

RESOLVE CONFLICT: EVERYONE CAN WIN

SKILL 1: WIN-WIN – OPPONENTS OR PARTNERS

Podcast time codes:

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How do we make the shift from conflict to co-operation?

This is the first skill number, Win-win – opponents or partners

It's from the book, *Everyone can Win*, about handling conflict constructively.

This audio is about a collaborative approach to difficult decision-making, arguments and strained relations; replacing victory versus defeat with building partnerships for solving mutual problems together.

#

Introduction

This approach to conflict resolution is all about heart. It's about wanting the best for all concerned. It's about committing to fixing our behaviour whenever we've stopped caring – firstly, about ourselves, but also caring about each other. And it goes deeper. If we're not considering the needs of our communities, other nations or even our environment we've got something to fix within ourselves.



We'll need a whole toolkit of conflict resolution skills to do that well. At Conflict Resolution Network, we've worked over many years with people in conflict in all walks of life. Distilling that experience, we've sifted out 12 skills that give practical support to people who choose a collaborative, rather than an oppositional approach. This talk deals with the first one, Win-win – opponents or partners? We'll dive deeply into the others as we move through this series.

First assess your CONFLICT CLUES.

Building a partnership for solving mutual problems together is definitely helped by being very clear about what's going on, that is what level your current conflict is actually at. It's easier to start with the small stuff when you're teaching yourself a new skill.

It starts with your ...

Discomfort

Discomfort is the intuitive feeling that something is wrong, even if you can't put your finger on it. Was it a tone of voice, some body language? Is it your problem anyway? Ask yourself: 'Is there something I could do about this now?'

Your task here is to get your questions answered without making a fuss. It may be as simple as 'Are you OK?' or 'Are we OK?' At other times there may be nothing to do except stay alert, observe. Do not dismiss your feelings, but also remember: don't make a mountain out of a molehill.

Next come Incidents

The clue to an *incident* is usually a minor one. Some apparently trivial thing happens, but it leaves you feeling rather upset or irritated for a while, and then forgotten, until next time. 'Better not make a fuss,' is often the thought at the time - but these little incidents kept simmering in the background. In itself an incident is a simple problem, but if you read it badly, it can grow into a big one!

What can you do? Don't put it aside, clear it up now. Get to know each other better, have a laugh if you can. Make understanding between you deeper. Close the gap rather than letting it widen.



Misunderstanding

And people often misunderstand each other without knowing it. They assume things about a situation, usually because the other person wasn't clear or the climate between you both is not warm enough. Sometimes misunderstanding arises because the situation raises a touchy issue for someone. Your thoughts are likely to keep returning to the same problem.

YOUR TASKS: You might open a discussion to fix the misperceptions using the skills you're learning here or you might need a bit of help from someone else. Good will is essential. Don't let it become ...

Tension

Tension is an obvious clue. Your own tension distorts your perception of another person and most of what they do. The relationship is weighed down with negative attitudes and fixed opinions. You'll hear or use talk peppered with lots of 'they always...' or 'you never...'. The way you feel about the other person or group has become quite toxic. People dwell on the issues, and 'mind chatter' runs riot, even when they are actually saying nothing.

A couple are sitting at their dinner table: he says, "Pass the salt", and she snaps back, "So you don't like my cooking anymore?" It's the signal that there's a much bigger problem, a tense situation like dry brush just waiting for a spark to set it alight.

TASKS: This is a big job. Really deep and meaningful conversations that revisit the big issues are needed. And perhaps with some help from an outsider to steer the process. Intervention can work if people want it and are willing to be open and to work hard.

Finally, CRISIS!

A crisis can't be missed. When someone walks out on a relationship or job, it's plain there is serious unresolved conflict. Violence is "too late." Things are out of control and should have someone from outside the relationship intervene, though of course it doesn't always happen. Beware of well-meaning interventions that can go wrong.

Vicious arguing with people screaming abuse at each other is also a loss of control.



