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## Conflict Resolution: Steps to Success

Conflict is inherent in our personal and work lives. It is not something that we can avoid. Successfully resolving conflict leads to happier and more productive personal and work lives. Below are nine steps to consider when faced with your next conflict:

1. Think strategically in conflict situations, recognizing the difference between what you can change, that which you cannot allow, and what you may need to accept in order to reach a solution.

2. Avoid being defensive when criticized. Instead take time to listen and understand what is being said before you respond. Ask questions to better understand how your action may have been perceived in a particular way.

3. Often disagreements are simply misunderstandings. If you respond too quickly with your point of view, you may escalate a problem. The real issue may be that you are both expressing your ideas differently even though there is considerable agreement.

4. When you are starting a discussion and you realize there is potential conflict, express your desire to come up with a resolution that will be acceptable to you and the other person.

5. If you disagree with what someone is saying let the speaker finish before expressing your viewpoint. This shows respect for the other's perspective even

though you may disagree. Active listening de-escalates the conflict and allows you to acknowledge the content, feelings, and perspective of the other person so you can move toward a solution.



6. It is important to look for options and solutions without blaming or complaining about the other party. Be action oriented, with an emphasis on where we go from here and what the next steps are.

7. There may be multiple issues where there is conflict but it is not possible to address them all at once. It is best

to prioritize based on which issue will be easiest to resolve. Try to reach agreement on the easiest issue as a step forward, rather than addressing the most important and toughest item on your list immediately.

8. When you are holding a discussion with someone who is highly emotional it is important not to respond in kind. Think in terms of what tone of voice will convey your desire to achieve a solution. If both parties cannot discuss issues rationally, it may be important to call for another meeting when everyone has had a chance to calm down.

9. Approach conflict as an opportunity to strengthen your work and personal relationships. Express a desire to resolve the issue in way that will meet the needs of both parties and strengthen your relationship.