

EVERYONE CAN WIN audio script edition

Skill 8: Mapping the Conflict

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Have you ever been driving along, thinking you know where you going and you make a wrong turn-off? Everything starts to look very strange and confusing. I've been overwhelmed at such times. Of course, the answer is to reach for a map.

**Maps work for finding locations and they also work
for finding solutions to conflict.**

This is skill number 8, Mapping the conflict. It's from our book *Everyone can Win*, about handling conflict constructively.

Mapping the conflict is about how to lay down a clear picture of the relevant needs and fears of everyone involved in an issue, so that solutions can be wide-ranging and inclusive. At Conflict Resolution Network, we developed this process way back in 1986. We've been using it regularly ever since. It describes the conflict situation graphically, but it's not theoretical. It leads to new solutions. Mapping puts the spotlight on people's motives, so that you can consider what's really driving the conflict.

#



Have you ever had a problem and felt like this?

- I'm confused. There are just too many factors. I don't know where to start.
- I'm stuck. There seems no way out and no way round.
- Something else is going on here, some hidden agenda. Whatever is it?
- Nothing I do seems to fix this, it's hopeless, it's a personality clash.

It's moments like these we need... *maps*. Maps give a clear picture. They show how things relate to each other and help us discover things we may not have seen before. When all the factors are doing your head in, the process of mapping organises your thoughts.

When you've got a serious unresolved conflict on your plate, your thoughts are going to jump all over the place. You'll be mentally rehearsing your case over and over. Ten thousand times, you'll go over in your mind why you're right and they're wrong, why it's so unfair, why it's so unjust. And none of that really helps. You need to calm this whirlpool. Sit down by yourself or with a trusted friend and begin the process of mapping. It will help you step away from being embroiled in the issue and see what's really going on.

Mapping is particularly helpful for complex conflicts where there are a number of people immediately involved or indirectly affected. Once you've taught yourself the principles, you can help others involved in the conflict to make a map together. The process works especially well in problem-solving meetings. It creates a common, unified vision that includes everyone.

And somewhere in that process, a magical transition is very likely to sneak in. While they're looking at their map and working on it together, people seem to shift from just being opponents towards becoming problem-solving partners. In the next episode, we'll go into detail about how you use your map to design more inclusive solutions together. But a good map is a great first step for that. So let's look into the method closely.



The first key to mapping is to back off from the conflicting solutions and all the emotions involved. You may remember the story about the orange for the first conflict resolution skill, the win/win approach. Here's a brief summary.

You're in the kitchen with a person you live with, and you both want the one and only orange left in the fruit bowl. What should you do? Toss a coin? Cut it in half? When we explore why you each need the orange, these two solutions turn out to be something less than your best options. OK: What's the need?

You say, 'I'm thirsty. I want to make juice.'

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

It may not be possible for each of you to get your way (having the whole orange), but it may be possible for each of you to satisfy your underlying needs.

Exploring the underlying needs leads to solutions where both people can get what, or more of what, they want. It preserves relationships and opens up the possibilities for some creative thinking.

So mapping is about finding out the major needs and concerns of the people involved. You ask *why* each person needs what they've been saying they want. The emotions about all that are still there of course, but they've been clouding the underlying picture. When you want to get clear:

Move off solutions and explore the needs behind them.

When people want their way and aren't listening to others, mapping out the needs helps you find the way to some new win/win solutions. It's orderly and systematic. It acknowledges the emotions, but it tones down their heat by acknowledging their cause: the needs, that are driving the conflict.

People are motivated to move towards what they do want, their needs, but they're also motivated to move away from what they don't want – their fears.

Sometimes the fear is just about not getting their needs met, but quite often when you ask people about their fears, some extra issues emerge. Sometimes those fears are not too rational, but nonetheless they are affecting people's responses. If we go back to that last orange in the kitchen, you might have an underlying fear of being seen as greedy or inconsiderate if you take it. So, for the purposes of mapping really clearly, we like to separate out these underlying fears as well.



