

## Day 1 - Conflict and Me

You are wading into the beautiful, calm water of the ocean. The water looks clear. But you know something wonderful is below the sand...if you could only see it...but you need to kick at the sand and ruin that beautiful, clear, calm water you are in. Do you kick up the sand and see what is underneath?

You are in your garden and anxious to start planting the garden. Do you rip out a few weeds, dig out a few rocks, or do you take the shovel, and dig deep, taking out the lower rocks and turning the soil?

Kicking the sand and using the shovel is like deep dialogue and conflict resolution; the treasure underneath this sometimes turbulent process is your improved relationship and even your entire life, including sleeping better at night. So many times we avoid dealing with conflict, but at the price of the treasure because we do not want to kick up the sand, or ruin the surface calm we are maintaining. We would rather avoid the work of preparing the garden properly, thereby putting a figurative “band-aid” on our responsibilities.

I have stories of failed communication, behavior I regret, and more that I could go into. We all do.

We all have a supervisor or co-worker with whom a basic working relationship seemed impossible at first. We could allow personality differences to dominate how we work together. Perhaps they have serious issues and no one can get along with them, and they require specific techniques to just be able to get through the day with. You can also try listening deeply to what they say and how they behave, looking at what is positive, go below the surface of what you see, and understand what is driving them and their goals, and ours as well. There are other people who can just accept whatever differences they have with someone, not need to think deeper into it, and work well with them, and that is great also.

I believe that awareness of how you behave and how you view conflict is an important first step to becoming a conflict resolver. Since many of us did not grow up in a collaborative environment, or learn conflict resolution skills, it is helpful to find out more about yourself and conflict, and make some goals of behavior change for yourself. It could be to be more collaborative, or have more courage when communicating, anything.

We are going to define conflict resolution as a transformational process that involves:

- Digging deep
- To truly solve problems
- Through honest dialogue
- To discover the core nature of our conflict and our authentic selves
- So that our agreements and new behaviors are actually honored by all participants in the conflict

You will learn ways to change your attitude towards conflict, and also how you behave during conflict.

Conflict is a signal that change is around the corner! Conflict can be described as a perceived struggle or incongruent goals between interdependent people or groups. Usually a conflict brews, and a confrontation is what brings the conflict to light. Conflicts usually develop with people you know or have to deal with. Sometimes you may think there is a conflict between you and someone else, but it may be more of a conflict inside you (intrapersonal). Other times, conflicts are there to help you see something about yourself that you can change.

### SUMMARY

#### Conflict and Me

1. Happiness is a choice.
2. Conflict can be a positive force for change.
3. Collaboration is digging deep to truly resolve a conflict.
4. You can change how you think and act in conflict.

Day 1 - Conflict and Me

TRY IT!

Conflict and Me - Conflict resolution

*Why do you want to learn conflict resolution?*

*What will you do with what you learn?*

*What do you think is the definition of conflict resolution?*

*What is the benefit of working through to the core of your conflicts, rather than just putting a "band-aid" over them?*

*Are there times a "band-aid" might be more useful than conflict resolution?*

One-time bar fights are more of a confrontation. A recurring conflict over rules of your relationship, damaging behavior in a relationship, or constant struggles with a supervisor are trickier conflicts to resolve.

Conflict feels like positive energy flow between you and the other person is blocked. It is up to you to decide who you want to be interdependent with. Some relationships are positive to keep in your life, and some are not. If you want to work at a relationship, usually it is important to have good communication and conflict resolution skills.

TRY IT!

Conflict and Me - Your conflict definition and behavior

*What do you think is the definition of conflict?*

*How do you describe conflict?*

*How do you know when you are in a conflict with someone?*

*What do you usually do when you are in a conflict?*

*Does your conflict behavior change depending on who you have a conflict with?*

*What would you like to do when you are in a conflict?*

*Why?*

## Day 1 - Conflict and Me

You are in control of your life and your conversations. You decide moment by moment whether you want to be happy or not. Happiness is a choice. How much time do you want to spend unhappy? Your attitude towards conflict is a choice also. Perception of reality is important. When you go into conflict with a positive attitude, and expect a good result, that is what you will get.

It is very possible to change your attitude towards conflict. Let's make some lists that will help.

### TRY IT!

#### Conflict and Me - Conflict attitude

*Pros/Positive results of conflict at work:*

*Cons/Negative results of conflict at work:*

*Pros/Positive results of conflict at home:*

*Cons/Negative results of conflict at home:*

This is not to say that conflict is always positive. There are very real and very negative results that can come from conflict. However, with an attitude change, and with better conflict resolution skills, you will begin to exert control over situations that seemed problematic or hopeless in the past.

Why bother? There are situations or problems that need to be solved. Also, there are relationships or situations that we want to keep intact. However, there are some relationships or situations that we hold onto that are not working. Only you can decide if you need to keep that going in your life, or if you can move on and leave them behind. Your attempts at conflict resolution and your conflict dialogues can help you decide.

Conflict can change you as an individual, for the better. Conflict can clarify your needs and goals. You may decide to create or define personal boundaries because of a conflict. Conflict also helps you define who you are (I am what I am not). Conflict can drive you to change your beliefs, your perceptions, channel anger into positive results, forgive, be good to yourself, and many other healthy, direct benefits for you.

One key to conflict resolution is to be constantly aware of what we are doing during our conflicts and why. It is easier to do this if you can be both a participant in, and an observer of, the conflicts you are a part of. Awareness is the first step towards making any change. You will have to monitor your emotions, your reactions, and your speech.

No one is perfect, there are always conflicts that go the wrong way and things said that we regret; but when that happens, there is a way to navigate back to trust and honest communication. You can be passionate, you can be involved, but you can also ensure that your relationships remain intact. Over time you will see radical changes in your life. I know I did in mine.

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TRY IT!

Conflict and Me - Conflict history and awareness

*How do you feel when in conflict?*

*Can you see conflict as a positive force? (can clarify goals, relieve tension, open up communication, clear up misunderstandings and assumptions, solve problems, stop suffering, purify mind, advance spiritually, what else?)*

*How did the people you grew up with communicate?*

*Is this how you communicate now?*

*How did the people you grew up with deal with conflict?*

*Is this how you deal with conflict in your life now?*

*If not, how do you deal with conflict now?*

*If you changed your conflict style from the people you grew up with, why did you?*

*If you are dealing with conflict the same way the people you grew with did, why are you?*

*How do you want to deal with conflict now?*

*Make a list of all the conflicts you are in now, or would like to analyze from the past:*