



15 damn good tips on how to handle conflicts

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1. The question should not be “whether”, but rather: “what can I contribute so that a win-win situation results?” (Of course a win-win situation will not always be reached, but if one seriously searches for it, it will not just make one’s own attitude more productive, but for the most part it will also make the attitude of the others involved clearly more productive and therefore the likelihood of a consensual solution will rise immensely.)
2. The question should not be “whether”, but rather: “how can I use the conflict as a chance for meaningful clarification, progress, improvement in relationships, personal development, learning and the like?” (Viewing the conflict as a chance, initiates creativity, perceiving it as pressure or a burden, hinders creativity.)
3. It follows then that: in conflicts one can definitely employ his reason and judgement and even his imagination (which is not only suitable for imagining worst-case scenarios). The following question is also of great importance: “What do I actually want to achieve here and how can I increase my chance of achieving it.
4. In order to reach a stage whereby one can really enjoy his thinking capability and ability to act, it is helpful, not at first to react, if one feels that one is getting up to ninety or at any rate in the “bright red” zone. Reacting when the mood is still green to orange to light red, is much more advantageous than having an alternative action at the ready. That is why early intervention is often better.
5. Early conflict intervention requires early conflict recognition. Early conflict recognition above all means: allowing oneself the luxury of taking one’s own perception and impressions seriously, and that is before one is overrun by them. (Feelings are complex and important information, which we have about ourselves and our environment. Being aware of them and taking them seriously means, being able to use and steer them. Waiting until one is up to ninety, means deciding in favour of one being dominated and steered by one’s own feelings.)

6. If one also believes the following: that somebody in a conflict situation is only and nothing other than the victim, that is (apart from cases of physical force) actually unacceptable. If one stays completely unimaginative when dealing with the question: "What do I actively contribute to the conflict maintenance or the conflict intensification?" it might be worthwhile, to think over the conflict one more time.
7. Very similar to the question: "What are the other person's good intentions?" An escalation of the conflict is often due to the assumption that the other party has bad intentions. It's the opposite in fact: the more one succeeds in differentiating the good intentions from the lesser good effects of the other, the more likely the emotional dynamite will be taken out of the conflict. If one therefore does not have anything in mind when dealing with the question regarding the other party's good intentions, it makes sense, to ponder over the situation longer, unless, one would like it to escalate further.
8. A mostly "successful" method of escalating the conflict is to simply strengthen a recently implemented but unsuccessful solution strategy according to the motto: more means more. It's the opposite in fact: if a strategy, in spite of honest endeavours and repetitive usage doesn't work, then it is advisable, to consider another strategy.
9. If nothing helps at all, it is good at least to know in this respect, that one is able to foresee, when it is advisable for the person involved, to stop or to take a break. In general the significance of taking breaks, creating distance and focusing anew, should not be underestimated in a productive conflict solution. (These do not always have to be the "famous" night's sleep so that problems can be freshly mulled over the following day; sometimes "the way to the toilet" is suffice. If these are not effective in the situation and if a "realistic" break is necessary, then one should if at all possible consider the others involved by not setting the break but rather agreeing on its arrangement with them.)
10. It is good, if on top of that one also knows of oneself, what one can do especially well (for example, to be quick, thorough, direct, probing, harmonic etc). This will count namely in stress conditions, to which conflict situations generally rank, by one being more distinct but however there is also the tendency to bring to much distinctiveness into play. With this it holds firm in this instance just like everywhere in life: too much is always too much. Too much for the others is at the same time too much for me: such measures have a tendency to be negative.

11. At any rate it is worth being more attentive as to: “which types of the other’s behaviour and in which situations irritate and annoy me so much, that I then like a reflex create an “opposing strategy” to it and end up into the bargain doing what I can do so well, and as if that were not enough, I continue doing it. Whoever can identify himself in this situation type, has the chance to realize, that he is in the 100,000th reproduction of an old personal conflict classic. To be aware of this (and at the same time to be able to inwardly smile just a little at yourself) will create at least a little distance to the events and in addition the chance, to be able to decide, whether one would like to dispute this 100,000th time exactly the same way as the other 99,999 times before that, or maybe just a little bit differently this time round.
12. Sometimes the capacity then emerges to reformulate the question, as to why the other gets on my nerves so much, in the following way: “What actually does the other want? What does he need? What are his action- and value-standards? What does the world look like from his perspective? And how can I reach him there? What can I offer him, so that we can make headway productively?”
13. This search way is connected with another point, which in the heat of the moment within a conflict can threaten to destroy the situation every time, it is the question once again: “What do I want to achieve here and do I really want it? Or is the feeling that I was right and that I was able to protect my position enough for me, regardless of how high the subsequent costs are?” If I don’t want anything else, I don’t need to bother about the others anymore. If I should want more after all, I have to strive to somehow reach the others. For which the following realization will help immensely.
14. It is a common misconception that everyone ticks like me, that they share my logic and standards and are in the position, to see the things exactly as I do. This is definitely not the case. Only one person “ticks” like I do, and that’s me. For everyone else I need additional ideas and imagination. And these all the more in a conflict situation.

15. How will it all work? For that there are three essential things, which in the cold light of day have little to do with magic: (1) taking the attitude: “How can we reach a win-win situation here?” seriously (2) being curious, attentive and a little bit self-critical gathering experiences with that and (3) being careful, even when it (the situation) intensifies – to keep at least a little distance to the events. In this instance one should not view this as having to “float supremely above the events”. That would mean only intensifying the pressure and at the end of the day lessening the productive distance. Sometimes 1mm distance is enough, in order not to “sit on it” and therefore being able to keep the ability to partly think freely and be able to weigh up and decide – which is not always so easy to do.