

Why Do You Crumple Under the Pressure of Conflict? Three Areas to Improve



It never fails, conflict always seems to be on the horizon when things are running smoothly, whether it is the annoying customer who grabs the last item right from your reach, or the coworker who manipulates their way into a promotion you deserved.

Your reaction to these conflicts, in many ways, determines the course of your future.

In a positive light, conflict pushes you forward, stretches your character, and propels you toward success. However, conflict often reveals inner character traits that can damage your reputation.

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often leads with this question: "What feels good, sounds true, and seems beneficial to me?" writes Ken Sande, in his book *The Peace Maker*. Unfortunately, this thought process is extremely biased. If you justify

yourself based on your own feelings and desires, you will nearly always see yourself as a self-righteous victim.

However, you probably aren't really that perfect and this self-focus leads one to respond quickly and impulsively, fueled by self-benefit.

Some individuals respond aggressively, others passively, as they determine their response to potential conflict.

What Can I Gain?

This is an aggressive response. Perhaps you are competing against coworkers to gain a particular sales client. You can almost taste the sweetness of a large commission. You may use forms of manipulation or dominance in order to elbow out your competition.

While this fight seems self-benefiting, it often blinds you to the fact that your gain might cause others to fail. Often, it misses the big picture.

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What Can I Keep?

This is a protective response, fluctuating between an aggressive or passive attitude. Perhaps you are fighting to keep the house after a divorce because it feels good knowing you can keep your familiar surroundings. Or perhaps you are desperate to keep a relationship going because the thought of being single again is frightening.

The problem with this attitude is that it shields you from seeing other possibilities. When you dig in your heels and refuse to move away from your comfort zone, you may fail to realize that you may be better protected outside your walls of familiarity.

What Can I Avoid?

Thinking "avoid" is a passive response. Perhaps your spouse discovers hints of an inappropriate encounter you had with a coworker. Your first impulse might be to divert the conversation, downplay the accusation, or simply discredit the evidence. At all costs, your efforts work toward avoiding conflict.

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Whether or not the evidence is true, by avoiding the conflict, you are allowing uncertain emotions to fester over time, and a history of unresolved conflict sets the

stage for bitterness in the future.

Better yet: Ask the right question

Each of three approaches is not wrong per se. They are fight-or-flight responses, hard-wired into the human response.

The key to improving these response styles is to pause and recognize the common denominator. The basic question, "What feels good, sounds true, and seems beneficial to me?"

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has one major flaw: it is based solely on you, the individual. However, society is not built upon individuals. It is built upon a collective harmony of people.

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The leading question, then, should be rephrased: "What feels good, sounds true, and seems beneficial to us?" Finding this answer may require some give-and-take. It may be an awkward, painful process. But by working toward this answer collectively, you will likely strengthen your individual character and also forge a stronger and more effective bond between yourself and others.

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Where Can I Find Out More?

If you are interested in finding out more about performing at your best and want to explore further or have questions – Get in touch and let's set up a time to talk. Kevin Onarecker
951.894.9094 [Email Me](#)