

**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL

# RESOLVING CONFLICT

The Leadership  
Excellence Series



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**





## RESOLVING **CONFLICT**

The Leadership  
Excellence Series

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Item 321A



**WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE**

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# THE LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE SERIES

Toastmasters International's *The Leadership Excellence Series* is a set of presentations addressing the subject of leadership. Members will learn about the skills they will need to be successful leaders inside and outside of Toastmasters.

Presentations in the *The Leadership Excellence Series* may be offered by any club member and require 10 to 15 minutes to present.

## CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

"Resolving Conflict" discusses why conflict occurs and what a leader can do to resolve it. This product consists of four parts:

- ▶ Definition and explanation of the presentation
- ▶ Guidelines for your introduction to the audience
- ▶ Outline for the development of your speech
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation

### ***In Your Own Words***

The outline is not a script and should not be read word-for-word. Instead, use the document as a guide for presenting the material in your own words and with your own narrative style. The outline is a structure on which to build your presentation. Use the points of the outline to develop your speech, but be the author of your own oration.

Here are some tips on using this outline to develop and deliver your presentation:

- ▶ Study the outline carefully. Familiarize yourself with the general structure. Preparation is the key to a successful presentation.
- ▶ Use the outline to build your own speech using your own words. Prepare a set of notes indicating where you wish to pause, gesture, or add special verbal emphasis. Highlight key words or sentences to help you present the material most effectively.
- ▶ Be expressive when delivering your speech. Use all of the presentation skills you have learned as a Toastmaster including vocal variety and gestures.

## USING VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY

Visual aids add interest to any presentation and help your audience retain information. If you plan to use the PowerPoint slides for this presentation as visual aids, make sure you have the equipment and technology needed to share the slides with your audience. It is recommended that you test your technology and equipment in advance. In the outline, there are indications for placement of the PowerPoint slides. Each is numbered. For example, V1 refers to the first visual.

Please note that the first slide in the PowerPoint show is a title slide and is not included in this numbering system.

If your presentation is taking place in a fully in-person format but you do not have the equipment needed to share the PowerPoint, you could create a flip chart using the visuals from the slides.

Follow these tips when using visual aids in an in-person setting:

- ▶ Set them up and test them before the meeting begins. Place them so they are easily visible to listeners.
- ▶ Bring backup equipment in case your technology fails.
- ▶ Display your visuals only when they are needed. If you are using a flip chart, flip the page back out of view when you are finished with it.
- ▶ Remember not to stand between the screen or flip chart and your audience or you will block their view.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with your listeners. If you must turn your back to point out something, pause as you point it out, and then resume speaking only after you are once again facing your audience.

Follow these tips when using visuals in the online or hybrid setting:

- ▶ Share your screen. Be sure your PowerPoint presentation is visible in the room and on the screens of those members participating from another location.
- ▶ Consider having someone else share the visuals so you can maintain eye contact with the camera.
- ▶ Consider an online whiteboard when sharing information, as it will be visible to both members in the room and those participating online.
- ▶ Consider enlisting the assistance of a partner to join the meeting on their computer in the room with you so that they can facilitate the remote attendees and monitor what is happening online. This is a good practice for all hybrid meetings.
- ▶ Test your online platform and technology before the meeting begins. Have an online participant confirm they can see everything as expected.
- ▶ Forgo visual aids altogether if you cannot be sure they will work for everyone in attendance.
- ▶ Share any handouts or other documents you use as part of your presentation with all attendees in advance or via the chat function of your meeting app so that all participants have access to them at the same time.

## **BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

By giving this presentation, you will be helping your club build excellence and move toward the possibility of being a Distinguished club—or reaching an even greater Distinguished status.

While this is an outlined presentation, it still provides a good opportunity for you to further practice speaking and build your presentation skills.

# RESOLVING CONFLICT

## Introducing the Presenter

### TIPS FOR THE PRESENTER: WRITE YOUR INTRODUCTION

All prepared speeches in Toastmasters require an introduction. A proper introduction of you and your speech is important to the success of your presentation. Use the following as a guide in writing your introduction:

- ▶ Include the purpose of *The Leadership Excellence Series*.
- ▶ Explain why “Resolving Conflict” is important for a Toastmasters club, stating the purpose and one or more objectives of your presentation.
- ▶ Incorporate some background about yourself.
- ▶ Read *When You’re the Introducer* in *A Toastmaster Wears Many Hats* (Item 1167D) for further detail on a proper introduction.
- ▶ Give your finished introduction to the person who will be introducing you.

### TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCER

- ▶ Ask the presenter any clarifying questions.
- ▶ Rehearse the introduction.

# RESOLVING CONFLICT

## Outline

### INTRODUCTION:

Conflict is a part of life. People will always have differences. In the workplace, people can disagree over anything, such as policies, decisions, ideas, and strategies. Even in a Toastmasters club, members can have disagreements over programming, meeting assignments, speeches, and people.

Conflict is not always bad. When it is addressed and resolved, conflict often leads to positive changes, increased productivity, better decisions, innovation, and bonding among people. Adversely, unresolved conflict can lead to poor productivity, low morale, distrust, and failure. A leader must know how to handle conflict.

