

# STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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**Purpose-** We all face conflicts of some sort in our own lives, and most of us are expected to referee and mediate conflict on our campus. We can fear conflict less and become better at resolving it.

## CONFLICT

- **Inflicts FEAR in those involved-** (loss of control, safety issues)
- **Causes PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS in participants-** (twitching, heart rate increase, sweating, headache, sick stomach)
- **Creates A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY-** (Forced learning, stimulates creativity and innovation, experience leads to confidence.)

## EDUCATORS SHOULD BE VERY OPEN TO CONFLICT!

Universities “inflict conflict” –Due dates, 8AM class, 300 pp. reading, Group projs, public spkg, athletics.

## LIFE MIGHT BE BORING WITHOUT CONFLICT!

EVERY GOOD STORY presents a conflict in some form. You learned this in English class!

**Characters -> Setting -> Plot -> Conflict -> Resolution**

**\* Resolution of the conflict makes the story a great story!**

**PEOPLE WHO GET GOOD AT RESOLVING CONFLICT ARE *HIGHLY VALUED!***

With every conflict there is a certain amount of discomfort, doubt and FEAR.

### **FEARS**

1. This will get even more out of my control.
2. What if this goes unresolved?
3. Consequences and pain!

### **FEAR NOT!**

1. "I will never leave you or forsake you." Truth and wisdom.
2. You can be an expert in conflict resolution.
3. You already have the ADVANTAGES.
  - Your Heavenly Father is a pro, and you are being mentored by him.
  - Age & life experience.
  - Developed social skills.
  - You are in a position to practice.
  - Repeat experiences.
  - You have tools to address conflicts.

**Embrace conflict!** Bring it on.

The Organization realizes they VITALLY NEED YOU.

YOU are going to be the hero of a lot of people's story! (Train, struggle, fight, persevere, resolve)

## **Common Types of Conflict**

**Which of these would you feel most confident confronting? Why?**

1. Talking about a personal hygiene problem
2. Asking a roommate to move out
3. Approaching someone about gossiping or untruthfulness
4. Dealing with disrespect like sarcasm and cutting comments
5. Dealing with someone who does not keep commitments (excuses)
6. Interference with my relationships (friend, dating partner)
7. Ending a relationship
8. Confronting emotional manipulation like sulking, feigning injury, exaggerated negativity
9. Confronting a substance abuse problem
10. Lack of submission to authority (especially you!)

## The Cultural Narrative

Avoid Conflict at All Costs

Conflict is the leader's fault

Someone else is responsible for my pain

Nobody should ever FEEL bad

Nobody should have to endure this!

Demand for "customer satisfaction"

Conflict should not exist on our campus

## Shape the Narrative in Your Culture

Conflict is a natural healthy part of learning

Conflict is by God's design

Accept responsibility for your mastery over pain

Guilt, conscience, shame, consequences still exist

We want to get you into the game! (Coaching)

Conflict offers you the full product benefit (leadership)

Campus is the "learning lab" of life!

**\*ALLOW FOR SOME CONFLICT IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT  
HELP PARTICIPANTS UNDERSTAND (students, parents, staff, faculty, President)  
"RELAX. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OK."**

## Case Study- The Story of Linda

1. Who are the primary stakeholders affected by this conflict?
2. What else do you want to find out from the person reporting this?
3. What are important factors to consider before any action?
4. What steps will you likely take next, to resolve this?

### What else do you want to find out from the person reporting a conflict?

1. Facts that were left out.
2. All of the people directly involved with this conflict.
3. Uncover any exaggerated information.
4. Consider all possible motives of the person reporting this.
5. “Anything else you haven’t shared that I should know about this?”
6. Complainant’s willingness to engage in the process. Empowering them.

### What are important factors to consider before any action?

1. Other than those named, other sources of relevant facts.
2. Possible *innocent explanations* for the conflict. (Avoids assumptions, Informs strategy)
3. Identify all of the stakeholders in this conflict. (Staff, parents, peers, pastors, community)
4. Who should be (and can be) made aware of this conflict so they do not get blind-sided.
5. Review policies and laws to follow.
6. Similar conflicts, and how they were dealt with. (Fairness and consistency)
7. Envision the most desirable outcomes. (Learning, truth, repentance, care, gratitude, resolution)
8. The wisest (shortest) path to desirable outcomes.

### What steps will you likely take next to resolve this?

1. Additional collection of information.
2. Meet with the offender (possibly with complainant) to ask “What happened?”
3. NEGOTIATE a resolution. Employ **TACTICAL EMPATHY**.
4. Make stakeholders aware of outcomes, for accountability and resolution.

### WE KNOW WHAT TO DO, BUT HOW?

Theory to practice; Spectator to player

How do we handle these difficult conversations to resolve conflict?

***Crucial Conversations*** (2002 Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzer)

***Crucial Conversation-*** Opinions vary, stakes are high, emotions run strong.  
Results have a **huge impact** on you.