So, when we do a map, we're deciding how to name:

THE ISSUE, WHO IT AFFECTS AND THEIR NEEDS AND FEARS

You can certainly map a conflict by yourself, but you'll probably have to use quite a lot of guesswork. So if you can, develop the map with the people directly involved in the issue. Let's say you're working on a large piece of paper.

Step 1. What's the Problem?

You want a label for your map. You might put it right in the middle of your page. It's the issue expressed in just a word or two and in broad **terms**. Don't go deep yet. Just name the general area that's at issue. Use neutral and unemotional words. Mapping lays all the emotions aside and plots the general terrain. You might be thinking the issue is Bob at work who is not doing his fair share, but *don't* write down: 'How Bob is not doing his fair share.' That's not neutral. It's emotive. Bob if he's present will be immediately upset. Perhaps the label you might write down instead is 'workload distribution'. So far, your Bob is good with that. He'll be able to participate without being immediately on the defensive. Perhaps you're making your map because there is a personality clash, the relationship has deteriorated and there are lots of issues. Play it safe, be general: your best label might simply be 'communication'. At home, where the problem is who does the washing up or the kids are not keeping their rooms tidy, perhaps name the issue as 'washing up' or 'household chores'. If neighbours are fighting over their rights during a new build, the topic might be 'amicable relations'. In other words, you just need the general topic.

As well as being neutral, your label should not point towards any solution. Mapping's not about destinations, it's about the roads you must travel. So don't write down a yes/no, either/or choice. Not 'Will you or won't you erect a privacy screen?' Perhaps, 'how buildings affect each other'. Not 'Who should do the washing up - Emma or Oscar.' Perhaps just 'dinner routines' will be broad enough include all the work you're doing to get the meal onto the table. Keep your definition open-ended, no solutions there.

When you're doing your map with other people, have a brief discussion about the label and get agreement on the broad topic you're meeting about. Don't get



anxious about whether or not it is exactly right. Simply write down **the area or the topic** to be mapped.

Write the label you've decided upon right in the centre of your page or board. And not too large. There are lots of other things that will circle around it as you move along.

Step 2. Who is Involved?

Decide who the major parties are – you might list each individual separately, perhaps each member of the family or the team. You might group some of them under the one name, as long as the people involved share the same needs on the issue. For example 'Sales Staff', 'Management', 'Clients', 'the Public', 'the Local Council'. A mixture of both individuals and groups is just fine. Give each a heading with their name and spread them out, around all the outer edges of your page.

Who gets up on your map is quite specific to the problem itself. So let's pretend for a moment that you're mapping a new university policy to do with the ratios of foreign to local students in classes. If the issue is just an internal matter to do with workloads, the parties involved might be: overseas students, local students, and particular teachers. If it has bigger implications with the public, you'd better include in your map the university dean, the board of directors and perhaps the media or a government department. In this situation they all have a stake, and their needs will also be influencing any decisions you make. So they need to place on the map.

If you're mapping two people having a clash in the office, you might list the two people separately, but you might be able to put the rest of the team together in one segment – as long as their needs around that clash are substantially the same. Perhaps you decide it's wise to include the manager separately.

Ask yourself, who's involved in or affected by the conflict? Give them spaces spread around the map.



Step 3: What do they need? What do they fear?

You're separating out the various motivations behind the issue. Now you're into the nitty-gritty of mapping. You're mapping the dynamics. With this big picture completed, you'll widen the range of options to consider once the map is complete.

For each person or group you've written down, make a subheading 'Needs' under which you'll list their relevant needs. When that's done, make another subheading 'Fears' directly below. There, you'll list their fears. We just head it 'Fears' for simplicity. It can include a whole bag of worries.

Generally you'll first ask about *needs* and list them. And then move on to *fears*. But while you're working through them, you might need to jump a bit between these two subheadings. Keep it simple, short dot points, not whole sentences.

Needs, using this term lightly, could mean wants, values, interests or the things the person or group cares about. Simply ask the question: 'What are your major needs in this?' and perhaps: 'Which of your needs around this are not being met?' Needs might include:

- satisfying and secure work;
- a tidy desk/house;
- being allowed to make a mess;
- having everything legal and aboveboard,
- to work in a quiet place,
- privacy,
- amicable relations.

