



## **Look, Listen, and Resolve Conflict**

During times of change and uncertainty, nerves can fray and tempers can flare. Even in the best of times, managers spend much of their time negotiating—trying to work out agreements with their customers, suppliers, unions, strategic partners, employees, and bosses. If the workplace is in a state of flux, managers may find that they are more often asked to resolve conflict within their work groups.

Just because you've put a team together, doesn't mean there won't be problems or conflicts. Do you have someone on your team who interrupts all the time when other team members are speaking or criticizes opposing views? Are you dealing with an unproductive team member, a person who's constantly late for meetings, someone who resists change, or an employee who's taken on more responsibility than he should have and is floundering?

## **Hold a private meeting**

Whatever the problem, as a manager and a team leader, it's your duty to face the situation and handle it constructively before it demoralizes your team. Dr. Lewis E. Losoncy, author of *The Motivating Team Leader*, recommends having a private meeting with the disruptive employee. Gather any facts you may need before the meeting and set goals for the outcome. After the meeting, follow up to be sure that the employee's behavior is changing.

But what goes on in the conference? How do you keep the discussion positive? Losoncy recommends 10 steps:

1. Start the meeting on a positive note. Point out some of the person's assets, strengths, or resources.
2. Point out the problem clearly. Avoid anger or name calling. Separate the problem from the person.
3. Encourage the employee to speak. Listen for the person's view, feelings, and defenses. Be open to hearing the other side of the story.
4. Convey your understanding and respect for the employee's view and feelings.
5. State your view and why the employee's actions present a problem for the team.
6. Indicate the discipline that will follow if the unacceptable behavior continues.
7. Share very clearly the desirable behavior you now expect.
8. Point out again the specific assets, strengths, and resources the employee has.

For more information, contact your EAP at (866)-723-4332  
Or refer to online resources at [carelonwellbeing.com/cc](https://www.carelonwellbeing.com/cc)



9. Give hope and confidence in the employee's ability to contribute to the team. Mark a new beginning.
10. Thank the employee for his time.

It pays to be prepared. Dr. William Ury, co-founder of Harvard's Program on Negotiation and author of the best-selling books *Getting to Yes* and *Getting Past No*, says, "Most negotiations are won or lost before the talking begins, depending on the quality of preparation. Negotiation, like a good voyage, needs a map."

### **Develop your listening skills**

While it's important to get your message across when meeting one-on-one with your employees, it's also vital that you listen. That doesn't mean waiting for your next chance to speak, planning your next point, or politely nodding while your mind wanders. Good listening involves four steps:

1. Concentrate on the speaker's message and meaning.
2. Look at the speaker.
3. Respond by asking clarifying questions or paraphrasing to verify your understanding of the speaker's meaning.
4. Don't interrupt.