

# mediation with joe salama



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Tips On How To Resolve Conflicts Effectively - September 2, 2009  
by Joe Salama

The key to successful conflict resolution is not compromise, but understanding. Once each party develops a true understanding of all the other parties' positions, then the possible solutions begin to present themselves. Use this in your personal and professional lives. The key to understanding is listening.

It is impossible to resolve a conflict until the parties stop avoiding one another, denying that their problems exist, and stop blaming one another. Once they stop doing this, and actually start listening to one another, then they can start assuming the necessary responsibility that will form the basis of a mutually agreeable resolution.

It's typically the person doing the yelling and the screaming that is the one with the problem/issue, not the person being yelled or screamed at. The easier part, believe it or not, is identifying the underlying issue, the harder part is figuring out the best way to manage it.

A good communicator understands the roots of human conflict. There are many things that can be motivating a conflict, including: revenge, fear of betrayal/inability to trust, prejudice, and the fear of being seen as weak. Good communicators perceive the distinction between reacting and responding to someone else, and can diffuse an otherwise hostile situation by a measured, appropriate response.

How to start talking about a problem:

- (1) Remember you are dealing with a human being with fears, insecurities, and other emotions;
- (2) Use neutral language to identify the problem: "Some co-workers may find the calendar in your office inappropriate." vs. "The calendar in your office is totally sexist."
- (3) Separate the person from the problem: "The calendar in your office is inappropriate." vs. "Your calendar is inappropriate."

In any negotiation, don't underestimate the value of the process itself because you are focused on the desired outcome. Most people require a struggle in order to feel good about the outcome and appreciate the result. To those who have been down that path before, it appears that the person is over-complicating things, and will end up in the same place after a lot of seemingly unnecessary work. But if you get to the end result too fast without giving each person a chance to speak and explain their position, even if you know what they are going to say, the final result won't feel satisfactory to all the parties involved.

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