

Surviving Conflict

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Why this is important

- It does not go away.
- Building and keeping relationships
- Self esteem
- Need for method

Alternative strategies

1. Denying

Good news

Little heightened emotion

Avoid mistakes

Appear calm and unaffected, keep up a front

Potential bad news

Things build up.

No room for change

Spend energy pretending

Sooner or later, you become aware

No improvement

2. Kill-kill—lashing out punitively - physically and/or verbally

Good news

Feel righteous

Release anger

Potential bad news

Retribution

Hurt - both ways

Feel guilty afterwards

Resolves nothing

3. Smoothing over

Good news

Momentary cooling out

Maintains appearances

"Nice"

Potential bad news

Phony

No improvement

Can be seen as superficial or unauthentic

Two-faced

4. Walking away - writing off "bad debts"

Good news

Avoids confrontation

Feel finished

Feel superior

Minimize - change the perspective

Potential bad news

- Lost opportunity
- Feeling of failure
- Conflict may not diminish

5. Negotiation

Good news

- Improvement - communication, relationship, emotional tone
- Strengthens feelings about self
- Establishes a norm of working things out
- Develops skills

Potential bad news

- Takes work
- Scary
- Requires courage and skill
- Requires two-way commitment
- Requires honesty
- Requires follow-through

The "bottom line"

All conflict is values based.

Improvement in conflict situations involves taking risks.

Negotiation is harder.

The payoffs are bigger and more long-lasting.

Not to try is a choice.

A Step-by-Step Process

1. Recognize the situation for what it is.
2. Calm yourself.
3. Assess your feelings, assumptions, and needs.
4. Analyze alternative strategies.
5. Commit to what can work in this situation.
6. Make an opening - an offer or request.
7. Stick with the situation.
8. Be open to give and take.
9. Be assertive about your needs.
10. Forgive yourself and the other—silently