



Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking

An International Resource Center in Support of Restorative Justice Dialogue, Research and Training

School of Social Work
College of Human Ecology
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Key Principles in Resolving Interpersonal Conflict

Mark Umbreit
1995

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

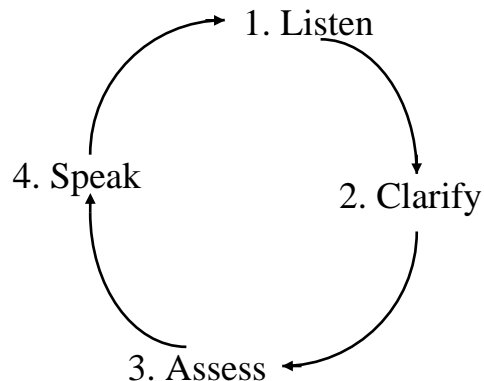
1. The more direct and timely the conflict is confronted, the better... usually.
2. Be direct and tough on resolving the problem, but gentle and respectful on the person.
3. If you err, err in the direction of empathy, warmth & being connected with the parties (being genuine) even if you mess up on the 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).



From *Warriors of the Heart* by Danaan Parry