Here are 7 ways that I hope can help you resolve conflict:

1. OWN YOUR PART OF THE CONFLICT

Conflict and even bad chemistry is almost never 100% one person's fault.

Thinking you're not part of the problem is often the problem.

One of the best expressions I've heard of how to figure out the extent to which you might be part of the problem is to ask a compelling question: What's it like to be on the other side of me?

Own what you can. What is it like to be on the other side of you? Ask some people.

2. GO DIRECT

Often issues are mishandled because we talk *about* someone rather than *to* someone. Your co-worker at the water cooler isn't the problem, so why talk to him about it?

Jesus was crystal clear on how to handle conflict, but very few Christians follow his practice. In the name of being 'nice' ("I can't tell her that!"), we become ineffective.

Talk to the person you have the problem with. Directly. If you haven't got the courage to do it, maybe the problem isn't even big enough to worry about.

3. BELIEVE THE BEST ABOUT OTHERS

It's easy to assign bad motives to people. Instead, give them the benefit of the doubt. They might not realize how they are coming across. Believe the best about others; don't assume the worst. Believing the best can help you address an issue directly without ruining the relationship. It can turn hurtful into helpful. Here's an example: "Rachel, you might not realize this, but sometimes your emails can come across as demanding or even demeaning. I'm not sure you're aware of that, but I just wanted to let you know how they leave me feeling sometimes. I know you probably don't mean to do that."

That gives the person an out, and frankly, many times, they probably had no idea they were coming across negatively.

When you believe the best about others, you tend to get the best from others.

4. EXPLAIN—DON'T BLAME

How to talk to the person you're struggling with is where many people struggle. And those conversations often go sideways because people begin with blame. Don't blame. Explain. Instead of saying "You always" or "You never" (which might be how you feel like starting), begin by talking about how you experience them.

If you're dealing with an 'angry person' for example, you might frame it this way: "Jake, I just want you to know that when you get upset in a meeting, it makes me feel like the discussion is over and I can't make a contribution."

If you're dealing with gossip, try something like: "Ryan, on Tuesday when you told me what happened to Greg on the weekend, I felt like that was something Greg should have told me directly."

Do you hear the difference between explaining and blaming?

Blaming others is a guarantee that the only person who won't grow is you.

5. BE SPECIFIC

Giving one or two specific incidents is much better than making general accusations or commenting on personality traits. "The other day in the meeting" or "In your email on the August numbers yesterday" is much more helpful than "You just always seem so frustrated."

The more specific you are, the more you de-escalate conflict and move toward a hopeful ending.

6. TELL THEM YOU WANT THINGS TO GET BETTER

What the person you're confronting needs is hope. At this point, they probably feel defensive, ashamed and (hopefully) sorry.

Let them know the gifts they bring to the table and the good they do.

Tell them you are looking forward to the future and want things to work out.

7. PRAY FOR THEM

I know this sounds trite, but it's not. Don't pray *about* them. Pray *for* them.

It is almost impossible to stay angry with someone you pray for.

It can also give you empathy for them, and at least in your minds eye, it places you both firmly at the foot of the cross in need of forgiveness. It will take any smirk of superiority out of your attitude, which goes a long way toward solving problems.

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