



Board of Peace

CONFLICT RESOLUTION 101: TURNING ARGUMENTS INTO CONVERSATIONS

You don't need a degree in psychology or mediation training to get better at turning arguments into productive conversations. Conflict resolution is a skill that can be learned by understanding and practicing the following core principles.

1. Try to recognize and understand what the conflict is really about, which might be a person's deeper needs such as:
 - To be heard
 - To be valued
 - To be treated fairly
 - To have some control over one's environment
2. Slow down before you respond so you don't say something you may regret
 - Buy time by:
 - Asking a clarifying question
 - Saying you want to think about it for a minute
 - Asking for a short break
3. Listen to the other person to understand where they're coming from (not just to respond)
 - Practice active listening; give the other person your full attention
 - Do not interrupt
 - Reflect back to ensure you understand what the other person is saying
4. Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements, i.e.:
 - "I feel [emotion] when [specific situation] because [the impact it has]" e.g., "I feel frustrated when decisions are made without my input because I end up having to undo work I've already done."
 - Focus on your experience instead of the other person's character or intentions