

## 4 Fundamental Principles to Resolve Conflict Successfully

1. **Never create an enemy.** Where there is an enemy, transform that person into an ally and partner. This is a fundamental principle of transactional analysis, as expressed by Eric Berne's phrase "I'm OK, You're OK." This idea is both a central truth and a fundamental tool in communicating mutual respect, positive regard, and cooperation. Every transaction must carry the power of this message even when using strong, limit-setting boundaries referred to as "tough love."
2. **The person is never the problem.** You Separate the person from the problem and focus on the issues to be resolve, not the individual. This is a basic principle to avoid escalations in the conflict resolution process. It can be counterintuitive because our culture drives the "demonizing" individuals in the political and religious arena, in children's literature, and in Hollywood films. It is hardly surprising then that we tend to personalize a conflict at work or at home unless we have learned another model from strong secure bases. Often, the thinking is that if only we can get rid of the person, then everything will be okay. This is a mind-set challenge and, once mastered, will prevent us from being taken hostage in the emotion of a conflict.

It is all too easy to view someone who is different from us in any way—be it appearance, language, culture, attitude, or approach—as a potential threat or enemy. This is a poor base for dialogue and is likely to lead to an emotional standoff. As our businesses are increasingly global and our workplaces and cities become more and more diverse, the possibilities for misunderstanding are immense. It is easy for a person to feel attacked or threatened, and there fore every effort must be made to separate the person from the problem.

3. **Maintain a sincere desire to help the other person get what he or she wants or needs.** Accepting It is all too easy to become hostages to ourselves by overemphasizing what we want without first communicating a sincere and authentic desire to help the other. We must maintain the bond with the other person in every transaction, verbal and nonverbal, by showing interest in what they want as well as what we want. Saying no or putting the fish on the table can be done as part of showing interest in the other person's wants or needs. Sometime the underlying battle in the conflict is to get the detached manager to show appropriate and authentic interest in the well-being of team members. The independent loners must learn to bond and show interest in people if they want to e effective leaders.
4. **Never be hijacked by attacks and intense emotions.** Never take aggressive words or actions personally. Keep your thoughts clear and never lose sight of the goal. When you feel like withdrawing or attacking someone, quickly cancel that thought in your mind's eye and replace it with a desire to help or a desire to carry on in your personal and professional role. Have you ever done or said something that you regretted later? You were quite simply taken hostage.