

Finding Ways Through Conflict

Adapted from the Conflict Resolution Network

Conflict affects us all – no matter who we are or what we do. It finds us at home, at work, on the farm, on the streets. It has the potential to create enormous damage or to spark positive change. All of us can learn constructive ways to work through conflict. Here are some suggestions:

Start with yourself. Good conflict management requires that you start with yourself. What is the problem from my point of view? Are my values or beliefs being threatened? What do I really need out of this situation to restore my sense of well-being?

What does the other person want? Unless the person with whom you are in conflict is truly a bully, try to examine the problem from their point of view. What do you think they need out of the situation to restore their sense of well-being? Is it possible that the other person's values or beliefs are being threatened?

Listen like you've never listened before. Ask the person to tell you their point of view on the situation and listen to them. Don't interrupt, and don't contradict. Just clarify and summarize what you have understood. After you have finished speaking, ask the other person to listen to you.

Use your imagination. Once you have listened to each other, you may recognize that each of you have legitimate needs and you may have developed a new understanding for each other's values. Create several possible ways that both of you can meet your needs while respecting core values. Even in deeply entrenched conflicts, the human capacity to create ways out of difficulties is enormous. Tap into a spirit of optimism and creativity – believe that you can resolve this!

Seek help when you need it. At any stage you can benefit from talking to someone who understands conflict and is trained and experienced in effective conflict resolution techniques and processes. Visit www.crnetwork.ca or Mediation Services at www.mediationserviceswpg.ca or call them at 204-925-3410.