The particular issue determines what's relevant. You don't need absolutely every side-street on your map, but you do need all the main roads. For example, the need behind a tidy desk might be efficiency. Sometimes the same need applies to several or all the players. It can be worthwhile to repeat the need under each heading to reveal how much the people have in common. You could even underline it in the same colour everywhere it appears to point that up.



The term, '*Fears*' is just a shorthand label. It can include any relevant concerns, anxieties or worries. The person doesn't have to be mortally terrified for it to go up on your map as a fear. Also, you don't need to debate whether or not the fear is realistic before it is listed. For example, you may have a fear about something your rational mind knows is very unlikely to happen, yet the fear still lurks underneath, wanting to be recognised. One of the real benefits of mapping might be the opportunity to air some irrational fear and have it acknowledged on the map. Sometimes you can dig deeper. If you sense excessive concern, for example, when someone says their fear is 'not getting the work done', probe underneath this: 'What would be really bad about that? What is the fear there?' They might say: 'being seen inadequate or inefficient' or 'damaging my reputation'?

Fears are acknowledged by mapping

Fears might include:

- failure and loss of face
- doing the wrong thing
- financial insecurity
- being rejected, disliked, unloved
- feeling unsafe in the relationship
- being unprotected
- loss of control
- getting stressed
- loneliness
- being judged or criticised
- uninteresting work



- being ordered around
- paying too much

This fears category can draw out motivations that just don't surface were you to consider only the person's needs. For example, 'fear of failing' may in fact be their primary motivator, but if you only ask: 'What do you need?' you won't uncover it. As a need all they could say is something like: 'I need to be successful', But that might not be the real issue. It will pop up immediately however when you ask: 'What are you concerned about?' Do take the time to list fears as well as needs.

On the other hand, if you *have* adequately covered a fear by expressing it as a need, for example: 'to know he is safe,' you don't need to write it a second time. 'Being worried about his safety' is really the same thing as 'to know he is safe'. For the purposes of mapping, it's up there under 'Needs'. If it's mentioned again as you're going through the 'fears' list, you could just underline it where it's written already.

#

Here's a real map that came up in a workshop.

HIGH FENCE MAP

A woman was unhappy because her neighbour wanted to build a high brick fence between their properties. The plan was about to go to Council for approval. She came to a Conflict Resolution course feeling very angry and helpless. The others in the course, had started off siding strongly with the woman about how horrible the neighbour was, and making suggestions about how she could make it difficult for him. But they joined in with her in mapping the situation. Once the map was complete, she felt far less angry and helpless. Her fellow participants also saw the value of mapping the needs, rather than immediately seeking a solution. After the map they were concerned about the neighbour's fears as well as how the woman could help



both herself and him. She left the workshop deciding that rather than bickering any more from their respective gardens, she would invite her neighbour in for a cup of tea and to get to know him a little better.

She didn't think she'd repeat the mapping process with him directly. But she'd start a conversation so he could clarify his needs to her and she'd let him know that she understood and cared about his point of view.

Before the exercise, she couldn't think about his issues. She'd girded herself up with her indignation. And she really hadn't thought through how to get him to respect her problems.

After drawing up her map she, she was much clearer about what her own needs were, and she felt she could tell him about them much more clearly.

Her map was called:

'THE FENCE'

She just had two people listed on either side of the page – herself and her neighbour.

HER NEEDS were for

- open space
- her property left intact to maintain her property's value
- And to have good communication and a friendly relationship with her neighbour

HER FEARS were

- Being boxed in and isolated,
- paying toward something she didn't want;
- reprisals if he didn't get what he wanted



- She worried about having to look at a big brick wall, and
- And about losing her rosebushes while the fence was being erected. They were right on her boundary.

In the workshop we all had to guess, but we **wrote down this:**

HER NEIGHBOUR'S NEEDS were

- privacy,
- security,
- to keep his dogs enclosed
- the neighbour's co-operation and communication.

HE FEARED

- losing his dogs or
- the dogs being a nuisance to the neighbours.
- Was he worried about burglary?
- not handling social contact well.

