

3 Steps to Resolving Conflict Within Your Family

The 'Perspective Triangle Strategy'

I'm sure you've noticed that we have the most intense conflicts at home, within our family, with the people closest to us. They are the conflicts that bring us the most pain, make us suffer, and distress us.

Whether it's yet another shouting match with your teenage child or a disagreement with your spouse, conflicts at home are the most challenging to face because it's so easy to be held hostage by your own emotions.

How then, can we turn a difficult moment at home into an opportunity to build rapport with the people that are dearest to us?

I'm happy to share with you a strategy I've been using in my conflict resolution work, dealing with leaders of death squads, youth involved in gangs, and even terrorists, while doing peacebuilding work around the world.

And of course, I've been using the same skills in my own everyday life, including with my family.

It's a strategy that works and that has helped me to shift from an unproductive state of mind to one that is more resourceful. It helps not to escalate the conflict further, which happens when you let raw emotions take over.

It's what I call the Perspective Triangle Strategy.

When you need to set yourself free from negative emotions, negotiators suggest that you metaphorically "go to the balcony" and look at the conflict with some detachment. It's easier said than done. But the perspective triangle strategy allows you to detach yourself and get some clarity. Clarity is important if you want to resolve conflict and avoid escalation.

Here are the three steps of the Perspective Triangle Strategy.

Step #1: Your Own Perspective

This step requires you to achieve a higher degree of self-awareness. You do so by asking yourself what's really bothering you.

What pain are you trying to avoid? What are you protecting yourself from? Through the emotions and the behavior you are displaying, what needs are you trying to satisfy? Are you

looking to be significant to the other? Or to feel secure? Are you trying to connect with the other, or to feel connected with yourself (especially if you feel down, sad, or depressed)?

Inquire, go deep into yourself, and clarify what the conflict is really about.

In fact, chances are that while the fight is about a specific issue, in reality, you are after something that lies at a deeper level. What is it? Get clarity, and you will be able to come up with different options on how you can get what you really want.

Step #2: The Other's Perspective

This step is fundamental. It requires you to have empathy and through empathy to widen your understanding of what's really going on.

Put yourself in the shoes of the other. For a moment, suspend your own judgment and do your best to see the situation you're confronting from the perspective of the other.

What might influence the position taken by the other? What experiences shape his or her understanding? What's going on in the life of the other? What needs is she or he satisfying with a particular behavior? Is the other looking for significance? Or rather for love and connection? Is it a way to feel secure?

What's the real intention of the other party?

Go deeper and ask yourself: How might the other interpret my own words and behavior? What can I do differently to meet the underlying needs of the other and at the same time satisfy my own?

When you combine the insights you gained from considering your own perspective as well as that of the other, you can have a better understanding of the issue at hand and the ways in which you can resolve it.

Step #3: The Third Party's Perspective

Often, someone from the outside can give us a fresh perspective about a problem you are trying to resolve.

In this step, you put yourself in the position of a third party observing the situation you are involved in.

Imagine you're sitting in a movie theatre, watching your conflict projected on a screen as if it were a movie. What is it all about?

What does the spectator tell you about your own behavior and judgment? What is he or she seeing? What advice does the third party give you? What would she or he tell you about the other's real intention? And so on.

Providing three different lenses, the Perspective Triangle Strategy allows you to get necessary emotional detachment, to gain valuable insight, and to have a broader and deeper understanding of the conflict. It allows you to shift from a victim position to a leadership position. By making you stronger, it empowers you.

Here is what you need to remember:

Change doesn't start with the other. Change begins with you, from within you. In this sense, conflict can always be an opportunity: For better communication, for a dialogue about problems that matter, for a more authentic relationship, for self-growth.

Conflict is part of life. It cannot be avoided. But it can be resolved, transformed, and experienced as a gift from life to become deeper and wiser individuals. Every day you learn a little bit more about how to love, and how to be loved.

Source: https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/turning-point/201506/3-steps-resolving-conflict-within-your-family?fbclid=IwAR3BMt70OX8zJxRdbONGVkrSgXsc3gSN1w_MOUW4cwLS0DbvEbpHCi4WCy0