### DEFINITIONS

**Conflict:** What you get when two or more people have differences, real or perceived, that are not resolved.

**Conflict Resolution:** What we do to identify and address conflict in a mature and respectful way.

### TYPES OF CONFLICT

Conflict may occur for four reasons:

1. **Contentious Personalities.** A person's disposition or personality is a complex and complicated matter; parenting, culture, community, experiences, and other outside influences determine how an individual is shaped. Sometimes, individuals simply do not like each other and clash. The following personalities can be categorized as annoying, bothersome, or difficult to work with:
  - A "know-it-all"
  - An argumentative individual
  - A "people pleaser"
  - A narcissist (ego-maniac)
  - A self-loather
2. **Misunderstanding.** Keep in mind that many conflicts may just be misunderstandings. Due to perceptions, you may find that one or more of the parties involved do not have all the facts about the situation. Once everyone knows the facts, the misunderstanding disappears.
3. **Issues.** Perhaps team members' opinions, objectives, or preferences about a situation differ, or they have different expectations. A multitude of issues can arise between individuals that easily halt a working relationship and alter the social atmosphere of any group.

V1

V2

V3

4. **Styles of Leadership.** Every leader has a particular way they lead. Every team member, employee, or follower preferentially responds to a particular method of leadership. Leaders can conflict with team members, just as much as leaders can conflict with other leaders due to their style of leadership. Differing leadership styles can create conflict for any individual or group. Here are four styles of leadership:

- Authoritarian
- Democratic
- Charismatic
- Passive

V4

## METHODS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

Do not let a conflict between team members degenerate into refusals to communicate or work with one another, name-calling, or even worse. Remind team members that they are not required to like each other, but you do expect them to put aside their personal differences and focus on achieving the team's goal. If a conflict does indeed exist, there are a number of ways to approach it:

1. **Ignore it.** In some situations, the issue may not be important and it may be best to ignore it. Often, though, this method does not work. The conflict does not go away; it often festers.
2. **Smooth it over.** This method is appropriate when the issues are more important to the parties involved than they are to you and the team's goals. This method preserves harmony and goodwill.
3. **Force.** A leader uses power to resolve differences. This method is best used when an emergency requires a quick decision. However, it usually results in "winners" and "losers," and losers can be resentful.
4. **Compromise.** Each party makes a major concession to arrive at a solution. Since both parties lose something, they may have less support for the compromise solution.
5. **Collaboration.** This is a good way to resolve conflict. Each side recognizes the other's needs as legitimate and important and acknowledges their ability and expertise. They work together to arrive at an agreement that will resolve the conflict. When each party wins, they have greater commitment to the solution and no resentment or distrust.

V5

## FACILITATE COLLABORATION

Collaboration offers a framework that will result in a win-win situation. You can facilitate the collaboration process by following these seven steps:

1. **Find the root cause.** Sometimes symptoms can mask the real problem or issue. Your goal is to find the root cause. Keep the discussion focused, and do not let it digress. Once the issues have been determined, focus on solutions not blame.
2. **Allow all parties to speak.** In any effort to resolve conflict, open communication is important. Allow all parties to express their views uninterrupted. You also have the opportunity to discuss how the conflict is:
  - Affecting team members' performance
  - Preventing the team from achieving its goals

### **A Word of Caution**

Since emotions often intensify in a conflict situation, do not allow them to consume the parties involved. Keep a respectful, empathetic, and caring attitude toward everyone. Do not let the discussion dissolve into accusations and blame or debates about who is right or wrong.

3. **Encourage all parties to listen.** As team members air their views and ideas, encourage them to listen intently to one another. Ask questions if needed. By listening, the position of each party will be made known, which will help in the efforts to resolve the conflict.
4. **Identify areas of disagreement.** Help both parties determine their key differences and discuss them to find the real issue or problem. Previous disagreements and behaviors should not be brought up. Limit the discussion to the facts and what is happening now in the present situation.
5. **Identify areas of agreement.** Once everyone has spoken, help them find and discuss areas they agree on, such as:
  - Common goals
  - Interests
  - Values
6. **Search for solutions.** Everyone works together to develop a list of possible solutions.
7. **Reach a consensus,** by:
  - Reviewing the list of possible solutions
  - Evaluating each suggestion
  - Reaching a consensus on the best one

### **THE BRAINSTORMING METHOD**

As the team develops its list of possible solutions, it may want to try the brainstorming method. In brainstorming:

- ▶ All ideas are written down as they are generated, without discussion or evaluation.
- ▶ After the ideas are exhausted, team members return to the first item on the list and discuss it, evaluating its positive and negative aspects. (This is done for each item on the list.)
- ▶ Eventually, the list is narrowed to the idea that best resolves the problem.

### **CONCLUSION**

Whenever people are working together closely, conflict will occur. Differences in perspective, skill, knowledge levels, goals, communication styles, and expectations all can create conflict. View conflict as an opportunity to solve team problems and keep everyone focused on team goals. Use your leadership skills to make sure the discussion focuses on issues and the search for solutions that will be acceptable to everyone. When everyone wins, the team will be able to focus on its work and achieve its goals. A leader must resolve conflict.

V6

V7

V8

V9



## Evaluation Guide

Evaluator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ How effective was the speaker's introduction in helping the audience understand the purpose of *The Leadership Excellence Series* and the presentation itself?
- ▶ Was the presenter adequately prepared? How heavily did the presenter rely on notes?
- ▶ How did the speaker use vocal variety to enhance this presentation?
- ▶ What other techniques did the speaker use to personalize and augment the presentation? Were they effective? How?
- ▶ Did the speaker display the visuals smoothly and at the appropriate times? How could the speaker improve?
- ▶ What aspect of the speaker's presentation style did you find unique? Why?
- ▶ Did the speaker present the material clearly and simply so audience members could easily use the information to improve their own leadership skills?
- ▶ What could the speaker have done differently to make the presentation more effective?
- ▶ What did you like about the presentation?



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