

# “Peace on Earth, Good Will to All” Conflict Resolution Assignment and DA’s

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Your Guide to a Peaceful Life

Let's face it. Conflicts are inevitable. Kids have different ideas, different solutions, and different ways to approach problems. Because of this, resolving conflicts peacefully is a key skill that kids need to succeed.<sup>1</sup> (It's also one of the 40 Developmental Assets.<sup>2</sup>) As kids grow up, it's important that they learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully (without giving in) and how to get along well with others.

## Advantages in Solving Conflict

In many cases, conflict in the workplace just seems to be a fact of life. We've all seen situations where different people with different goals and needs have come into conflict. And we've all seen the often-intense personal animosity that can result.

The fact that conflict exists, however, is not necessarily a bad thing: As long as it is resolved effectively, it can lead to personal and professional growth.

In many cases, effective conflict resolution can make the difference between positive and negative outcomes.

The good news is that by resolving conflict successfully, you can solve many of the problems that it has brought to the surface, as well as getting benefits that you might not at first expect:

- 1. Increased understanding:** The discussion needed to resolve conflict expands people's awareness of the situation, giving them an insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining those of other people.
- 2. Increased group cohesion:** When conflict is resolved effectively, team members can develop stronger mutual respect, and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.
- 3. Improved self-knowledge:** Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.

However, if conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. Conflicting goals can quickly turn into:

- 1. personal dislike**
  - 2. Teamwork breaks down**
  - 3. talent is wasted**
- as people disengage from their work. And it's easy to end up in a vicious downward spiral of negativity and recrimination. If you're to keep your team or organization working effectively, you need to stop this downward spiral as soon as you can. To do this, it helps to understand two of the theories that lie behind effective conflict resolution:

## Understanding the Theory: Conflict Styles

In the 1970s Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann identified five main styles of dealing with conflict that vary in their degrees of cooperativeness and assertiveness. They argued that people typically have a preferred conflict resolution style. However they also noted that different styles were most useful in different situations. They developed the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) which helps you to identify which style you tend towards when conflict arises.

Thomas and Kilmann's styles are:

- 1. Competitive:** People who tend towards a competitive style take a firm stand, and know what they want. They usually operate from a position of power, drawn from things like position, rank, expertise, or persuasive ability. This style can be useful when there is an emergency and a decision needs to be

make fast; when the decision is unpopular; or when defending against someone who is trying to exploit the situation selfishly. However it can leave people feeling bruised, unsatisfied and resentful when used in less urgent situations.

**2. Collaborative:** People tending towards a collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved. These people can be highly assertive but unlike the competitor, they cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. This style is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution; when there have been previous conflicts in the group; or when the situation is too important for a simple trade-off.

**3. Compromising:** People who prefer a compromising style try to find a solution that will at least partially satisfy everyone. Everyone is expected to give up something, and the compromiser him- or herself also expects to relinquish something. Compromise is useful when the cost of conflict is higher than the cost of losing ground, when equal strength opponents are at a standstill and when there is a deadline looming.

**4. Accommodating:** This style indicates a willingness to meet the needs of others at the expense of the person's own needs. The accommodator often knows when to give in to others, but can be persuaded to surrender a position even when it is not warranted. This person is not assertive but is highly cooperative. Accommodation is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party, when peace is more valuable than winning, or when you want to be in a position to collect on this "favor" you gave. However people may not return favors, and overall this approach is unlikely to give the best outcomes.

**5. Avoiding:** People tending towards this style seek to evade the conflict entirely. This style is typified by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. It can be appropriate when victory is impossible, when the controversy is trivial, or when someone else is in a better position to solve the problem. However in many situations this is a weak and ineffective approach to take.

Once you understand the different styles, you can use them to think about the most appropriate approach (or mixture of approaches) for the situation you're in. You can also think about your own instinctive approach, and learn how you need to change this if necessary.

**Ideally you can adopt an approach that meets the situation, resolves the problem, respects people's legitimate interests, and mends damaged working relationships.**

## Understanding The Theory: The "Interest-Based Relational Approach"

The second theory is commonly referred to as the "Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach". This type of conflict resolution respects individual differences while helping people avoid becoming too entrenched in a fixed position.

In resolving conflict using this approach, you follow these rules:

**1. Make sure that good relationships are the first priority:** As far as possible, make sure that you treat the other calmly and that you try to build mutual respect. Do your best to be courteous to one-another and remain constructive under pressure.

**2. Keep people and problems separate:** Recognize that in many cases the other person is not just "being difficult" – real and valid differences can lie behind conflictive positions. By separating the problem from the person, real issues can be debated without damaging working relationships. Pay attention to the interests that are being presented: By listening carefully you'll most-likely understand why the person is adopting his or her position.

**3. Listen first; talk second:** To solve a problem effectively you have to understand where the other person is coming from before defending your own position.

**4. Set out the "Facts":** Agree and establish the objective, observable elements that will have an impact on the decision.

