

Conflict Management Technique

This technique can be best remembered using the memory aid, FACE RAP.

F Fault
A Appearance
C Cause
E Effect
R Responsibility
A Action
P Prevention

Fault

Conflict is like a tree that begins to grow from a single seed.

In good moist ground and sunlight it grows slowly and matures fully grown into a tree, which produces fruit in abundance.

If you cut away the branches and destroy the fruit, the tree remains alive, with the potential to reproduce branches and bring forth further fruit.

If you cut down the stem of the tree and leave the root, the tree will still grow.

To destroy the tree you must first locate the root - the fault and "root" it out completely. Only then will the tree die.

Fig 1.1 represents a minor conflict that was not resolved, but was left to grow and mature, producing negative fruit in abundance. The fruit of war, division, murder, hatred, lying, adultery and many more.

Notice also that such trees are firmly rooted in the ground, spreading their roots far and wide. Not only is it difficult to locate the root of conflict, but conflict that is left to grow are mountains to destroy. Think how much easier it is to cut down a small plant in comparison to a fully grown tree.

When you recognise conflict, locate the root cause immediately and destroy it. Do not let it mature and produce ill-fruit in abundance and more importantly, if you let the sun go down before you resolve it, you may regret it. Become like a detective in a criminal enquiry. First, you would need to ask questions, listen, round up all the facts; second, examine the evidence; finally, solve the case.

Many show off their achievements, PhD's and other qualifications, yet they cannot find and destroy the root of their own conflict.



Fig 1.1 "Has your conflict grown out of control?"

Appearance

The appearance of conflict is in fact the symptom. Symptoms indicate that something is wrong.

How did this conflict come to your attention? Was it something you saw, heard, felt, smelled, or tasted which gave the indication that something was wrong? What was the sign and how did it manifest itself? Maybe it was the look on your partner's face, or cry of your child, the scratch on your car, and the pain in your stomach, the swelling on your hand, the flood in your bathroom or your child's school report.

The appearance or symptom tells you that something is wrong. The appearance is the fruit or branches of the tree; it is not the root of the tree.

All professionals such as doctors, police, probation officers or arbitrators use the appearance as motivation to locate the real root cause of conflict. By treating the symptom you are only temporarily relieved.

Now that you have investigated and are absolutely certain something is wrong, listen with empathy and be genuine, accepting, trustworthy, encouraging and sensitive.

Cause

There seems to be always someone or something that causes discomfort.

At this stage your job is to find out who or what it is.

A group of people or an individual perhaps? Was it the storm, or simply the rain or lightning? Was it the government or your organisation? By locating who or what causes the conflict puts you in a better position to find the motive and root of the matter.

Effect

Conflict carries with it "an effect". Sometimes the effect is minor, but on other occasions it can be quite severe even deadly. Ask yourself:

- a What effect has this conflict had on me, my family, friends, colleagues, the community or even the whole nation?
- b If I were to leave this conflict unresolved what effects would it have on my family, friends, colleagues, the community or even the whole nation?
- c Would today's conflict that remains unresolved cause tomorrows conflict? Yes!

A wise man once wrote, "Never let the sun go down while you are still angry."

Before the day is out do your very best to resolve the conflict.

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Today we can see the effects of the actions of others as it destroys individuals, families and communities. Are you a part of the solution or a part of the conflict?

**There is conflict that has taken place in some countries
that has affected human beings worldwide.**

Responsibility

At this stage you need to identify who is responsible for taking the appropriate action. The responsibility is dependent upon the type of conflict and may rest with more than one person.

If a child is not performing well in his/her studies the responsibility may rest with the teacher, parent or even the child. Once the responsibility has been realised, the next thing to do is to take action.

Action

You have now become like a judge who has listened carefully and patiently to the prosecution and the defence.

You have asked questions, weighed up all the relevant facts and taken into consideration the evidence.

You have listened to all the witnesses and are now fully enlightened about the whole situation. You are now in a position to take action.

But first! Brainstorm ways in which you could resolve the conflict.

Then evaluate each idea, choosing the best one.

Trust your judgement; you will know what is best.

From time to time review your actions to see if this was the right choice, if not change it if you can. Finally, ask yourself, "What lessons have been learnt as a result of this conflict?" "What mistakes have I and others made?"

Do not allow this learning opportunity to pass you by. After all, you want to prevent it from happening again, don't you?

Prevention

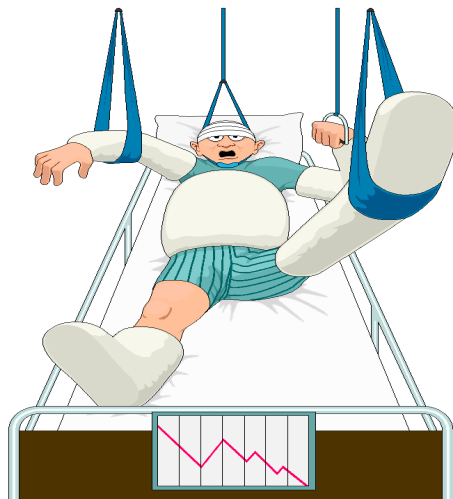
"Prevention is better than cure."

"Better a fence at the top of a hill than an ambulance at the bottom of it."

These are well known words.

How can I prevent this conflict from ever happening again?

Look for ways to prevent this conflict from ever recurring. To continue to make the same mistakes over and over again is a sign of negligence and bad time and self management.



"This is the fourth time that I have fallen on this slippery floor!"