

# 8 Conflict – Managing it Creatively

## **Checklist: Important Things to Consider when Dealing with Conflict**

- 1. Make sure that good relationships are the first priority.**
  - Treat each other calmly
  - Try to build mutual respect
  - Be courteous
  - Remain constructive under pressure
- 2. Keep people and problems separate.**
  - Real and valid differences can be behind conflicts
  - Real issues can be debated without damaging working relationships
- 3. Pay attention to the interests that are being presented.**
  - Listen carefully to find out what those involved are thinking and why
  - Ask clarification questions
  - Restate, paraphrase and summarize
  - Ask if you have missed any important ideas
- 4. Listen first and talk second.**
  - To resolve a conflict effectively, you have to understand where the other person is coming from before defending your own position
  - Use active listening skills
  - Listen with empathy to see the conflict from other points of view
  - Use “I” statement



**5. Establish the facts.**

- Agree on and establish an objective
- Look for observable/measurable elements that will have an impact on the decision
- Think about the timing, politics and other factors that could have an impact
- Decide how you will know that an appropriate and acceptable decision has been reached

**6. Explore options together - this promotes collaboration.**

- Be open to the idea that other options may exist and that you can get to a solution together
- This part of the process builds trust, mutual respect and commitment to the solution

**7. Strive for a win-win solution if possible.**

- Win-win solutions work best when the stakes are not too high and relationships must be maintained.
- Compromise is not always possible or appropriate. When the outcome is crucial, win-win is not a good way to go.

**8. According to Stephen Covey, there are six ways to resolve an issue:**

- Win/Lose:** This is most popular in business, sports, academics and even as a control device in some relationships.
- Lose/Win:** People who use this style demonstrate low self esteem and always put others before themselves regardless of the results
- Lose/Lose:** This one is popular in divorce – if I can't have it, nobody will.
- Win:** A person with this mentality thinks in terms of securing his own ends and leaving it to others to secure theirs.
- Win/Win:** This style is the essence of principled negotiation.  
Separate the person from the problem, focus on interests and not on positions, invent options for mutual gain, and insist on objective criteria – some external standard or principle - that both parties can buy into.



- vi. **Win/Win or No Deal:** If both parties can't win, then walk away, keeping trust intact. This works well when an immediate solution is not necessary.

**Each problem has hidden in it an opportunity so powerful that it literally dwarfs the problem. The greatest success stories were created by people who recognized a problem and turned it into an opportunity....**

**it's not whether you win or lose in life that's important but whether you play the game.**

JOSEPH SUGARMAN