I really hope that cup of tea happened, and that they each acknowledged each other's needs together and went on to build some really creative solutions together. She'd certainly laid the groundwork for that to happen.

#

STEERING A MAP WITH OTHER PEOPLE

Perhaps you're leading them through building a map up together. It's a great process for making sure that everyone feels their issues are being acknowledged. And it helps people step aside from their emotions and see the other person's point of view.



- **Keep the focus on the needs and fears of all parties until the map is complete.** Don't be side-tracked into background stories, explanations, or solutions. Quickly and as politely as you can, get back to the map. Stick doggedly to: 'What are the needs? What are the fears?' Be a broken record!
- **Focus only on one person at a time.** Do both their needs and their fears before you move on to the next person. Of course, if they later think of something they forgot, you could still briefly add it in.
- **Ask the group what would the absent people say that their needs and fears are?** For example, you may think that person '*needs* to communicate more'. But they probably wouldn't say that that is their need. They're more likely to say that their need is 'to have more quiet time' or 'to have longer to think things through.' Be conscious that you are only guessing what another person needs. Focus on what would they be most likely to *say* if they were asked. That's what you write down. You often doing a bit of clarifying and vetting.
- **Check carefully who really has the need?** The way we say things can confuse this. If you were to write down on their list: 'They need to be more understanding!' that's not about their needs at all, it's about yours. Put it down on your own list. You might write under your name: 'to be understood'. What they may need is more information so that they can understand you better. When in doubt ask: 'Whose need is this?' 'They need to be more considerate' is about my need to be 'cut some slack', or 'not corrected for tiny errors'.
- **Handle digressions by going back to needs.** While mapping the needs and fears it is important to not allow participants to start suggesting solutions. Don't allow questions such as 'Why don't you try...', 'Have you thought about doing ...?' That's for later, once the map is complete.
- **Don't spend time on long background stories.** They're not necessary in order to do an effective map. They can often colour the picture



unnecessarily. Go to current needs as soon as possible. It's one of the great advantages of mapping. People are drawn away from the past and into present time.

- **Avoid 'Why did you...?' questions.** Don't allow questions that cause people to defend or justify what they did.
- **Clarify the legitimate needs behind a hidden agenda.** You may get a sense that there are hidden needs and concerns such as a particular advantage for one party if a problem is solved one way and not another. Commissions, bonuses, getting the credit, recognition and time out are some of the advantages people like to keep hidden. Legitimise these by including them on the map. It's OK for people to want such things as their authority or their contributions being recognised and respected.

A common unexposed pay-off is the **need to save face**. Treat these hidden agendas with compassion and consideration. If they get up on the map, the decisions that you ultimately come up with can lend support to such needs. And then everyone's more likely to stick to the new agreement.

- Occasionally mapping goes off at a tangent. You're in the midst of charting one person's needs and fears, and another person interrupts and launches into their particular issues.

How are you going to **handle the interruption**? Demonstrate that it's OK that they're emotional. And that it's also OK that they don't fully understand the process yet. Extract one of their needs or fears from what they are saying. Put it up in *their* place on the map, and then ask them whether it would be alright to return to where you were in the mapping process. This keeps the process orderly, whilst respecting their outburst.

- Many people, when asked what they need, will reply with a **solution**. They think that's their need: 'I need him to ring me when he's going to be late.' But him ringing is just one option. *Ask:* 'What need of yours will this



meet?’ The underlying need could be ‘*to know he is safe*’. There are a variety of solutions which meet that need.

- If anyone comes up with **very general words** such as ‘respect’, ‘acknowledgment’ and ‘understanding’ these are rather intangible, so probe deeper. For example, if the word ‘recognition’ comes up, ask: ‘*from whom?*’ and ‘*of what?*’

Include in the map answers such as: ‘recognition from my manager for the extra work I do’ So, for those intangible needs, ask:

‘How would you know if this need were met?’

‘What would you need in order to get this?’

- If the discussion starts moving **off target**, perhaps they interrupt with ‘We should be doing XYZ!’ you may also find some of these questions useful:

‘What needs would that option meet?’

