

Navigating Conflict with Compassion and Understanding

1. Speak from Your Own Experience

- Instead of placing blame, share how you feel.
For example, say *"I feel..."* or *"It's important to me that..."*
rather than *"You always..."* or *"You should..."*.

2. Listen with an Open Heart

- Let the other person speak without interrupting- even if it's hard!
- Truly hear their perspective, even if it differs from yours.
- Practice empathy by acknowledging their feelings.

3. Read Body Signals

- The body speaks volumes, before a word is spoken
- Notice: facial expression, jaw tension, eye contact
- Which part of the body is open? What is protective or shielding?

4. Create open dialogue

- Ask questions to understand their point of view.
- Give each other time to respond without rushing.

5. Know When to Take a Break

- If emotions run high or communication becomes unproductive, take a step back and pause before continuing. If needed, stop- and come back at a later point.

Habits That Can Make Conflict Worse

Some behaviors can make disagreements more difficult.

Watch out for these:

- **Interrupting** – It can feel frustrating when you aren't given space to speak.
- **Blaming or Accusing** – Instead of saying *"You're so negative,"* ask *"Can we talk about what's bothering you?"*
- **Unsolicited Advice** – Rather than saying *"You should..."*, check if they want your input first.
- **Generalisations** – Phrases like *"You always..."* can make someone feel misunderstood.

- **Ignoring Boundaries** – If someone clearly says "*Stop*," respect their request.
- **Dismissing Their Feelings** – Saying "*That doesn't interest me*,"- "*It was nothing*" can make the other person feel unvalued or not taken seriously.
- **Asking Without Listening** – If you ask a question, be open to the answer rather than preparing a rebuttal.

How Conflict Can Impact Us Emotionally

When we don't feel heard or respected, it can lead to:

- Feeling invisible or dismissed.
- Frustration and resentment building up.
- A sense of being controlled or disregarded.

Ways to Handle Conflict More Positively

- **Take a moment to pause before responding.**
Take 1-3 conscious breaths prior to your answer
- **Keep the dialogue open.**
If possible, talk through concerns calmly.
- **Read Body-Language**
The body often says more than words only.
- **Watch out for sarcasm or cynicism.**
These are often shields rather than solutions.
- **Step away if needed.**
Giving space helps both sides cool down.

- **Avoid reacting defensively.**
Counterattacking only escalates the situation.
- **Humour.**
Blowing things up with humour can shift the mood instantly.
It defuses, but it does not solve.-yet!
- **See what is happening.**
Acknowledge what's working:
sometimes even the fact to show up for a conversation is a lot.

Focus on one or maximum two of these points and practice with them.
Notice what's happening, inside of you and your partner during the interaction.