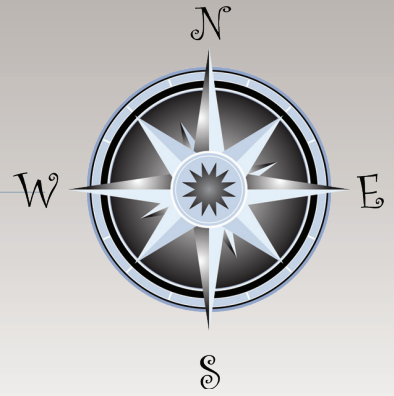


# The Courage Principle of **CONFRONTATION**



*A soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up strife.*

## PRINCIPLE OF THE WEEK

Conflicts become confrontations when we say unkind things, raise our voices or become aggressive with our expressions. Confrontation often produces one of two instincts within any person: fight or flight. When we fight, our natural tendency is to get defensive and argumentative. Conversely, some of us will go to almost any length to avoid the confrontation including avoiding the person and shutting down emotionally.

Often, when we fight, it is because we do not want to be proven wrong. To be wrong is humbling, and it hurts our pride. We may defend our position even when we know we are wrong or have exaggerated the truth. No one is always right in every situation, yet all of us are usually partly right and that is what gets us into trouble. Since we know we are at least partly right, we open our mouths and freely give our opinions even though we may only know one side of the situation. Once we have spoken our opinions, we are committed to defend our position. Each time we defend ourselves it is more costly to admit that we were wrong in some way.

Avoiding confrontation is not the answer either. We may manage to dodge an argument but we will not bring resolution and may build walls in our relationships by shutting down and refusing to deal with the issue at hand. If we shut down on others often enough, they will stop bringing anything to our attention and the relationship will dissolve.

The answer to dealing with confrontation well starts with managing and controlling what we say and how we say it. A soft answer turns away wrath. When our response is gentle, our opponents will respect us and are more likely to consider our point of view. That is not to say that we will not disagree. We will have times of disagreement but we can choose to refuse to escalate the situation. It is amazing how powerful words are in the hands of those who know how to use them. The words "I'm sorry" are powerful but when they come from

a soft, sensitive tongue, they are disarming.

The way we use and handle words may determine war or peace, friends or enemies, and failure or success in life. If we know something for sure, we do not have to scream or get loud and abrasive, that is only a sign of insecurity. It can be very embarrassing to be wrong at the top of our voice. Confrontations exist and are a reality but try to remember that disagreement does not equal rejection. The best way to win is to forget to keep score.

## Benefits

There are several benefits to be gained by confronting in the right way:

1. Responding in a calm and peaceful way lets people know we are confident in our information and sure about our position. This will build their trust in us.
2. We will maintain good relationships and keep communication open. It is not about winning at all costs. When a discussion develops into an argument, an aggressive attitude may fool us into believing that we won the fight but the truth is, we only win when we maintain good interaction and keep communication open.
3. Handling confrontation properly will keep us humble and increase others respect for us.
4. Dealing with confrontation will train us to see the other point of view. "You may be right" or "That's an interesting point" may help to disarm the situation and make our point easier to accept.

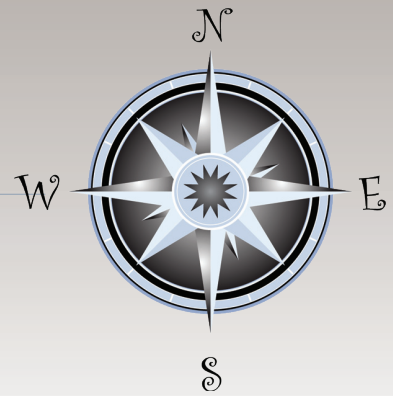
## Characteristics

Those who handle confrontation well:

- Respond peacefully and refrain from escalating emotions even when the other person starts to get upset.

# Action Plan for

# CONFRONTATION



- Keep a good attitude and are unafraid of admitting they do not know or are not sure.
- Express opinions in an open manner and give reasons and logic for their point of view.
- Do not fear altering their opinions once they have listened to the other party's perspective and reasoning. They are more interested in what is right rather than just being right.
- Maintain good relationships and recognize that being right is not as important as keeping a relationship healthy.

place into account before making the decision to be involved.

7. Always finish with a peaceful close. Acknowledge that you do not have to agree on everything. This makes room for a difference of opinion.

*Remember... Thoughts become actions. Actions become habits. Habits become our destiny.*

## Steps to Follow

1. Take five minutes to think about what you are going to say and how you are going to say it before confrontation whenever possible.
2. Do not get sucked into arguments. Control confrontation using soft answers and a smile. If someone wants to argue with us and we have a smile and a soft answer, it will be difficult for the other person to perpetuate the argument.
3. Control your emotions; breathe deep before you respond on the defense. Choose your words, your tone and keep your expressions in mind when you speak.
4. When the other person is escalating the discussion into a full-blown argument, make them aware of how confrontational they are being. Saying something like 'why are you shouting at me?' may allow them to look at themselves for a minute. This might calm them down if they have become lost in the moment and do not realize how they are behaving.
5. Develop the skill of seeing value in others and their opinions. Do not be boastful or have an over confident attitude. By acknowledging that they may be right, you can defuse the situation and win the right to express your opinion and be heard.
6. Pick your battles. Notice where things are going and decide if it is worth engaging in at the present time. It is important to take the time and

## Reflect and respond

1. How do you react when someone speaks to you with anger or arrogance?
2. What aspect of this principle challenges you most?
3. What is hardest for you to control in a confrontation: your words, your tone or your facial expressions/body language?

Evaluate yourself from 1 to 10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
What specific action can you put into practice to test the benefits of this principle?										
Check list for the daily reading of this principle	M	T	W	T	F	S	S			

Completed

Not completed