Whether violent or not, it's a crisis. When normal behaviour goes out the window, people think about extreme gestures and sometimes do them. Things end – jobs, friendships, marriages. Health and safety can be an issue. External and skilful intervention may well be needed. Crisis professionals – legal, social, medical and welfare have a place here.

YOUR TASK: restore everyone's self-control right now, and if that's impossible, get out and get help!

Pay attention to early conflict clues.

Watch out for discomfort and small incidents. Don't ignore them. Deal with them *before* emotions are running high. Once that's your habit, most situations won't ever build towards misunderstanding, tension or crisis, because you're constantly working on improving the relationship. So take a moment. Ask yourself: is this something I can easily let go of, or would it be wiser to get it out in the open? Does it have other implications? If so, look for an opportunity to start a constructive conversation. You'll need your toolkit of conflict resolution skills to do so.

So here's the first one:

WIN-WIN — OPPONENTS OR PARTNERS?

The win-win approach to conflict does not come naturally to everyone. We may not have seen it demonstrated around us in our childhood. It's a learnt response to say to ourselves: 'I want to win, but not at your expense. I want to find a better way.'

Instead, as soon as we're in a conflict or see one looming, we often read the situation as 'I'm under attack' and immediately revert to a knee-jerk reaction. Something's triggered in the primitive animal part of our brains. One of our pre-wired survival defence mechanisms kicks in: it's fight, flight or freeze.

Perhaps someone appears to be taking advantage of us, ignores our wishes, makes us look stupid or is just being plain mean. Can you recall a recent situation where you felt threatened? How did you handle it?



Did you FIGHT back?

Explode? Shout? Intimidate? Interrupt? Maybe you insisted you were right and kept trying to explain your point. Did you tell them how they ought to behave, nag or issue ultimatums ('You do it or else.'). Maybe you made some sarcastic comments or worked out how to get even with them.

But perhaps that isn't your usual style of reaction. Rather, do you tend to retreat into:

FLIGHT mode?

Run out the door or hope the problem will go away if you say nothing. Tell yourself it doesn't matter anyway, but then get depressed. Do you hold back your own opinion to prevent more conflict? Or get cranky, do nothing about the problem itself, but maybe take it out later on the wrong person?

If we physically or emotionally withdraw from a conflict, we are safe from potential danger and we have avoided our fear of speaking up for ourselves. Flight mode's smart when the conflict is unpredictable, violent or when it's none of our business. And sometimes it's better to back off and give the other person some space to rethink the situation.

But there is a big downside – we no longer have a say in what happens next. The problem might just get worse and worse. Your silence may silence your potential supporters. They're presuming you don't care, while the other person has won, at your expense. And the opportunity's been missed to talk it through and find a workable solution.

Perhaps we're withdrawing to punish the person, or we might use it as a subtle whip to force them to change their mind. We hold back on love or contact, whether we're fully aware of it or not. And we might win this round that way, but we're causing long term damage. That's how relationships grow cold.

We're also wired with a third survival defence mechanism. It was useful to our ancestors when they needed to escape notice.



Like a rabbit caught in a spotlight, we may:

FREEZE

In modern society we still engage it. We wear a tight smile and we go silent, so silent that we can't even think what to say. We tread oh-so-carefully so as not to arouse their anger. We freeze if we need peace at any cost.

It may be sensible when a confrontation over a slight disagreement puts too much pressure on the relationship, or when people are not ready to hear what you have to say. Sometimes, you can preserve a relationship by choosing tact over brutal honesty. Some conflicts can even dissolve just because you stay friendly.

However, it gets less than helpful if you accept physical or verbal abuse and don't stand up for yourself. 'Anything for peace' can be dangerous. We perpetuate the problem when we deny that there is a problem.

HOW CAN WE MOVE BEYOND IMMEDIATE REACTION?