**When it counts the most, we are at our worst.**

- Physiology works against us
- Surprise and spontaneity
- Inexperience/ Lack of modeling
- Emotions can get the best of us (Not rational- We are emotional creatures)

**Mastering conflict through Crucial Conversations.**

- MVP in your Organization
- Better relationships in your own life
- Better health Emotionally/ Physically
- Better Organizational Culture

**SKILL: Find a way to get all relevant information from yourself & others out into the open.**

- MAKE IT SAFE to add input.
- Better and more accurate information leads to better decisions.
- Withholding information (or meaning) can be detrimental. It allows misunderstanding and suspicion to persist.
- “Free flow” of information (or meaning) births synergy among key players.
- Lack of engagement leads to lack of commitment to outcomes. (quiet criticism, passive resistance)

**MAKE IT SAFE for your counterpart to communicate.**

1. Slow down and listen.
2. Do not be quick to correct. Hear it out.
3. Absorb attacks. Be curious. Mirror. Talk about feelings.
4. Look for conditions of silence or violence.
5. Apologize when you make a mistake or omission.
6. Contrast: Here's what I DON'T intend/ Here's what I DO intend.

Eg. "You are saying I'm a bad person!" "Joe, the last thing I wanted to convey is that you are a bad person. I love how you invest in others. I want you to be even better at it."

**PREPARE A STRATEGY FOR CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS.**

A little progress can produce a lot of benefit.

Aim for progress not perfection!

STRATEGIZE AHEAD

TRY ONE SKILL

ADD ANOTHER SKILL

PRACTICE UNTIL THEY COME NATURALLY!

## TACTICAL EMPATHY – *Never Split the Difference* (2016, Chris Voss)

**Premise-** universally people want to be understood and accepted.

- Shift the emotional environment of a crisis just enough to secure the safety of everyone involved.
- Listening is our cheapest and most effective concession toward resolution.
- By listening intently we demonstrate empathy, a sincere desire to understand.
- When people feel listened to they become less defensive and more open to other perspectives.

**Tactical Empathy-** a listening “martial art” used to understand the feelings and mindset of another and also hearing what is behind those feelings, so you increase your influence in the moments that follow. It’s bringing our attention to both the emotional obstacles and the potential pathways to getting an agreement done.

## CONNECT

**Self-Awareness-** Seating arrangement, body language (smile)

Voice- positive/ playful, Relaxed calming

Even if you disagree. Just listen/ clarify/ identify real needs

Effective pauses (silence) with minimal encouragers (OK, uh huh, yes)

**Mirroring-** Pause and repeat back what you just heard

“So, you are saying that...”

**Labeling-** Identify and label primary emotions.

Labeling negative emotions diffuses them.

“So, it seems like you are embarrassed.”

“It sounds like you are disappointed.”

“It looks like you are angry.”

Labeling negative emotions actually *diffuses* them. “You understand me.”

**Accusation audit-** “You probably think I don’t care about you.”

I say it first and it moves us to an *Empathy Safe Zone*.

**Use *How* and *What*-** Uses their energy to solve the problem.

Keeps them talking so you learn more about real needs.

Helps them form ideas that are their own.

“How are you feeling right now?”

“What do you think you should do?”

“How is that a good idea?”

“How can I best assist you?”

“How can I do that?”

**Summarize-** “So if I’m understanding this correctly ...(the world according to Jill)

Listen for “That’s right.” Trust- *You understand me.*

## INFLUENCE

**Introduce other perspectives-** Leading questions- “Can I ask you a question?”

“Do you think Bill wanted to make you angry?” “He just doesn’t seem like that guy.”

“How do you think this conflict could have been avoided?”

“What would it take to resolve this?”

“How would you go about doing that?”

“Do you think you had any part in this escalating?”

“Is it possible Bill was embarrassed in front of his girlfriend?”

“What would it look like if you approached Bill to apologize?”

**Identify what we can agree on-** “Joe, you don’t want all of this stress.”

“You are probably feeling some fear right now.”

“It’s important to resolve this before it escalates further.”

## ACHIEVE

**Ask for co-operation-** Instead of “you must” “Is there a way you could...?”

“What can I do to help you feel better about this solution?”

“What would it take for you to comply with this?”

“What about this doesn’t work for you?”

**Move to action steps-** Coach up the game plan.

“What would it look like if you took Joe out for coffee tomorrow?”

“What would happen if you tried it *this way*?”

“Sometimes people respond *this way*, and here is a good way to deal with that.”

“Can you try this? Then come back and let me know how it went.”

**Respect your counterpart-** They are giving you co-operation. Reciprocate with respect.

“Thank you. I really appreciate your understanding in this.”

“You taking the first step, means a lot. Thank you.”

## WORK ON THE FOUNDATION

**Self-Awareness-** Study yourself, Triggers, Physical warnings, Intimidating habits  
Evaluate critical input.

**Self-Control-** Hold your tongue, Control your emotions, Be patient, Be kind, Smile.

**Self-Defense-** Fitness, Communication skills, Leveraging resources, Practice.

## PEACE-MAKING ON YOUR CAMPUS

**Improve your campus culture by modeling effective communication and conflict resolution.**

Wow! It’s different here. People care. They respect one another. They get along!

(Unresolved conflicts “show.”)

**Outcomes:** I felt understood and respected.

People cared enough to help.

I have grown so much!

I am more confident.

I am valued for my wisdom and leadership ability.

## **James 3 New International Version**

<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

<sup>14</sup>But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup>Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

<sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>**Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.**