



### Managing Conflict in Six Easy Steps



- 1** Acknowledge that conflict exists.
- 2** Identify the real conflict.
- 3** Hear all points of view.
- 4** Together, explore ways to resolve the conflict.
- 5** Gain agreement on, and responsibility for, a solution.
- 6** Schedule a follow-up session to review the solution.

### Setting Goals with SPIRIT



**SPECIFIC**  
Be specific about what you want or don't want to achieve. The result should be tangible and measurable.

**REVIEW**  
Review your progress periodically. Does the goal make sense? Are you stuck? Do you need to adjust certain parts of it?

**PRIZES**  
Reward yourself at different points in the goal, particularly if it's long term. If your goal is to reorganize your office, for example, you might purchase a piece of artwork after you get the clutter cleaned out.

**INSPIRING**  
Frame the goal positively. Make it fun to accomplish.

**INDIVIDUAL**  
The goal must be something that you want to do. If your manager wants you to reorganize your office, but the layout works for you, you're not going to want to work towards the goal.

**TIME-BOUND**  
Give yourself a deadline for achieving the goal. Even better, split the goal into small parts and give yourself a deadline for each item.

### Suggestions to Maximize Planning and Prioritizing



- ✓ Write a to-do list.
- ✓ Take five or ten minutes at the end of the day to make up tomorrow's to-do list so you can start fresh tomorrow and not spend the rest of today fretting about it.
- ✓ Revise your plan. Stay flexible. Check your to-do list several times throughout the day, and if necessary, postpone, rearrange, and even procrastinate on purpose.
- ✓ Make at least one appointment with yourself each day. Give yourself one hour every day to work on top priorities.
- ✓ Remember that your top priorities are the tasks your manager has asked you to do.
- ✓ Consolidate activities. Shorten your to-do list by grouping like items together. Group activities by category: make calls, work on reports, etc. Or group priorities into A, B, and C priorities. Watch out for "C" priorities that don't need to be done or could be delegated to someone else.
- ✓ Make time every day to work on your progress tasks, the priorities that will move you forward and tie into your goals. Don't put these on the back burner.
- ✓ Use a system that works for you. Some people prefer a paper day planner while others use computer software. Just be consistent.

### Building the Right Environment

#### Negative Cues

are things that distract or stop you from doing the things you want to be doing. If you want to cut down on the amount of time you spend watching television, but you have a 52-inch screen and 130 channels, you have a negative cue set up. The temptation to turn the television on and then start scanning programs or flipping channels is very evident. On the other hand, having a smaller screen, fewer channels, or a stack of books next to your chair can help distract you from the television.

#### Positive Cues

are things that influence you to do things that meet your goals. That stack of books handy when you sit down to relax, an ergonomic chair to work from, or a good long-distance plan when you need to be making a lot of calls, are all positive cues. If your work involves a lot of driving, then keeping your car clean and in good shape is another positive cue. Positive cues can also include calendars with good scheduling programming, reminders, sticky notes, task lists, and being with people who are reminders of your desired behaviors.

### The Master Plan (Big Picture)



#### Five Parts to Any Plan

### Probing Techniques



**Ask an open question.**  
Some good questions include:  
"Can you describe that more clearly?"  
"Would you give me a specific example of what you mean?"  
"What do you think we should do?"

You'll soon recognize that if you ask too many of these questions, your conversation partner will feel like they are under interrogation, so use them carefully.

**Paraphrase.** Reflect what has just been said in your own words. This technique shows that you want to understand your conversation partner and that you want to be accurate. It also allows the sender to hear back what they have said from someone else's point of view.

**Pause.** Many of us feel uncomfortable when silence overtakes a conversation, and we will fill the silence by expanding on what was said previously.

**Use Summary questions.** Summary statements or paraphrases sum up what has been said, and will show that you have listened and absorbed what's being said. Don't use them to take over the dialogue.

**Use reflective or mirroring questions.** These kinds of statements also serve to focus or clarify and summarize without interrupting the flow of the conversation. They demonstrate your intent to understand the speaker's thoughts and feelings.

### Steps for Difficult Conversations



**Step 1** **Make sure the receiver is ready.**  
Some people resent it when we pounce on them unannounced. Others are much more receptive when you simply ask permission.

**Step 2** **State your purpose.**  
Remember to use positive intent and to be aware of your body language. If you are professional and avoid anger, you can be pretty sure that the other person will

**Step 3** **Ask for their story.**  
Listen. Ask questions so that you understand.

**Step 4** **Tell your side.**  
Focus on behaviors, numbers, and facts rather than criticizing the person. "Lesley, your work is always late," is too general, but "Lesley, your reports have been late six times to keep your message clear; reframe as needed.

**Step 5** **Get to the third side.**  
Synthesize both stories into the third story. This is an objective view of what's going on, so it'll be different than the first two stories. Here you can check for understanding by sharing what's coming out in both points of view.

**Step 6** **Evaluate the three F's.**  
To get to the heart of the problem, evaluate the 3 F's: **facts, frequency, and frustrated relationship.**

**Facts**  
What are the facts of the issue? Create a list so that you do not get sidetracked while you plan your conversation.

**Frequency**  
Make sure you have a very clear history of the frequency of the issue. Revealing that you notice a pattern brings the history to the forefront. The history is important because repeated frequency erodes your trust.

**Frustrated Relationship**  
If your relationship is about the relationship, but you only focus on the pattern, then you are not likely to get the change that you are aiming for. You have to discuss what is important to you in terms of the relationship.

**Step 7** **Create an action plan, if appropriate.**  
Make sure that the employee creates or at least contributes to the plan so that they agree to it. They need to be responsible for the outcomes, not blaming co-workers, life at home, or the company if things do not go as planned.

**Step 8** **Follow up.**  
If you commit to follow up with the employee every few days at first, and then less frequently, make sure that you do so. They may need support from you initially to keep on track.