

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Adapted from *Youth Leadership Development Workbook* written and published by New Light Leadership Coalition, 2001-2003, pages 62-63. Used with permission.

In order to work well with other people, leaders must be good at resolving conflict.

A **conflict** is a situation causing disunity or discord between two individuals or groups. Conflicts are usually caused by perceived feelings of hurt, insult, or injury.

To resolve a conflict, it is important to ***maintain control of emotions***.

Use the following steps to approach solving conflicts with others peacefully:

STEPS TO SOLVING A CONFLICT

1. ADOPT A PEACEFUL ATTITUDE

You should never be the aggressor or the cause of a conflict. Try to avoid physical confrontations if possible.

2. LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN

The main problem during conflict is that both parties want to get their point across. This causes them to want to speak before the other person is heard. It is important to LISTEN in order to resolve a conflict.

3. STATE YOUR DESIRE TO WORK THINGS OUT

The other party must know that you are willing to compromise. A compromise is the process of give and take that leads to a middle ground where BOTH PARTIES are content.

4. BE A MODEL OF SUPPORT & COOPERATION

Be sincere in your attempt to reconcile with another party.

GUIDELINES TO RESOLVING CONFLICT

√ **Never** approach an individual in front of other people as this will only cause defensiveness. The person will likely retaliate instead of cooperating with you.

√ **Do not insult** the other party. Tell him what he is doing that is hurting you and ask him to stop.

√ **Do not provoke** the other person or group. This will only lead to further conflict and, potentially, violence.

√ **Be calm!** Instead of approaching the situation emotionally, give yourself a moment to cool down before trying to deal with the conflict. Emotion can cause unnecessary confusion, leaving the root of the problem neither discovered nor solved.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

1. Have the team identify what criteria they will use to make decisions and then evaluate the conflict using the agreed upon criteria.
2. Have participants silently post their opinion and ideas on the board and write the pros and cons of each suggestion.
3. When two people disagree, ask each to reiterate the opposite position until the other person feels his position is fully understood.
4. Summarize the issues on which there is agreement to show progress and possibilities.
5. Look for non-verbal signs of dissent and address them openly.
6. Never take sides. Instead, suggest a way for the team to overcome its roadblock.

THE 8 STEPS OF ATONEMENT

Atonement is a process for making amends for a fault or wrongdoing. In order to resolve our problems with one another, we must follow these steps:

1. **Point Out Wrong or Fault** – *Let it be known that a wrong was committed.*
2. **Acknowledge the Wrong** – *No matter who brings it to your attention, if you were at fault, admit it.*
3. **Confession** – *Confess your wrongdoing to your Creator and to the person whom you wronged.*
4. **Repentance** – *Show remorse for your actions and sincerely promise to change.*
5. **Atonement** – *If you can, do something to make up for your actions.*
6. **Forgiveness** – *Seek forgiveness from the individual wronged and your Creator. Remember, also, to forgive yourself for your transgressions.*
7. **Reconciliation** – *Settle differences and make peace with yourself and with those whom you have wronged.*
8. **Perfect Union** – *Oneness with your Creator, family and friends.*