

## Need To Resolve A Conflict? Use Stephen Covey's 7 Habits!

1. **Be proactive:** Solving a problem does not mean just reacting AFTER the problem takes place. Why wait for a problem to occur? Be proactive to prevent it or eliminate it. Do what you can to make sure problems do not occur in the first place. Try to identify the cause of a potential problem, and work hard to eliminate or change it.

Remember, being a proactive problem solver means... I am a responsible person. I take initiative. I choose my actions, attitudes, and moods. I do not blame others for my wrong actions.

2. **Begin with the end in mind:** Solving problems is not about winning or losing or being right or wrong. 99% of the time, it is about clearing up a misunderstanding. So when it comes to solving a problem, the "end" that we need to keep in mind is the **relationship** with the person with whom you are having the problem. So as you are resolving a conflict, please remember to treat the person with respect, empathy, and kindness so you still have a positive friendship/relationship with the person at the end of the conversation.

Remember, being a leader who begins with the end in mind means... I am careful to look for ways to be a good citizen. I am an important part of my school and classroom. I contribute to my school and classroom's safety and positive environment.

3. **Put first things first:** The first step in any conflict resolution is to define the actual problem. Did you know that a problem well-defined is half-way solved? For example, let's say you saw your friend move your lunchbox that was placed by your classroom and now you are feeling mad. The first thing to do is to go and ask your friend why he/she moved the lunchbox. You may learn that your friend saw that the lunchbox was in a trail of ants and didn't want your lunchbox to get infested. Suddenly, your anger may transform into appreciation.

Remember, being a problem solver that puts first things first means... I spend my time on things that are most important. In times of conflict resolution, this means that I do not spend my time saying bad things about others, spreading rumors, or gossiping about others. Instead it means that I spend my time getting the facts and asking for help when I need it.

4. **Think win-win:** When conflicts arise, do not focus on who is to blame or "who did it." You don't need to put others down in order to get what you want. Thinking win-win means you just can't insist on getting your way without thinking about other people's feelings. And don't get jealous when something good happens to someone close to you. Instead, use your proactive communication skills and empathic listening skills to brainstorm a solution to the problem at hand.

Remember, being a problem solver who thinks of win-wins means... I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. Everyone's feelings are important. When conflicts arise, I look for third alternatives.

5. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood:** One thing is simple... if you do not understand the problem, it is very hard to try to solve it. So try your best to stay calm and ask questions that will help you better understand the problem.

Remember, being a problem solver who seeks to understand, THEN to be understood means... I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking.

6. **Synergize:** Approach a problem as if everyone involved is on the same team. It is interesting that the letter "I" is not used to spell TEAM. The four letters in the word team can stand for "Together Everyone Achieves More." When conflicts are resolved in anger and inappropriate actions, time will pass and you may actually forget what the conflict is about, but the person you are having a problem with will always remember how you treated them. Synergizing means it is not your way or my way, but a better way, a higher way.

Remember, being a problem solver who synergizes means... I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different than me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems because I know that by teaming with others we can create better solutions than anyone of us can alone. I am humble.

7. **Sharpen the saw:** Spending time with family and friends is a very important part of the day. Do your best to make that time a positive and fun time. Conflicts are a natural part of relationships. When conflicts or problems come up, use the situation as an opportunity to reflect, grow, or improve. Not having skills to solve a problem can be very stressful for children and adults. Use the 7 Habits to help you solve problems. They are a recipe for success! Finally, keep in mind that nobody is perfect. We all have weaknesses and faults. Sharpening the saw is about finding balance in your body, mind, heart and soul. So use your body, mind, heart, and soul to find the good in people rather than judging or criticizing others.

Remember, being a problem solver who sharpen the saw means... I spend time with family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I find meaningful ways to help others.