

# Seven Steps for Resolving Conflict

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Downloaded 16 March 2006 from: [http://www.christianwomentoday.com/womenmen/kassian\\_conflict.html](http://www.christianwomentoday.com/womenmen/kassian_conflict.html)

**Conflict is inevitable.** If you manage conflict poorly, your relationships will suffer. If you manage conflict well, you'll help them grow healthy and strong. Here are steps to RESOLVE conflict.

**1. R - Remain calm:** The number one rule for resolving conflict is to remain calm and controlled throughout the process. Rash, uncontrolled speech is damaging speech. Once spoken, words can never be retracted.

**2. E - Echo and inquire:** The second step in conflict resolution is to echo and inquire to make sure we understand the other person's meaning and motivation. Most conflicts escalate because we jump to conclusions without checking to see if our perception is accurate. Take your time. There will be plenty of opportunity to respond after you understand. Remember, understanding does not equal assent. Echo. Inquire. Listen with humble, open ears. Make it your aim for the other person to be satisfied that you understand what they want.

**3. S - State position:** After you have verified that you understand the other person's position, state your own position clearly. Be personal, honest and direct. You may want to inquire to find out how the other person is interpreting your message.

**4. O - Objectify crux:** When both parties understand each other, identify the crux of the conflict. Is the conflict about particulars, process, purpose or principle? Objectify the crux of the conflict with a summary statement: "It seems that we are at odds about..."

**5. L - List alternatives:** Ask the other person to help you come up with some alternative solutions. Ask, "What are some ways we can address both of our concerns?" or "What do you think we should do about this situation?" Be creative. Try to come up with a number of options.

**6. V - Validate needs:** Choose the solution that validates the needs of both parties - the "win-win" scenario. Remember, the worst way to close a conflict is to remain deadlocked in competition. The best way to close it is to cooperate. Conceding and converging also close the conflict door, but leave one or both parties with unmet needs.

**7. E - Establish a plan:** Finally, establish a plan and follow through on it. Support the decision with your attitude as well as your actions.