**5. Explore options together:** Be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you can get to this idea jointly.

By following these rules, you can often keep contentious discussions positive and constructive. This helps to prevent the antagonism and dislike which so-often causes conflict to spin out of control.

## Using the Tool: A Conflict Resolution Process

Based on these approaches, a starting point for dealing with conflict is to identify the overriding conflict style employed by yourself, your team or your organization.

Over time, people's conflict management styles tend to mesh, and a "right" way to solve conflict emerges. It's good to recognize when this style can be used effectively, however make sure that people understand that different styles may suit different situations.

Look at the circumstances, and think about the style that may be appropriate.

Then use the process below to resolve the conflict:

### Step One: Set the Scene

Make sure that people understand that the conflict may be a mutual problem, which may be best resolved through discussion and negotiation rather than through raw aggression.

If you are involved in the conflict, emphasize the fact that you are presenting your perception of the problem. Use active listening skills to ensure you hear and understand other's positions and perceptions

**Use active listening skills to ensure you hear and understand other's positions and perceptions.**

1. Restate.
2. Paraphrase.

Summarize and make sure that when you talk, you're using an adult, assertive approach rather than a submissive or aggressive style.

### Step Two: Gather Information

Here you are trying to get to the underlying interests, needs, and concerns. Ask for the other person's viewpoint and confirm that you respect his or her opinion and need his or her cooperation to solve the problem.

Try to understand his or her motivations and goals, and see how your actions may be affecting these. Also, try to understand the conflict in objective terms: Is it affecting work performance? damaging the delivery to the client? disrupting team work? hampering decision-making? or so on. Be sure to focus on work issues and leave personalities out of the discussion.

**Listen with empathy and see the conflict from the other person's point of view.**

Identify issues clearly and concisely.

Use "I" statements.

Remain flexible.

Clarify feelings.

## Step Three: Agree the Problem

This sounds like an obvious step, but often different underlying needs, interests and goals can cause people to perceive problems very differently. You'll need to agree the problems that you are trying to solve before you'll find a mutually acceptable solution.

Sometimes different people will see different but interlocking problems – if you can't reach a common perception of the problem, then at the very least, you need to understand what the other person sees as the problem.

## Step Four: Brainstorm Possible Solutions

If everyone is going to feel satisfied with the resolution, it will help if everyone has had fair input in generating solutions. Brainstorm possible solutions, and be open to all ideas, including ones you never considered before.

## Step Five: Negotiate a Solution

By this stage, the conflict may be resolved: Both sides may better understand the position of the other, and a mutually satisfactory solution may be clear to all.

However you may also have uncovered real differences between your positions. This is where a technique like win-win negotiation can be useful to find a solution that, at least to some extent, satisfies everyone.

**There are three guiding principles here: Be Calm, Be Patient, Have Respect.**

## Conflict Resolution Skills

### BUILDING THE SKILLS THAT CAN TURN CONFLICTS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

Conflict is a normal and necessary part of healthy relationships. After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything at all times. Therefore, learning how to deal with conflict—rather than avoiding it—is crucial.

When conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship. But when handled in a respectful and positive way, conflict provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people. By learning the skills you need for successful conflict resolution, you can face disagreements with confidence and keep your personal and professional relationships strong and growing.

#### **Understanding conflict in relationships**

Conflict arises from differences. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences look trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is at the core of the problem, such as a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy.

#### **Conflicts arise from differing needs**

Everyone needs to feel understood, nurtured, and supported, but the ways in which these needs are met vary widely. Differing needs for feeling comfortable and safe create some of the most severe challenges in our personal and professional relationships.

Think about the conflicting need for safety and continuity versus the need to explore and take risks. You frequently see this conflict between toddlers and their parents. The child's need is to explore, so the street or the cliff meets a need. But the parents' need is to protect the child's safety, so limiting exploration becomes a bone of contention between them.

It is important to acknowledge that both parties' needs play important roles in the long-term success of most relationships, and each deserves respect and consideration. In personal relationships, a lack of understanding about differing needs can result in distance, arguments, and break-ups. In workplace conflicts, differing needs are often at the heart of bitter disputes. When you can recognize the legitimacy of conflicting needs and become willing to examine them in an environment of compassionate understanding, it opens pathways to creative problem solving, team building, and improved relationships.

## Conflict 101

1. A conflict is more than just a disagreement. It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real).
2. Conflicts continue to fester when ignored. Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them. We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.
3. Conflicts trigger strong emotions. If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully.
4. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth. When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure, knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

## Conflict may feel more threatening to you than it really is

Do you fear conflict or avoid it at all costs? If your perception of conflict comes from frightening or painful memories from previous unhealthy relationships or your early childhood, you may expect all present-day disagreements to end badly. You may view conflict in relationships as demoralizing, humiliating, dangerous, and something to fear. If your early life experiences also left you feeling out of control and powerless, conflict may even be traumatizing for you.