‘What benefits do you see we do XYZ?’

‘Tell me more about why that could be a good answer.’

Uncover the needs underneath and you are back on track.

#

Here’s another map – about a company’s Reception area.

COVERING RECEPTION MAP

A section supervisor was particularly uncomfortable about confronting her receptionist. The receptionist was taking so much time off that other staff members had to cover for her too frequently. The receptionist was a single mother and she was quite often called away over difficulties with her three-year old child.



The supervisor was a reserved woman, and laying down the law just wasn't her style. She suspected her hesitancy with the receptionist was annoying her staff. But she knew she ought take action and tackle the issue with more confidence. So first she drew up a map.

She called it:

‘COVERING RECEPTION.’

Here are some of the needs and fears that made it onto her map.

The SECTION SUPERVISOR (herself):

HER NEEDS were:

- customers being handled appropriately
- to nurture all the people in her team, including the receptionist
- a happy and productive team
- to manage her group effectively
- overcome her difficulties with being assertive

And her main *FEARS* were:

- losing efficient control of her section
- losing respect – from her team and from upper management
- And she didn't like upsetting the receptionist



The RECEPTIONIST *NEEDED*

- to look after her child
- And to have an income
- to prove to herself and others that she could cope

HER FEARS were

- losing her job,
- being unable to respond if her child was sick or baby-sitting arrangements had fallen through
- seeming unprofessional to her workmates

OTHER TEAM MEMBERS

NEEDED:

- their section supervisor to steer them out of the problem.
- to fulfil their own roles without disruption
- to show support – both for the receptionist and for the smooth running of the office.

THEY FEARED

- having no choice about covering reception
- being unable to carry out their normal duties well enough because of too many interruptions
- the problem not changing or getting even worse

After doing her own rough map, the supervisor toyed with the idea of doing another with the whole team. But she already had some ideas on how the issue could be



handled. She decided on a friendly chat with the Receptionist first. She'd see if she could help her balance her priorities better, perhaps with some more reliable childcare arrangements.

She was also wondering if perhaps management might be willing to turn Reception into a job share position, which might suit this young mum much better.

If neither of those options worked out, she'd create a Reception backup roster for the rest of her staff, so that this extra workload would be more fairly shared around. She was now well on the way to addressing everyone's needs and fears much more effectively.

#

MAPPING 'DIFFICULT' PEOPLE

We have quite frequently been asked to facilitate maps where the issue presented was a 'difficult person'. By the way, we really dislike that term. Everybody is somebody's 'difficult person.' We label them 'difficult' because *we* are having difficulty with them. 'We have a personality clash' often really means 'I don't know what makes this person tick and my standard methods of dealing with people are not working here.'

***Behind difficult behaviours are unmet needs or hidden fears
which the person is defending in clumsy and often unaware ways.***

Mapping opens us up to discovering why they are doing what they are doing and how our behaviour is affecting that. We'll often find that people will act in difficult ways if they feel insecure or don't know the boundaries. By exploring their needs, and ours, we may see what we can do to make them feel safer or understand their duties more clearly. We might begin to understand what they really need. Perhaps it's to be more included or more visibly respected or have a clear job outline. By exploring our own needs, we may see that our expectations of the other person have been unrealistic. Can we look for other ways to meet our own needs?

Focus on discovering needs and fears, theirs and yours around them. There may be ways of meeting their needs that you haven't previously thought of, and your



map might lead you to see new solutions. You might get a totally different response from them once you do.

Perhaps your difficult person might be your teenager. Their crankiness might mask their fear that you don't really love them. Respond to that. Perhaps a one-on-one outing just with you and them might show them that they're really special to you... and fix some of their general grumpiness at the same time.

Map the needs of a fellow worker who is often negative and might start giving them some positive feedback rather more frequently. Doing a map with the whole team – including the 'difficult' person – can create an amazing shift, but it needs to be handled very diplomatically, or with the help of an external facilitator. We might realise that we know very little about what this so-called difficult person really needs and then we're motivated to get more information.

