Surviving Conflict

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Why this is important

It does not go away.

Building and keeping relationships
Self esteem
Need for method

Alternative strategies

1. Denying

Good news

Little heightened emotion
Avoid mistakes
Appear calm and unaffected, keep up a front

Potential bad news

Things build up.
No room for change
Spend energy pretending
Sooner or later, you become aware
No improvement
2. Kill-kill—lashing out punitively - physically and/or verbally

*Good news*
- Feel righteous
- Release anger

*Potential bad news*
- Retribution
- Hurt - both ways
- Feel guilty afterwards
- Resolves nothing

3. Smoothing over

*Good news*
- Momentary cooling out
- Maintains appearances
- "Nice"

*Potential bad news*
- Phony
- No improvement
- Can be seen as superficial or unauthentic
- Two-faced

4. Walking away - writing off "bad debts"

*Good news*
- Avoids confrontation
- Feel finished
- Feel superior
- Minimize - change the perspective
**Potential bad news**

- Lost opportunity
- Feeling of failure
- Conflict may not diminish

5. Negotiation

**Good news**

- Improvement - communication, relationship, emotional tone
- Strengthens feelings about self
- Establishes a norm of working things out
- Develops skills

**Potential bad news**

- Takes work
- Scary
- Requires courage and skill
- Requires two-way commitment
- Requires honesty
- Requires follow-through

**The "bottom line"**

All conflict is values based.

Improvement in conflict situations involves taking risks.

Negotiation is harder.

The payoffs are bigger and more long-lasting.

Not to try is a choice.
A Step-by-Step Process

1. Recognize the situation for what it is.
2. Calm yourself.
3. Assess your feelings, assumptions, and needs.
4. Analyze alternative strategies.
5. Commit to what can work in this situation.
6. Make an opening - an offer or request.
7. Stick with the situation.
8. Be open to give and take.
9. Be assertive about your needs.
10. Forgive yourself and the other—silently.