

Breaking the Cycle of Conflict

Top 10 Practice Tips About the Cycle of Conflict, Defensive Communication, and High-Conflict Personalities

Elder Mediation Training Webinar Series

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1. Listen to the message, regardless of who is the messenger.
2. The cause of our feelings is not the other person's behavior, it's our needs.
3. Articulate your needs by making a statement that includes an observation, feeling, need and clear request.
*Credit: Rosenberg, Marshall, *Speak Peace in a World of Conflict: What You Say Next Will Change Your World*, Puddle Dancer Press, Encinitas, CA, 2005.*
4. When dealing with high-conflict people, evaluate if a response is necessary.
5. If a response is necessary, keep it BIFF (Brief, Informative, Friendly, and Firm).
*Credit: Eddy, Bill, *BIFF: Quick Responses to High Conflict People*, HCI Press, Scottsdale, AZ, 2011.*
6. Take time for a thoughtful response. It will save time in the long run.
7. Responding defensively is a natural reaction. Be aware of your own emotions and needs. Find out what is the full story, and embrace both sides of the story.
8. Disentangle their intent from its impact on you. Many times our assumptions about their intentions are wrong. Be curious and ask!
9. Instead of focusing on blame, consider how each person contributed to bringing about the current situation.
*Credit: Stone, Patton, and Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 2nd Ed., 2010.*
10. Be sensitive to a person who may have dementia or hearing loss. Their communication ability may be impaired.