#

OK, your map is done. You've got all these needs and fears spread out in front of you. What next? You need to make sense of them.

READING YOUR MAP.

Look out for:

- New perspectives
- Common ground
- Special concerns

Firstly, look for new perspectives and insights – Once you've drawn up your map, pay attention to individuals' needs and fears that you hadn't really thought about before. Mapping helps you see what it's like to be in the other person's shoes. You'll usually find some new perspectives on the issue. There'll be factors that weren't obvious before.



Secondly, consider common ground. Pointing it out helps people reunite who feel separated by the conflict. Look for common ground *already present* – similar needs or interests that have arisen while the map was being drawn up. Perhaps, an important value has already been listed for just one person. Consider if it's shared by others.

In the map we discussed about staffing the office reception, 'a happy and productive team' is listed by the supervisor. The receptionist and the other team members would realise that that was important for them too. That's common ground. This was a vision they could all share. That's common ground. And it can help you pull together.

You're after values and ideals which can inspire you all. And you might draw up a list of values you share. Perhaps your organisation already has a statement about vision, mission or purpose. It might be a good time to discuss how you want to realign with that.

If it's appropriate, and it often is, you might *build new areas of common ground*. What values and ideals, raised by one person, can be incorporated into a common vision? For example in the family, a parent cares about homework being done, while their child cares about having fun. Whatever the context you're working in, the common vision should contain both homework *and* fun. Whatever the context you're working in, your united goal *includes* the individual values of each of the parties.

Thirdly, look for special concerns. Can you see now the areas of difficulty that most need attention? Somewhere where the flow of information is blocked, or where access is difficult, for example or a regulation has an impact. The special concern may be for just one individual, or it might be pressing for more of them or even for the whole group.

If you're working alone, analyse new perspectives, common ground, and any special concerns yourself. If you've been working up your map in a group, lead this discussion with your mapping participants. You might separately list the points demanding attention or asterisk them on your map. That's how you'll have all the



benefits and insights from having done your map first, before you jump into building new solutions.

#

Danielle told me about her quick map:

DANIELLE

She had become a stepmother to a ten-year old boy and was keen to be a good mother to him. She thought he should take a shower each night and he didn't want to. They were clashing over it frequently and it was interfering with her new relationship. So, she started to mentally map the problem: 'Showering every evening...whose need is this?' she asked herself. She realised very quickly it was her need, not his.

So she talked to him about it, asking him what his needs were. He said his need was not to be asked to shower every day! She asked him how often he thought he needed to shower. He reckoned he only needed a shower when he was dirty - which was every few days and always after soccer. She asked him when he thought he would need to shower more often and he immediately said: 'Soon as I start to have B.O.' So they agreed that when that happened, he would shower every day!

When the time came a few years later he willingly started to shower daily...and not long after that getting him out of the shower became the new challenge!!



GOOD TIMES TO MAP

Maps have now been made all around the world. They've been done by people who can only work alone. Perhaps their issue is just personal. Perhaps they're not able to gather the people involved together. Maps have been done during conflict counselling and coaching sessions. They've been highly effective in team-building exercises and organisational change processes. They've often been used as the starting place for a mediation or a controversial public meeting. It gives everyone a voice. Mediators and facilitators often commence by guiding their participants through a mapping process. It's relatively non-confrontational. But it clearly lays out the issues involved for everyone to see. Conflict resolving consultants use it regularly as a management tool.

Even children seem to understand it very well and it's great for their conflicts too. It's common sense, it's easy to do and powerful in its result.

Even children seem to understand it very well and it's great for their conflicts too. You can make a map anytime, anywhere and with anyone! It's common sense, it's easy to do and powerful in its result.

Many a first-class map has been made on a serviette in a restaurant! I did a quick one recently on my iPhone. Just in Notes with headings for the key people and separate subheadings for each person's Needs and Fears. It was very handy later in the day when I thought of an extra issue that I wanted to add. I was asking myself the right questions, and the answers kept coming.

Make a map quickly in your own head before starting a new job or living arrangement, or planning a holiday with friends, or to help you make better deals or agreements. Any time in any personal or work relationship really. You don't need to have a conflict for mapping – use it to prevent conflict.

