



Conflict Resolution, Top '7' Tips

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Seth was fast tracking it to the top of his company. He was focused, tenacious and smart with a solid work ethic. His talents were also admired on the golf course and basketball court. He seemed to have it all—fun, smart, fast tracking and popular.

Client Seth surprised me one day when he came to a session in frustration: “I’m going to find a new job. I want to work for a company where there are no politics and thus no conflict!” To his dismay I then chuckled in good nature to help him see how ludicrous his desire was.

In any company that possesses more than one person you will find politics. Even in a one person operation you’ll find inner conflict. Seth’s new goal was simply not attainable.

Our leadership coaching session then moved from ‘finding the impossible dream’ to a more attainable goal—knowing how to handle conflict which can occur in any interaction, inside or outside of work.

Conflict is a natural result of people having different opinions and not knowing how to communicate them or respect the other’s opinion.

Here are the top seven strategies I’ve seen employed to deal with conflict. As you’ll see not all are effective. You may see yourself in one. As with Seth, you too may choose to change your strategy once exposed to your options.

1. **Complain:** Many otherwise smart people lose their power the instant a conflict arises, especially if it is a pattern with this person or situation. This ‘lose/lose’ strategy accomplishes nothing. Additionally, complaining reduces the respect of the ‘complainer’ to a victim rather than someone who can find solutions.
2. **Evade:** Go about your work as if nothing harmful is happening. With major conflict this is a ‘lose/lose’ strategy. Ignoring the problem will not make it go away. However, if your conflict is a minor issue, this strategy may work. It’s like writing that letter and waiting three days to mail it.
3. **Contend:** Try to satisfy your own goals while ignoring other’s goals. This is a ‘win/lose’ approach. You are not concerned with what the other person or group wants, you move forward with your own needs in mind. This is politics at their worst.
4. **Threaten:** When backed in to a corner some of us resort to an animalistic strategy of threat or anger, pounding your fist on the table demanding what you want or else. This ‘win/lose’ strategy that rarely accomplishes your goal.
5. **Accommodate:** The opposite of ‘contend’, this ‘lose/win’ strategy seems the easiest when you think you just can’t win. You give in to the wishes of others to keep the peace, though you feel defeated. This does not set you up for a ‘win’ the next time around.

6. **Compromise:** Now we're getting somewhere. This is a 'win/lose a little' strategy that often works and sets you up nicely for the next time a conflict with this person or group occurs. They look at you as being willing to accommodate their wishes and may not come on so strong.
7. **Integrate:** This is the winning strategy. It's 'win/win' for all involved, though it takes focus, time and work to get there. This strategy listens to the needs of all involved in order to arrive at a solution where everyone feels like a winner.

Seth's previous strategy was to 'evade' the problem hoping it would go away. Since it did not, he felt less empowered which turned into a silent anger. His productivity and feeling of accomplishment at the end of the day was on a downward slide.

Feeling he had no options he was going to leave the company.

In looking at these alternative strategies he learned that the problem was not with his current company, but with his inability to handle conflict.

Seth chose the 'integrate' conflict strategy and is once again on the fast track to becoming this company's best CEO ever.

I challenge you to be honest with yourself in how you handle conflict. Might one of the above strategies serve you in creating a win/win scenario the next time around?

Read all of Ann's Writing and Wisdom at: <http://gvasuccess.com/writing-and-wisdom.htm>

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