

# 8 Conflict – Managing it Creatively

## Tips Top 10: Difficult Conversations

- 1: Be clear about your issues:** if you are calling the meeting, think through what your issues and concerns are - you will need to be specific, and have evidence
- 2: Know what outcome you want/prefer:** know what for you would be a satisfactory outcome
- 3: Anticipate their reactions:** how might they react; what might be their objections? Put yourself in their shoes, then mentally address their concerns, before you have the meeting - ie what will be your response to any likely objections?
- 4: Avoid 'us/them':** don't make it a battleground. Seek and agree common ground or principles at the outset. Also this helps create a positive dialogue - "can we agree...?" "so we both believe..."
- 5: Acknowledge and build on their strengths and assets:** keep the issue in perspective - confirm what's good about them, their performance, your relationship
- 6: Consider, identify and acknowledge your contribution to the difficulty:** it takes two to tango....what have you done, or not done, that has led to this point, this conversation needing to occur?
- 7: Ask 'what would it take?':** if they seem reluctant to accept or move, ask them what it would take to get their movement or buy in...this changes the dynamic, from simple resistance to contributing a solution
- 8: Focus on consequences, not just behaviour:** people are often more persuaded by the consequences of their action, rather than any focus on the action itself. Consequences are where the reasons for change lie



**9: Stay professional:** manage your emotions, your tone of voice, and your behaviour; stay calm throughout

**10: What next?** if there is complete resistance and inflexibility from the other person, despite your best efforts, then know what you will say to close the meeting, to avoid stalemate - ie what you will do next

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