try to monitor everything. However, don't use this method if difficulties are hard to spot, a single error could be significant, or the employee is inexperienced.

Determining Your Involvement

In deciding whether you want to proceed with a difficult conversation, there are some things to consider. In order to decide whether you need to deal with a difficult person or not, ask yourself the following questions:

Is this person important to me?

Does this bother me or other people?

Is this relationship important to me?

Can I invest my time?

Has this happened before?

If you answer "no" to any of the five questions, we recommend that you remove yourself from the situation, either temporarily or permanently.