

Weekly WorkPlace Wisdom

A Weekly Service To The Business Community From Saddleback Church

RESOLVING CONFLICT IN YOUR OFFICE

By Rick Warren

Since God made each of us unique, conflict with people you work with is inevitable--even with those you like! My needs, interests, temperament, and background are different from yours so we shouldn't be surprised when we see things differently. I believe conflict resolution should be a mandatory course in school. Unfortunately it isn't, so most people never learn the skills needed to resolve conflict. Or worse, they learn from a poor role model. How do **you** normally react to conflict? There are five common reactions:

- **"MY WAY"** - I assert my will until you give in. My way is the only way. I'm always right and must always win.
- **"NO WAY"** - I withdraw. I avoid conflict at all costs. I ignore the problem. Nothing is ever resolved.
- **"YOUR WAY"**- I give in. I roll over and play dead. I'm passive and peaceful but also very frustrated.
- **"HALF-WAY"**- We compromise. I win some and lose some. But this is still not the best approach.
- **"OUR WAY"** - I care about our relationship and your needs too. So we work out mutual goals. *The Bible gives this practical advice for resolving conflict:*

1. **ANALYZE THE PROBLEM.** *"Take the log out of your own eye first and then you'll be able to see and take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3).* Before accusing, ask yourself, "How much of this is my fault?"
2. **SCHEDULE A PEACE CONFERENCE.** *"If your brother has something against you...go at once to make peace with your brother..." (Matthew 5:23).* Think through what is the best time and place for this. Pray and ask God to help you say the right things in the meeting.
3. **AGREE ON THESE BASIC GROUND RULES:**
 - No condemning: "You always...never...all your fault..."
 - No commanding: Power plays are for immature people.
 - No condescending: Don't belittle or play psychologist.
 - No confusing: Bringing up unrelated issues/diversions.
"Speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15)
4. **STAY WITH IT UNTIL YOU RESOLVE IT.**
Don't walk out. Finish your fights. Resolution is never easy. It takes courage to hang in there and work it out. *"We will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9)*
Until Next Week...

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you need to do to further grow in this area so that you are a role model?
2. What has been your typical approach to conflict resolution and what will you do so that you don't fall into that old pattern?
3. What support can your workplace small group provide to you?