Fight, flight and freeze are our three hard-wired 'emergency' mechanisms, all useful from time to time. But they needn't rule us. In that brief space between the stimulus and our reply, we can quickly call up better strategies to turn ourselves and the situation around –

to respond, rather than just react.

Whenever we're about to engage with a difficult conversation, it helps to take a moment to ask ourselves: 'What's happening in my body, my emotions and my thoughts?' so that we can modify those initial reactions. Keep calm. Take a deep breath. If your tummy's in knots, place your hands on your belly. Adjust your stance. Stand strong, stable and flexible. And only then, carry on!

Well, not before you centre yourself too. It's a powerful technique that comes to us from the martial arts.

Centreing

is about bringing yourself back into balance. Just as potters centre their ball of clay on their wheel, so it doesn't spin out of control, our point of balance is our centre. It's a little below our navel – but inside, about half-way between your spine and the skin over your stomach. Centreing means just bringing your attention to that internal point.



Try it now. Use your breath as well – take your breath and attention to that midway point. Experience your body relaxing... Can you feel some physical tension dropping away? ...

Centring begins at the level of body, but it immediately calms distressing thoughts and runaway emotions too. Getting centred is very powerful. In the midst of conflict, it's the quiet spot in the eye of the storm. It gives you the space to edit your initial reaction, and respond. It need only take a moment. No one can even see you doing it. You just choose to be centred, focus on your belly and then turn your attention to whatever it is you are doing.

If you sense an emotion, name it quickly for yourself. Get things back into perspective with: 'Is this a mistake?' 'Did they mean this?' 'What are they really trying to say?' Go back to your centre. You're taking charge of yourself.

If the other person has lost control of their anger, perhaps your reactions of fight, flight or freeze are over-taking you too. If so, do you need a little more time to quieten down? You might say: 'I don't think I can continue this right now. But I want to discuss this. Let's make another time.' I'd call that a tactical withdrawal, not in the same ballpark as reactive flight. We're withdrawing to get centred, so we can attend to the conflict more calmly and turn it towards solutions that work better for everyone.

You've let go of fight, flight and freeze. You are beginning to practice a fourth way. We like to call it:

FLOW

The intent behind the martial art of Aikido is all about flow and how to direct the energy away from causing or being caused harm. The expert canoeist does something similar by flowing with the force of rapids but steering powerfully around all the dangerous boulders in the river.

Flow in verbal conflict also relies on this intent. If you flow with the movement of energy, you won't rigidly oppose the other person. You'll use your strength to direct their energy away from causing harm and towards solution. You might need to calm their emotions by really listening. You can help the other person



say what they *do* want, rather than what they don't want. You'll put your case in a way that shouldn't inflame them further. Each step you take supports the conversation in flowing more smoothly and in the right direction. Now you are really choosing how you will respond.

What is flow like? We're flexible, but relatively effortless; we're able to respond immediately to each changing circumstance. Like tree branches swaying in the wind. We are very present – right here, right now. Our awareness is incredibly concentrated on exactly what's going on. We know about being in the flow when we're engrossed in a work project. But when our emotions are aroused in conflict, of course, flow isn't that effortless. It's hard work and it's a learnt skill. Sometimes we'll trip up. Everyone does. All we can do is get back on track as quickly as we can.

Flow is not about backing down, but it's non-combative. It disarms the attack, theirs and yours. Flow requires courage. We have to trust the *process* of communication and our own ability to steer the conversation around obstacles, sway with the wind of other people's emotions, and respond appropriately at each moment.

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Flow requires heart. It works *for* all people in the situation, negotiating what's best for everyone. We start that caring connection by consciously committing ourselves to a

WIN-WIN STRATEGY.

What's involved?

- I want to win AND I want you to win too.
- I'll treat you as my partner in problem-solving, rather than my opponent.

