

## 7 Steps for Conflict Resolution

In a time when navigating systems are available for our cars, desktop, and cell phones, how does the location of conflict resolution remain so evasive? Jesus Christ gives us the coordinates, but it is up to us to get there. Conflict resolution is located at the intersection where love, boldness, wisdom, and Matthew 18:15-20 merge together as one.

We have learned as Christians often that healthy conflict resolution always requires confrontation for its success, but confrontation should not be equated with combat. This simple seven-step process has kept relationships from deteriorating, churches from splitting, families from self-destructing, and allowed God our Heavenly Father to bring victory in so many ways. It has proven to be effective whether one is a part of the conflict itself or serving as the arbitrator.

1. **Set up a private meeting between yourself and the other person(s).** Do this quickly so the conflict doesn't escalate. Begin and end every meeting with prayer-especially in church related conflicts!
2. **Begin with "I" (ownership) language.** It is important that you allow the meeting to have no potential for accusation or to generate a defensive posturing. This reinforces everyone's trust in your desire to sincerely bring resolution to this conflict.
3. **Ask "What can *I* do to resolve this?"** You make an honest effort to create a path for repair. Even if you are a part of the issue, this posturing is not taking total blame upon yourself, but rather, offering a willingness to do everything you can to facilitate resolving the conflict at hand.
4. **Ask: "What can *you* do to resolve this?"** As you are involved in the conflict either as a participant or as the arbitrator, it is only natural to have the same question asked of the other that you were willing to ask of yourself.
5. **Word the agreed upon solution together.** Together, you "package" the process for resolution. All are better served by sharing in the process for resolution, allowing a greater probability for the conflict to be healed.

6. **Restate the agreed upon solution.** Before anyone leaves that meeting, each one restate the agreed upon process for resolving the conflict. It is best if the process is written out, re-read, and a signed copy received by all, stabilizing the integrity of the intent.
7. **Agree to a specific date, time, and place to meet again to evaluate progress.** As participant or facilitator, be sure that meeting happens. We must always *inspect* what is expected or people will not *respect* what is expected. This meeting celebrates resolution or reveals the need for more effort.

Confrontation with integrity of ownership and free of combat was the course Christ set to resolve conflict. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus said He would join us in conflict resolution. "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."