Key Principles
in Resolving Interpersonal Conflict
Mark Umbreit
1995

“Conflict is the engine that drives interpersonal and organizational growth”

1. The more direct and timely the conflict is confronted, the better… usually.

2. Be direct and tough on resolving the problem, but gentle and respectful on the person.

3. If you err, err in the direction of empathy, warmth & being connected with the parties (being genuine) even if you mess up on the techniques.

4. Good conflict resolution skills are not hard to learn. You can do it!

5. Good skills & technique alone are not the answer.

6. The essence of good communication skills in resolving conflict is to be found in the presence of integrity…a consistency between that which we are thinking, are saying verbally, our bodies are communicating, how we are feeling, and the deeper values within our heart.

7. Understanding & responding to conflict must be viewed through appropriate and relevant cultural lenses.
Conflict Management

It is necessary to create safe space in which to resolve conflict. Here are a few of the things you and I need to STOP doing if we want to create a safe space.

- STOP assuming that your truth is THE truth. What is true for you is not necessarily true for another.
- STOP insisting that other people must agree with you. Disagreement is okay. Don’t “cross-examine” people.
- STOP unconsciously assuming that anyone else will see it the way you see it. Always check it out.
- STOP invalidating other people’s experience just because it doesn’t agree with your experience.
- STOP blaming anyone else for how you feel or what happens to you. Take full responsibility for yourself.

A communication technique to maintain safe space is conflict resolution is the **Circular Energy Flow** (as represented below).

![Circular Energy Flow Diagram]

From *Warriors of the Heart* by Danaan Parry