You commit yourself to treat the other person collaboratively. It's not a competition. And you hold firmly to that commitment, *even if the other person is not playing by those rules.*



To grasp the basic principles, let's take a very simple example. You're in the kitchen with a person you live with, and you both want the one and only orange in the fruit bowl. That's your initial position and as it happens to also be theirs, you're in conflict. What should you do? Toss a coin? Decide who needs it most? Perhaps you decide you'll cut it in half? That might be an acceptable compromise. But jumping at a compromise often turns out to be something less than the best solution.

So, before you argue it out or jump to what might well be a lesser solution,

Move off your initial position and any solution!

Back off for a moment and

Explore the needs behind the problem

Find out what are the major needs and concerns of the people involved. Ask *why* the other person needs what they say they want - their position. Examine why *you* need what you say you want - your position. And have this conversation as soon as you can.

Let's return to the kitchen:

You say: 'I'm thirsty. I want to make juice. What do you want the orange for?'

The other person says: 'I'm baking a cake. I want the rind.'

When you consider what each person needs, you'll often find that people are *apparently* wanting the same thing, but they want to achieve quite different results. And this can open up the possibilities for some creative thinking. It may not be possible for each of you to obtain your *position* (having the whole orange), but it may be possible for each of you to satisfy your underlying *needs*.

It's essential research. Do it first and only then start to:

Create new options

You are now looking for new options where everyone gets more of what they want. Where one of you wants the juice and the other wants the rind, the answer is obvious. Sometimes win/win solutions can be that easy. And sometimes they're not.

Back to our example – suppose it isn't so straightforward and you're both after the juice because you're both thirsty. What are the options then? Sharing the juice is the obvious compromise. But if you are really investing in a collaborative approach



and you're responding with conscious skill, you'll look further. You're trying to find a way that will satisfy both people. You flow *with* the other person and explore whatever ingenious options you can come up with together. Maybe you just need more to go around. You could make a smoothie with the orange and add some other fruits, or find one of you something else to drink. You could even work up a conflict prevention strategy for the future. Knowing that you both will reach for oranges when thirsty, you could buy more oranges next time you shop.

We're often asked

Is win-win about the process or the outcome?

Short answer: it's about the process. It does not, and cannot, define the end result. What it defines is *how* you will travel - aiming for mutually beneficial outcomes, the best possible under the circumstances.

It's certainly about a *process* where we try to find a win for everyone. But there may not be an easy answer. There won't always be a clear win for each person. Win-win is about the approach we've used.

- Have all needs been considered, all options been explored and the solution been chosen which meets more major needs than any other?
- Have the relevant people been part of the process?

There's a huge benefit in

Doing it together!

Of course, you can, on your own, back off your own stance of wanting the whole orange, analyse both people's underlying needs and then design a new option, but the win-win approach is much more powerful if you work it out together, if you collaborate. Firstly, more ideas means more creative solutions. Secondly, you make it clear that you are treating the other person as a partner, not an opponent. They see that the process is fair. You're *inviting* their contributions. If the other person is hard to budge, you might try 'I'm here to solve problems. Can we out work something that seems fair?'



When you *both* agree on the best option, the relationship is at least maintained, but at best you'll have improved the climate of mutual trust and respect between you.

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If you sense there's a conflict,

DROP YOUR OPPOSITIONAL APPROACH

Sometimes that's hard because we love being right, and we prove it by making the other person wrong. The conflict quickly becomes 'your way' or 'my way', 'this' OR 'that.' The other person becomes our *opponent* as we push for and defend our point. That's fun on the sports field, but it's not fun anywhere else.

Try to be objective and separate the problem from personalities.

Striving to be better gives us goals to achieve. But striving to destroy an opponent can be vicious and dehumanising.

We see it in public debate, in parliament and in our court system. It's a competition – and not a very productive one! Cut-throat competition in the workplace produces poisonous working atmospheres and promotes mediocrity in decision-making. *Right* versus *wrong*, *true* versus *false*, *winner* or *loser* can make for some very nasty arguments. We may end up right, but at what cost? Did I allow space for a better idea to emerge? Did I destroy a relationship?

