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Conflict Resolution

13 Ways to Deal with Difficult People

1. Don't take their behavior personally. It is usually never about you. Their bad behavior has to do with them; you just happen to be in the way at the moment.
2. Don't fight back or try to win. In the end, difficult people need to save face. Their self-identity is tied into winning.
3. You can't appease them. Takers will always take.
4. Exercise the greatest power you have: the power to change the game. You can't change them. The only person you are in control of is you. Change your attitude, keep the boat steady, and control your response to their behavior.
5. Let them vent. Don't vent back. Let them explain themselves without jumping in.
6. Use the power of acknowledgment. Nod your head (nodding does not mean you agree, it just means you have heard what they said).
7. Use positive gestures.
8. Disarm and deflect the other side with kindness and understanding. Just because you are being nice, does not mean you are giving in.
9. Use silence to your advantage: It makes the other side wonder what you are thinking.
10. Remain steadfast and assertive in expressing your goals and interests. Once the other side sees you are listening and understand their plight, they may be more willing to work with you.
11. Neutralize threats, lies, and insults. Say, "I feel as though you are bulldozing me into a corner;" or "You seem upset," or "I feel that you are you are playing good cop/bad cop."
12. Use "I" messages, not accusations.
13. Say what you feel— keep it short and to the point — and let them respond.



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Create a Safe Environment - People Feel Unsafe Because the Conditions, NOT the Content of a Conversation

1. Create specific and measurable goals.
2. Strengthen interpersonal relationships.
3. Listen actively.
4. Pay attention to non-verbal communication.
5. Be mindful.
6. Change the venue.
7. Take a break.
8. Build TRUST.

20 Best Practices in Conflict Resolution

1. Have a goal - Think about where you can agree and what YOU are willing to change ahead of time.
2. Keep the other side talking.
3. Explore the differences.
4. Narrow the gap.
5. LISTEN to what they want – and try to give it to them.
6. Add impartial perspective.
7. Behaviors:
 - Call out (nicely) inappropriate behavior.
 - Focus on behaviors and consequences of behaviors; be specific.
 - Control excessive venting – redirect.
8. Keep focused on the small “yes’s” as they lead to bigger one’s (we’ve agreed on so many smaller things...)
9. Ask WHAT you want instead of what you DON’T want.
10. Control and take ownership of your behavior and feelings.
11. Ask yourself: “What am I pretending not to notice about my role in this?”



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12. Humanize the other person. Ask yourself: “Why would a reasonable, rational, and decent person do what they are doing?”
13. Use active listening behaviors. Make it safe for others to express their opinions, needs, etc.
14. SOFTEN the message:
 - “The fact is...” (vs) “In my opinion...”
 - “Everyone knows that...” (vs) “I’ve talked to 3 others who share my view...”
 - “It’s clear to me ..” (vs) “I’m beginning to wonder ...”
15. Be open to a variety of solutions and compromises.
16. Ask them to clarify: “What am I missing here?” or “I’d really want to hear from you.”
17. Take time out when feelings heat up.
18. Set a time to start again if you take time out.
19. Ask for help if you need it.
20. It’s a small world - retaining relationships is key.

Perception – Practical Skills

1. We all have a story/history. Be a “**soft place**” for them to tell you their side (eg: do not be combative). **The goal is to have a resolution.**
2. Don’t blame - describe issue **factually**.
3. Ask yourself: do they **TRUST** me?
4. Don’t infer their intentions from your fears (**react based on hard data**).
5. Discuss each others perceptions.
6. Alter negative perceptions.
7. Allow them to save face.
8. Reputation!
9. The better you can relate = the easier you can find a **GRACEFUL** solution.



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10 Sources of Power (you must equalize power in order to “win a resolution”)

https://epublications.bond.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1105&context=law_pubs

1. **Formal authority:** The power that derives from a formal position within a structure that confers certain decision-making prerogatives.
2. **Expert/information power:** The power that is derived from having expertise in a particular area of information about a particular matter.
3. **Associational power:** The power that is derived from association with other people with power.
4. **Resource power:** The control over valued resources (money, materials, labor, or other goods or services). The negative version of this power is the ability to deny needed resources or to force others to expend them.
5. **Procedural power:** The control over the procedures by which decisions are made, separate from the control over those decisions themselves (for instance, the power of a judge in a jury trial).
6. **Sanction power:** The ability (or perceived ability) to inflict harm or to interfere with a party’s ability to realize his or her interests.
7. **Nuisance power:** The ability to cause discomfort to a party, falling short of the ability to apply direct sanctions.
8. **Habitual power:** The power of the status quo that rests on the premise that it is normally easier to maintain a particular arrangement or course of action than to change it.
9. **Moral power:** The power that comes from an appeal to widely held values. Related to this is the power that results from the conviction that one is right.
10. **Personal power:** The power that derives from a variety of personal attributes that magnify other sources of power, including self-assurance, the ability to articulate one’s thoughts and understand one’s situation, one’s determination and endurance, and so forth.

Suggested Reading

- Tongue Fu!: How to Deflect, Disarm, and Defuse Any Verbal Conflict - by Sam Horn
- The Dynamics of Conflict: A Guide to Engagement and Intervention - by Bernard Mayer
- The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization - John C. Maxwell



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- Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In - by Roger Fisher, William L. Ury, Bruce Patton
- Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard: Chip and Dan Heath

Dana's PMI Webinars

1. **Conflict Resolution:** <https://www.projectmanagement.com/videos/518330/Conflict-Resolution>
2. **Having Difficult Conversations - Parts 1&2:**
<https://www.projectmanagement.com/videos/537978/Mastering-the-Art-of-Having-Difficult-Conversations---Part-1>
<https://www.projectmanagement.com/videos/544943/Mastering-the-Art-of-Having-Difficult-Conversations---Part-2>
3. **Contracts:** <https://www.projectmanagement.com/webinars/547616/Mastering-the-Art-of-Contracts---Part-1>
4. **Negotiations:** <https://www.projectmanagement.com/webinars/554734/Mastering-the-Art-of-Negotiations---Part-2->
5. **Ethics and Leadership:** <https://www.projectmanagement.com/webinars/558593/Mastering-the-Art-of-Ethics-and-Leadership---Part-3->
6. **Mediation:** <https://www.projectmanagement.com/webinars/573745/Mastering-the-Art-of-Mediation>
7. **PMXPO – Mastering the Art of Human-ness**
<https://www.projectmanagement.com/videos/639449/PMXPO-2020--Mastering-the-Art-of-Humanness-in-Project-Management--Serving-Others-Through-Powerful-Communications>

One life. Just one.

What is stopping you from
running towards your wildest dreams?

Do you Dare to Live Brave?

Let's dive in... 



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