Maps can be used before drawing up a plan. For example, when a financial cut back is essential, a mapping exercise with all concerned can make a huge difference to implementing the cutbacks and the attitudes of those who are involved.

You can initiate a mapping session in your work, home or any other group activities you are involved in. You might just suggest: 'Let's get a clear picture of the



situation before we go further. Let's hear everyone's needs and concerns on this issue.'

If you call a meeting, you might organise butcher's paper clipped onto a whiteboard. Write with thick pens so everyone can see. Try to use several colours – one colour for the issue and the parties' names, another for needs, another for fears. Instead, if you have access to an electronic whiteboard, use that. Later you can send the map to everyone. You might photograph the completed map and distribute that. You might try one on a group participation app.

Conflicting wishes may be best got out in the open by expressing them in terms of needs and fears on a map. For example, two people want the same promotion or one neighbour wants an uninterrupted view, while the other needs their privacy. We often think that if we have obviously conflicting needs, then we need to manoeuvre to our best advantage behind the scenes. However, in most circumstances, I've found that concealing this type of difficulty poses more risks than being frank about it. Laying out and discussing the competing needs will often invite new options to emerge.

#

BENEFITS OF MAPPING

- Mapping structures the conversation and usually keeps it away from excesses of emotion. People can lose their tempers any time but do tend to keep them toned down when they're mapping. Instead of pointing at the other person as the issue, they soon start pointing at the relevant spot on the map. Quite unconsciously they redirect their energy away from attack.
- The tone shifts from confrontation towards exploration
- Mapping often gives a forum where people can say what they need.
- Mapping builds empathy and acknowledges people who may not feel they were being understood before.



- It points out new directions. After mapping, conversations move towards more creative and inclusive solutions. Try a mapping exercise. Make your own map.

The best way to teach yourself to map is to practice. So give one a go. Is there an issue you are dealing with that could be helped by a map? If you can't think easily of an issue, consider the division of household chores in your home. Any problems there? It's a common one in many households! Perhaps yours deserves a map.

SUMMARY

Mapping the conflict is about how to lay out a clear picture of the relevant needs and fears of everyone involved in the issue, so that your solutions can be wide-ranging and inclusive. Maps can be done alone, with those involved or with others who might help with a fresh view.

The key is to back off from solutions and explore the needs behind them. Instead of arguing over competing positions, explore what needs and fears are relevant and for whom.

Remember: Behind difficult behaviours are unmet needs.

STEP 1: Label the issue in general terms.

STEP 2: Name the parties involved. It might be a mix of individuals and groups.

STEP 3: Write down the needs and fears of each person or group that you have listed.

You may need to make some guesses for people not present. What would they say they need?

- Remember, needs are not solutions. They're what's behind people's positions.
- Fears can include concerns, anxieties or worries that might well be more hidden.

STEP 4: Read your map. Look for and write down:

- New perspectives



- Common ground
- Special concerns

Whenever you need a structure for a difficult conversation, mapping can be your ‘go to’ technique. If you’ve got an ongoing conflict, do a map. Don’t miss this step– even if you have to do it alone. It lays the groundwork for less damage in the relationship and for more inclusive solutions.

If you’d like some written reminders on all of this, have a look at our website, at Conflict Resolution Network. Our headquarters are at crnhq.org. You can download a transcript and explore our extra study notes on Mapping. If you’re very visual you might want to *see* a sample map before you get started. There’s a free [manual for trainers](#) there too. And for ongoing reference, you might want to purchase a digital or a hard copy of the book, [Everyone Can Win](#). It’s the inspiration for this series.

In this episode, we’ve looked at how you lay down the solid foundations, all the facts, in order to be more creative with your solutions. We’ll cover how you design better options in the next episode. So you might like to press your ‘Play’ button for that one, sometime soon.

Perhaps subscribe to this series wherever you listen to podcasts. And if you’re liking the series, you could really help us spread the word if you leave us a review there. And let your friends know about it too. Good conflict resolution skills might be just what they need right now.

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