Here's one of the most useful skills you can employ. We call it:

'AND' not BUT'

Treat an opposing idea as just a different way of seeing things. It's adding a new perspective as you both search for good answers.

- 'I understand that you see it this way AND the way I see it is...'

Banish 'Yes, BUT...' from your conflict vocabulary even though it's how we often speak. Weed out the 'but.' If it comes out by mistake, immediately correct it.



All points of view actually *add* to the full picture, so don't dismiss them. This includes the doubts in your own mind – don't dismiss them either.

- 'I'd like to raise this with him, *but* I'm worried he'll think I'm making a fuss' becomes 'I'd like to raise it with him *and* I'll need to do it so that it won't look like I making a fuss.'

Include the other person's doubts similarly.

- You say: 'I think we should move our factory to a cheaper suburb. The rent will be much more reasonable.'

And the other person dismisses that with: 'We can't do that! We'll lose staff if we move out of this area.'

Use your 'AND not BUT':

'Right! We could really do with cheaper rent *AND* we don't want to lose staff.'

You are pointing out the direction for creative problem-solving. You include rather than dismiss the objection.

Also sprinkle in words like: 'we *both*' 'rather than 'you *or* me'. Try '*discuss*' rather than '*argue*'. As well as dropping '*but*,' drop the word '*disagree*'. Instead you might say: 'I see it differently'... You're not contradicting, you're adding your view as part of what goes in the pot.

You're being hard on the problem, and soft on the people.

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Hannah's story

Hannah came to our workshop because she had a really annoying problem with one of the members of her team, Nina. Nina had joined them two years ago and Hannah really appreciated the quality of her work, but Hannah was at her wits end with her. Nina would interrupt her at least six or eight times every day, asking how to proceed or giving Hannah some new piece of information that she really didn't need just then.

At the beginning, Hannah had said nothing, hoping that Nina would become less dependent as she got familiar with the job - but the interruptions went on. Then she tried to drop some subtle hints - taking a long moment to look up from her work when Nina walked in. That failed too.

Then one afternoon Hannah lost it and snapped at Nina. She knew she needed a better way when she saw the hurt look on Nina's face. How could she fix this with a collaborative approach?

She had to reduce Nina's demands on her time AND still keep her happy and productive. So, using the conflict resolution skills she'd learned, Hannah opened the conversation. First, she let Nina know how much she valued her as a member of the team, which was very true. Then she went on to explain that she needed to find a way to organise the demands on her own time and that she wanted to come up with a plan that would work well for Nina too.

Nina was happy to problem-solve with Hannah. In fact, she seemed empowered by being asked to help. Together they brainstormed some procedures which would mean that Nina didn't have to call on



Hannah so frequently. They also agreed on how often and over what things Nina would still come for Hannah's advice.

Their new methods were fair for both of them. And as Nina had been involved in creating the plan she was committed to it...and happy!

Hannah was delighted and was busting to tell me about it when next we met. She said their new arrangement was actually working much better for both of them.

In summary then, here are some useful guidelines for your win-win approach:

- Step back off opposing solutions
- Involve the relevant people
- Define everyone's needs.
- Look for creative and ingenious solutions.
- Try to meet as many needs as you can – something for everyone.
- Support their values too, as well as your own.
- Concentrate on fairness, not pressure.
- Try to be objective and separate the problem from personalities.
- Be hard on the problem, and soft on the people.

You will however find yourself at times in some huge...

WIN-WIN CHALLENGES!

They will test your constructive stance to the limit. The other person's behaviour might be impossible for you to put up with. They may mistrust you. They may be too attached to what they want to even listen to you. What to do? Continue to hold in your heart their best interests, as well as your own - whether or not they're noticing that, and whether or not they co-operate in the process.



Let's run through some examples.

What about a friend who never reciprocates favours or colleagues who don't pull their weight?

