

### **Understanding the Sources of Conflict**

You can be more effective at managing conflict if you understand the sources of conflict: Goals, Methods, Facts, and Values.

#### **GOALS CONFLICT**

The most common type of conflict is a Goals conflict. I have a goal of watching “American Idol” and you have a goal of watching “Survivor.”

##### **To resolve a Goals conflict you can:**

- Find the common over-arching goal (in this case, being entertained)
- Determine how to prioritize the conflicting goals to meet the over-arching goal

Often the best approach to a Goals conflict is compromise. I can tape “American Idol” and you can watch “Survivor.”

If the other person’s goals are completely at odds with yours, you may not be able to compromise.

If Joe wants to borrow money from me and I don’t want to lend it: I can compromise by lending Joe less money or I can say “no” and accept the consequences.

#### **METHODS CONFLICT**

Once you know a conflict is a Methods conflict, you may realize that the end result is more important than how it is accomplished. At that point the conflict is resolved.

##### **Other ways to resolve Methods conflicts are to:**

- Test each method and choose what works best
- Blend the methods together
- Find an alternative method

#### **FACTS CONFLICT**

A Fact conflict centers on whether the information presented is correct.

##### **To resolve a Fact conflict:**

- Review the facts
- Verify the facts
- Gather additional data

Once you understand you are in a Facts Conflict, your job is to help the other person see that the facts you’ve presented are correct.



## **VALUES CONFLICT**

A Values conflict is the most difficult type of conflict to resolve because values are the core of who we are.

### **To resolve Values conflicts:**

- Seek to understand the other person's values
- Clarify your values
- Know when to quit

You are often better off respecting the other person's values than trying to change them.

But in some cases a behavior change can resolve a Values conflict. For example:

- We can decide not to discuss politics or religion
- We can agree to disagree
- You can agree to support my need to learn new things

Understanding the source of conflict (Goals, Methods, Facts, or Values) can help you be more effective in preserving your relationships, getting what you want, and managing the frustration of facing un-resolvable conflict.