

RESOLVE CONFLICT:

EVERYONE CAN WIN

Skill 7: Willingness to resolve

Extra study materials



Are you informed or inflamed?

Unexamined anger or resentment stands in the way of willingness to resolve.

Whenever I'm inflamed, there's something for me to learn about myself

When a situation just informs me of a problem, I may need to fix it. But when the situation inflames me, that extra emotion comes from a personal issue that I haven't fully recognised. I have a 'hot button' and it's been triggered!

This situation offers me an opportunity to find that personal issue and separate it from the outer situation. I then have a clearer perspective and respond more appropriately.

My greater self-awareness may arise by acknowledging:

- **An unresolved piece of my personal history that has been triggered.** Old emotions from another time flood unbidden into this new situation that may not be appropriate now. e.g. If I was seriously let down as a child, I may be wild when people don't do what they promised.
- **The other person's actions obstruct a need I have, but I haven't realised how important that need is for me.** e.g. Under-estimating my need for companionship, I am too deeply hurt when a friend postpones time we had planned to spend together.
- **A quality I strongly dislike and don't acknowledge in myself. I suppress or pass over it inside me. It makes me wild or feel contempt when I see it unchecked in others.** e.g. When I cannot accept my own anger, greed or arrogance, I am excessively disturbed when I see that in others.

When I discover what the extreme part of my reaction is really about, and acknowledge what I hadn't seen about myself before, I simmer down.

I begin to see the current reality more clearly and less emotionally.

Something may indeed need fixing. Perhaps I'll address the situation directly or perhaps the solution actually lies elsewhere.

When I'm no longer unreasonably inflamed, I can view the situation objectively and act more appropriately.

For things to change, first I must change.



'Hot button' exercise

Fill in your responses in the following fields

	Focus on one quality of theirs or a particular way they behave that irritates or upsets you, pushes your 'hot buttons'.	Focus on your reaction. What feeling does it arouse or what can't you do around them? Perhaps, write several thoughts until you find the key one.	Why do you feel this way? Choose reasons that are about YOU, not them – probably one of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some unresolved personal history An unrecognised need I have is obstructed around them A quality I strongly dislike and don't acknowledge in myself. I suppress or pass over it inside me. 	YOUR 'HOT BUTTON' Summarise the three columns as your quick reminder for self-awareness. It's not to deliver to the other person. Before you respond inappropriately, alert yourself to your personal issue whenever this hot button triggers that inflamed reaction in you.
1. A person you work with:				When he/she... I feel ... because of my own issue with ...
2. A child or someone you know and find difficult:				When he/she ... I feel ... because of my own issue with ...
3. Intimate relationship e.g. spouse or close friend:				When he/she... I feel ... because of my own issue with ...



No fee required to reproduce this page if this notice appears:© The Conflict Resolution Network PO Box 1016 Chatswood NSW 2057 Australia

Email: crn@cmhq.org Podcasts: <https://www.cmhq.org/podcasts> Web: www.cmhq.org

'Hot button' exercise

Fill in your responses in the following fields

DEBRIEF

Has the 'hot button' exercise given you some new insights into yourself?

Do you find that the same hot button is triggered quite often by different people?

Might you now choose to respond a bit differently when a hot button of yours is activated?

Has your attitude softened a bit to this person or to that sort of behaviour?

For each person you used in the exercise, find something you can acknowledge them for, perhaps their good intention or something that makes you glad they are in your life.

Person 1: ...

Person 2: ...

Person 3: ...



When they're not willing to resolve

How will I best manage that? For smooth resolution of conflict both parties need to be willing to resolve. Of course, they may have buried issues that they haven't acknowledged to themselves, but it's not appropriate for me to point these out. So...

To get a better response, can I provide a better stimulus?

Can I work on the relationship, independently of solving this problem? Build greater trust?

Can I clean up my own act?

How have I contributed to the problem? Have I done or said something that I need to correct or apologise for? Can I attempt to fix my piece of the problem, without grovelling? My apology may help them move on.

How am I coming across?

- How am I using my power? Do I disempower or empower them? Am I playing out victim, persecutor or rescuer roles? Did I offer clean choices, or did I make threats?
- Did I manage my own feelings first? Is something I haven't acknowledged about myself in the way of resolution?
- Did I really listen to them? Did I block the flow of empathy with something I said?
- Did I use 'charged' language or did I use 'clean' messages?

Has something been misinterpreted?

- Position, motives, requirements, values, feelings? Both mine and theirs?
- Can I clarify the issues?
- Do I need a mediator to help with this?

How does it look from their side?

- How might they be feeling? Do they feel backed into a corner?
- What might be their needs and concerns around this issue? Do I need to pay more attention to their need to be right, have the final say, take the credit, or some financial gain?
- Do they need to save face?

Is it time to reopen the conversation on this issue?

For example: 'I'd really like to clear this up. How about you?'

- What could make it worthwhile for them to want to resolve the situation? Can I paint a picture of how it could be if we were both able to get along well again? What needs of theirs would be met? Consider e.g. increased harmony, decreased stress, greater productivity and effectiveness, lower costs.
- Can we define the issue more clearly and appropriately limit its scope?
- Can we discuss their needs and concerns, and mine around this?
- Can we go over our common ground, the goals we both share, the outcomes we both want?



If my best efforts fail...

If I've done all that's possible, and that's got nowhere:

Do I need to let go?

Perhaps I'm trying to resolve a really old issue. Indeed, they may have died long ago. Perhaps it's just that they're no longer available.

Perhaps I need to move away for safety, self-esteem or recovery. This may involve practical steps such as looking for a new job, moving house etc. and also emotionally focused steps such as grieving, meditating, seeking counselling, finding new directions and relationships. It is sometimes a long process.

Am I ready to move beyond my personal issues?

- Do I need to stop dwelling on how badly hurt I've been?
- How unfair they have been and how unacceptable their behaviour was, my own need for self-respect, or proving I'm right.
- Am I waiting for an apology that I'll never get?
- Do I still need my time to withdraw, incubate, get angry and experience my pain? I may not be able to shorten this natural process.
- Perhaps there were other benefits in my hanging onto the problem. For example: Not forgetting? I don't want to fall into the same trap again. Forgiveness doesn't have to mean I forget!

Is it time for me to make an internal shift?

- Would I rather be right or happy now?
- Can I now concede my own faults as well as theirs?
- Can I stop waiting for them to change?

Am I ready to forgive?

Forgiveness, finally, is just up to me. Can I now forgive them?
Or can I notice that I am at least willing to *become* willing to forgive.

While my forgiveness may free the other person to change, most importantly

My forgiveness frees me.



Willingness to resolve

Recommended

Books –

certain chapters in the following books relate closely to the skill of 'Willingness to resolve'.

Conflict Management Coaching: *The Cinergy™ Model* by Cinnie Noble

Everyone can win: *Responding to conflict constructively* by Helena Cornelius and Shoshana Faire

Forgiveness and other acts of love: *Finding true value in your life* by Stephanie Dowrick

Making friends: *A guide to getting along with people* by Andrew Matthews

What makes us tick: *Making sense of who we are the desires that drive us* by Hugh Mackay

Books on Carl Gustav Jung

Carl Jung: *Wounded Healer of the Soul* by Claire Dunne

Jung and the Human Psyche: *An Understandable Introduction* by Mary Ann Mattoon

Owning Your Own Shadow: *Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche* by Robert A. Johnson