Emphasise shared goals: Try telling them: 'I want us to stay friends and I find that hard to manage when I don't feel there's equal give and take.' Or 'I want to continue working with you and I need to know you're matching me with the workload.'

What about trading with another business that seems to have struck financial difficulties?

Be creative in responding to their needs. 'We can only continue to supply you on a C.O.D. basis. But we could offer you smaller and more frequent deliveries if that suits you.'

Suppose you are in direct competition with others for the same position?

You may have to redefine what is a positive outcome for you. Try to stop worrying about the others and concentrate on yourself. Getting that position may or may not be the best thing for you.

If the situation demands competition: use it as your incentive to bring out your personal best.

I've adapted this story from Joe Hyam's book, *Zen in the Martial Arts*:

In sparring practice, a martial arts student was being constantly overwhelmed by a more skilful opponent. He was upset and went to his teacher for advice. The teacher drew a chalk line on the floor about two metres long.



'How can you make this line shorter?' he asked.

The student studied the line and made several suggestions, including rubbing out bits of it. The teacher shook his head and drew a second line, longer than the first.

'Now how does the first line look?'

'Well, it looks shorter,' the student said.

The teacher nodded. 'It is always better to improve your own game rather than trying to diminish your opponent.'

If you tackle competition by developing yourself, you grow in dignity and strength regardless of the outcome this time round.

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What about someone who won't co-operate?

You and your sister are arguing over a relative's will. Things have become nasty. And she won't co-operate in working out a fair solution. No matter how difficult, try to leave a corner for her in your affections. Don't put up with insults or rudeness. Stay civil. When someone won't co-operate, just be very clear on what support you are and are not willing to offer.

Here's another win-win challenge: *Your child's behaviour is unacceptable.*

You've taken matters in hand and severely limited how much time your son can spend gaming each week. His unhealthy preoccupation was his only way of relating to his friends. And now he's surly and swears at you whenever you ask him to do anything. But he's asked you if he can have a friend to come over. Will you ban



too that until his behaviour improves? Well, you may, but his need for friendships is very real and a far healthier version of it than his addiction to gaming. Perhaps in the interests of better relations you allow the visit.

The skill here is to **support underlying needs** even when their behaviour is extremely inappropriate.

Say, you've ended up in an uncomfortable stalemate

- with your partner and can't agree on where to go for your next holiday.
- Or you strongly disagree with a work colleague on how to proceed with a work strategy.

The skill here is to **keep communicating** even if you have to drop the issue for a while. Don't freeze the other person out. Keep talking on other matters, even if you can't talk about the conflict itself.

Of course, sometimes another person you've disagreed with refuses to communicate further with you at all. Then there is very little you can do about the situation, but you might be able to send them a card or text at Christmas or for their birthday. Of course it doesn't fix the problem, but it sends a message – 'my door is open to you.' If they reach out in any way, try to respond even if the argument is not solved. Holding onto grudges helps no one and especially not you.

Grudge or no grudge, there are certain times when it's wiser to back right off. If it's a negotiation, it is your right to say: "No deal in these circumstances." You may feel the other person is very self-serving, is not playing fair, or is abusing your rights. **You have to know when to walk away.** You may certainly need to cut off the relationship if violence or its possibility is involved. Sometimes it takes great strength to walk away. Weigh up your motives first. Does the desire to walk come from excessive pride or is this necessary for self-respect or safety?

The collaborative approach used consistently and early in a conflict should generally keep you away from these extremes. However resolving conflict is sometimes lengthy and may need perseverance. Of course, the end result is important,



but generally it is during the process that the real benefits appear. Co-operation, mutual respect, better options, commitment and goodwill are the prize.

Here's the SUMMARY

Fight, flight, or freeze are primitive survival reactions which generally won't serve us well – unless we are being stalked by a tiger. We need to choose to respond, take a moment to get centred, then flow with the situation so that we can skilfully navigate the way through. Set your course with a win-win strategy, and start with these four steps:

1. Move off your position
2. Explore everyone's needs
3. Create new options where ideally, everyone gets more of what they need.
4. Do it together. Make it clear you are partners, not opponents.