If you view conflict as dangerous, it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you go into a conflict situation already feeling extremely threatened, it's tough to deal with the problem at hand in a healthy way. Instead, you are more likely to shut down or blow up in anger.

Healthy and unhealthy ways of managing and resolving conflict	
Unhealthy responses to conflict:	Healthy responses to conflict
1. An inability to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person Explosive, angry, hurtful, and resentful reactions	1. The capacity to recognize and respond to the things that matter to the other person Calm, non-defensive, and respectful reactions
2. The withdrawal of love, resulting in rejection, isolation, shaming, and fear of abandonment	2. A readiness to forgive and forget, and to move past the conflict without holding resentments or anger
3. An inability to compromise or see the other person's side	3. The ability to seek compromise and avoid punishing
4. The fear and avoidance of conflict; the expectation of bad outcomes	4. A belief that facing conflict head is the best thing for both sides

**Successful conflict resolution depends on your ability to regulate stress and your emotions. Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments,**

**and break-ups. But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases our understanding of another, builds trust, and strengthens our relationship bonds.**

If you are out of touch with your feelings or so stressed that you can only pay attention to a limited number of emotions, you won't be able to understand your own needs. If you don't understand your needs, you will have a hard time communicating with others and staying in touch with what is really troubling you. For example, couples often argue about petty differences—the way she hangs the towels, the way he parts his hair—rather than what is really bothering them.

**The ability to successfully resolve conflict depends on your ability to:**

1. **Manage stress quickly while remaining alert and calm.** By staying calm, you can accurately read and interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.
2. **Control your emotions and behavior.** When you're in control of your emotions, you can communicate your needs without threatening, frightening, or punishing others.
3. **Pay attention to the feelings being expressed as well as the spoken words of others.**
4. **Be aware of and respectful of differences.** By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, you can resolve the problem faster.

## Common Responses when Overwhelmed by Stress

Psychologist Connie Lillas uses a driving analogy to describe the three most common ways people respond when they're overwhelmed by stress:

1. **Foot on the gas.** An angry or agitated stress response. You're heated, keyed up, overly emotional, and unable to sit still. – **like a mad Grizzly Bear**
2. **Foot on the brake.** A withdrawn or depressed stress response. You shut down, space out, and show very little energy or emotion. – **like a scared rabbit**
3. **Foot on both gas and brake.** A tense and frozen stress response. You "freeze" under pressure and can't do anything. You look paralyzed, but under the surface you're extremely agitated. **Like a possum**
4. **Goal is to be a golden Lab** (man's best friend – the dog)

**Stress interferes with the ability to resolve conflict by limiting your ability to:**

1. Accurately read another person's nonverbal communication.
2. Hear what someone is really saying.
3. Be aware of your own feelings.
4. Be in touch with your deep-rooted needs.
5. Communicate your needs clearly.

## Tips for managing and resolving conflict

Managing and resolving conflict requires the ability to quickly reduce stress and bring your emotions into balance. You can ensure that the process is as positive as possible by sticking to the following conflict resolution guidelines:

1. **Listen for what is felt as well as said.** When we listen we connect more deeply to our own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Listening in this way also strengthens us, informs us, and makes it easier for others to hear us.
2. **Make conflict resolution the priority rather than winning** or "being right." Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your first priority.
3. **Be respectful of the other person and his or her viewpoint.**

4. **Focus on the present.** If you're holding on to old hurts and resentments, your ability to see the reality of the current situation will be impaired. Rather than looking to the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the here-and-now to solve the problem.
5. **Pick your battles.** Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worthy of your time and energy. Maybe you don't want to surrender a parking space if you've been circling for 15 minutes. But if there are dozens of spots, arguing over a single space isn't worth it.
6. **Be willing to forgive.** Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can never compensate for our losses and only adds to our injury by further depleting and draining our lives.
7. **Know when to let something go.** If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move

## Short Answer

1. Look on the back page of this package to find this answer. What Number is conflict resolution on the list of 40 assets
  
2. What three benefits do you gain from going through the conflict resolution process
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
3. What are the five main styles of dealing with conflict
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
4. What are the 5 rules that you incorporate when employing the "Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach".
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.

5. What are the 5 steps to resolving a conflict

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

6. What are two things that you must do that indicate you are actively listening

- a.
- b.

7. When gathering information what should you listen with ?

8. What three guiding principles should guide us through the 5 step process of conflict resolution

- a.
- b.
- c.

9. What are 4 unhealthy responses to stress

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.



10. What are 4 common responses when overwhelmed by stress and indicate what animal is liken to each response

a.

b.

c.

d.

11. List 4 ways that stress interferes with your ability to resolve conflict ?

a.

b.

c.

d.

12. What are 7 tips for managing and resolve conflict

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

13. Pick 2 External assets and tell me why you think they would help you deal with conflict in a better way. (refer to 40 developmental Assets chart)

a.

b.

14. Pick 2 Internal assets and tell me why you think they would help you deal with conflict in better way. (refer to 40 developmental Assets chart)

a.

b.