



DEACONS

Resolving Conflict

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I've done a lot of research on the topic of conflict resolution in recent months, and here are a few tips I've come up with for resolving conflict in your workplace and professional life.

Don't be afraid of conflict. Too many of us become agitated when we encounter conflict or disagreement out of concern and fear. It's odd when you think about it, because conflict is a part of nature, a part of life. Unless you are a hermit, odds are that conflict is inescapable. and so, you need to approach conflict calmly, as an expected part of dealing with others. Consider conflict a way of learning to see things more clearly.

Abandon the concept of winning and losing when faced with conflict. Instead, adopt a strategy of resolution. Unless you are on a battlefield, chances are the person you come into conflict with is not The Enemy, but instead is probably someone whose goals are generally the same as yours, or at least interrelated with yours.

Be flexible. When the other side senses that you are interested in finding a solution, you likely will have created an ally where a potential adversary once stood. Rather than confrontation and conflict, you can work together in cooperation to find a solution that suits both sides.

Talk through the situation with a neutral party to gain perspective and clarity from that person, and also to better understand the conflict through talking it out. It is always helpful to get a problem out in the open and to get input from people you trust and people who understand your frame of reference so that they can help you better understand what you are going through and tell you, for better or worse, whether they think you have properly judged or handled the situation.

Rather than approaching the conflict with the attitude of stopping it or overcoming it, think of redirecting the energy toward a common target. Look for similarities in your positions rather than focusing on your differences. Although war is part of our nature, most successful societies have been built on cooperation. Common goals are great unifiers. How many stories have you heard of strangers acting together in times of emergency? When a common goal is made obvious the natural reaction is to put differences aside.

Make a mutual commitment to the greater good. Whether it is to a successful television show that will employ both sides, or the manufacture of a product of a good or the offering of a service that is the source of your mutual wealth, there is undoubtedly a common focus in your lives that should be the center of your attentions.

Find something to distract you from the conflict. Take off on a vacation or weekend getaway, a new project, or family outing, so that you can clear your mind, reevaluate your position, and perhaps come back to it with a fresh vision of what needs to be done to resolve the matter.

Please contact the **Leadership and Life Development Department** for further information. ~ 800.226.8584 extension 3018 ~

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