So drop your oppositional language. Change your 'BUT' to an 'AND'.

No matter what win-win challenges you face, don't switch to win/lose. You may need to:

- emphasise shared goals, and be very creative in responding to everyone's needs.
- You may have to redefine what a positive outcome actually is for you.
- If the situation demands competition, use it as your incentive to bring out your personal best.
- Support underlying needs even when their behaviour is extremely inappropriate.
- Generally speaking, keep communicating, but you may have to re-assess and decide whether, this time, it's wiser to walk away.

Conflict is a journey. Almost always, the best way to travel it is with a collaborative approach.



TWELVE SKILLS TOOLKIT

For the win-win approach to become our go-to choice, we need to develop new skills. And not just those we've mentioned so far, but a whole toolkit of them.

Let's have a quick look at where this series is heading. Each audio will introduce you to another 'tool' to add to your toolkit and strengthen your skills.

We've started with the theory and extracted what really does make a difference when a difficult conversation is right in your face or you want to manage your relationships better than you have been

OK. What's in this toolkit? Here's a brief run-down of the twelve skills, and the questions to ask yourself so that you engage with the skill:

- **Skill number 1, Win-win - makes us Partners not Opponents:** What needs underlie our positions on this issue? How can we solve this as partners not opponents? That's the one we've just dealt with in this session.
- **Skill number 2, Creative Response to conflict:** Asks what must I do to respond, not react? And what opportunities can this situation bring?
- **Skill 3, Empathy:** In the first part of this we'll look at ... How can I open up the communication? What are they trying to say? In Part II we move to... How can I get past my reactions to allow for their personal style or their differing values?
- **The 4th Skill Appropriate Assertiveness:** answers the question, how can I express myself so that I'll be really heard and understood?
- **Skill number 5, Co-operative Power:** what steers us to use power 'with' each other rather than power over each other? How do we move beyond disempowering relationships and behaviours?
- **Skill number 6, Managing Emotions:** Discovers what message is my feeling is delivering to me. How can I use it as my fire for positive change? How will I best manage my own and other people's strong emotions?



- **Skill 7: with a Willingness to Resolve** I'm ready to move beyond personal issues towards forgiveness. What feelings or personal problems do I need to release?

Those are the personal skills, now it's time to put them into a strategy.

- **With the 8th skill, Mapping the Conflict** we make a map of the situation to give us greater clarity and point the way.
- **With Skill 9, Designing Options** we develop creative options together.
- **The 10th is Negotiation:** where we find we can be hard on the problem and yet soft on each other at the same time.
- **Number 11 is called an Introduction to Mediation:** it's an introduction only, as mediation is its own professional field. But we have a good look at when other people are in conflict. Ask how I can be helpful and skilful while still staying neutral?
- **Finally the 12th Skill, Broadening Perspectives** deals with putting this issue into perspective. Am I including my 'heart' as well as my intellect? How do I live with these skills in the wider world?

The toolkit is also a great starting point if you're writing a document or a speech that you want to present in conflict resolving mode.

As you've just heard about with Win-win, these skills transfer readily to widely differing contexts. In choosing our examples and stories here, we use a variety of them. We've done that on purpose, so that you can see how readily these skills transfer. Yes, there are some adaptations needed to fit particular cultures, but the fundamental principles hold true. The skills you'd teach a young child are basically the same ones needed by an international diplomat. One morning, you'll pull out a 'tool' for a problem over breakfast, and find yourself needing it again in a difficult business meeting that afternoon.

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online course and lots of teaching material you can download for management, communication studies or professional development – anywhere that resolving conflict well is key to the job.

It remains the same toolkit of skills – whether for personal, workplace or international effectiveness, just massaged to fit the people.

So join us again for **Skill number 2, to inspire you to use a more creative response to conflict.**

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