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Relationships

Conflict Styles

Vocabulary: value compromise collaborate

Mini-Lesson: Forming Opinions

Literacy Practice: Advice Column

►► Discussion

What do you think of when you hear the word *conflict*?

A conflict is a disagreement between two or more people.

What kinds of things do people disagree about?

There are positive and negative ways to handle conflict. Think of positive ways to handle conflict. Write your ideas here.

Read the passage to find out the different ways people handle conflict.



Conflict Styles

Like snowflakes, no two people are alike. Each of us has our own ideas about the world and our place in it. Even in close relationships, the other person might not share all of our **values** and beliefs. Disagreeing on all sorts of things is normal. We disagree on how to raise children or who should do the laundry. We handle these disagreements, which are called conflicts, in different ways.



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Stop and Think:

**Think about a time that you disagreed with someone.
How did you handle the conflict?
How did the conflict make you feel? Why?**

There are five common conflict styles. Do any of these styles describe how you handle conflict?



1. Walk Away: I prefer not to argue, so I walk away or keep quiet. I withdraw when I need time and space to think about the issue. But when I avoid the problem too often, I feel powerless and angry.



2. Your Way: I want my partner to be happy, so I give in. I end the argument to keep the peace. I do not mind giving in when the problem is not important to me. But, if I give in every time, I am ignoring my own needs. I begin to feel angry with my partner.

3. My Way: I know I am right, so I don't want to waste my time listening to my partner. I speak my mind and stand my ground. Sometimes, I lose my temper and yell, but this frightens my partner and we end up arguing more.



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4. Half Way: I listen to my partner. Then we talk and try to reach a **compromise**. We both give up something, but meeting halfway can be just a quick fix to prevent an argument. We might miss a chance to work out a better solution.



5. Our Way: We both try to find a solution to the problem. We talk and listen to each other. It takes time and energy to **collaborate**, but in the end, we feel good. Two heads are better than one.

The way we respond to conflict can either help us or harm us. To keep relationships healthy, we must respond in ways that do not hurt either person. We must learn to make choices that turn conflict into a positive experience—a chance to grow and learn.

.....

Check the ideas you wrote on page 21 about handling conflict.

Can you find your ideas in the passage?

If not, do your ideas connect in some way to the ideas in the passage? How?

►► Discussion

1. Think about two important people in your life. Match them to the conflict styles in the passage. Was it easy to match the people to the conflict styles? Why or why not?
2. Which conflict style is most positive? Explain your choice.
3. Reread the first three conflict styles. What leads to negative feelings in a conflict?
4. How do you think conflict can be turned into a positive experience?
5. Speaking one's mind is important. Yet, it is also important to listen to the other person. When should people speak their minds? What kinds of things block people from speaking their minds? How does being silenced make people feel?

Vocabulary

Circle the best meaning for each bolded word.

Figure out what the word means by looking at how it is used in the sentence.

1. He could have kept the wallet that he found. But because of his **values**, he returned the wallet to the owner.
(a) greed and dishonesty (b) strong feelings of love
(c) ideas about right and wrong (d) love of money
2. We finally came up with a **compromise**. I'm going to pay for his guitar lessons. He has to get a part-time job.
(a) give-and-take solution (b) problem with no solution
(c) argument (d) broken promise
3. Everyone in the community **collaborated** to solve the pothole problem. The city repaved our street last week.
(a) gave up (b) refused
(c) worked together (d) had a celebration

Write an answer for each question. Use complete sentences.

1. Different **values** are important to different people. For example, some people think being honest is more important than anything else. What are your most important values?

2. Describe the last **compromise** you made with someone. What did you give up to find a solution? What did the other person give up?

3. Sometimes it is good to work alone. Sometimes it is better to **collaborate**. Describe the last time you had to complete a project or make a decision. Did you work alone or did you collaborate with someone?

Dictionary Use

Do you remember what information a dictionary provides? A dictionary

gives the definitions of a word,
gives the parts of speech of a word,
shows how to spell plural forms, and
shows how to use the word.

Here is some other information a dictionary provides.

Syllables: divides the word into parts

Verb Forms: shows how to spell verb forms

col-lab-o-rate (v.) collaborated; collaborating 1: to work with another person or group in order to achieve or do something: COOPERATE
2: to give help to an enemy who has invaded your country during a war
(He went to jail for collaborating with the enemy.)

Synonym

Use the dictionary entry for *collaborate* to answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think it is a good idea to divide long words into syllables?

2. Cover the dictionary entry. Divide *collaborate* into syllables. _____

Compare how you divided *collaborate* with the dictionary entry.

Do you have to divide words in the same way as a dictionary?

Why or why not? _____

3. Underline the two verb forms of *collaborate* in the dictionary entry.

Fill in the blank below with the correct verb form of *collaborate*. Check your spelling.

The two groups _____ and solved the problem.

4. Synonyms are words that have the same or similar meaning. Find and circle the synonym for *collaborate* in the dictionary entry.

Mini-Lesson: Forming Opinions

What is an opinion?

An opinion is a belief, judgment, or way of thinking about something. We often hold opinions even if it is hard to prove that they are 100 percent correct.

When do we form opinions?

Do you ever agree or disagree with something that someone says?
Do you ever start an idea with the words “I think” or “I believe”?
Do you ever question a politician’s words?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you have formed opinions. Opinions are shaped by logic, knowledge, and experience. We form opinions every day on all kinds of issues from which brand of soup is best to how to raise children.

Active readers form opinions as they read. Active readers question what the writer says. They choose to agree or disagree with the writer’s ideas. Sometimes readers have mixed feelings about an idea.

Read the following letter to an editor.

As you read, think about the following questions:

1. What are the effects of graffiti?
2. What does the writer think about graffiti?

(Re: The Underground Voice, Sept. 17) Last week five buildings downtown fell victim to graffiti. This is a sad event expected to cost \$1,000 to clean up. And it makes the city look bad. I used to live in an area full of graffiti. Graffiti makes places look rundown. Some say that graffiti is a form of art. But most of the graffiti I see is not art. What happened downtown was simply a selfish form of cheap fun. There truly is no point to graffiti. It is simply the destruction of someone else’s property. And it costs a lot of time and money to clean up! – *Edie Graff, Montreal*

Which of the writer’s ideas do you agree with? Disagree with?
Which ideas do you have mixed feelings about?

.....

The ideas below are from the passage *Conflict Styles*.
Do you agree or disagree with the ideas? Or do you have mixed feelings?
Complete the appropriate sentence(s).

1. Like snowflakes, no two people are alike.

I agree because _____

I disagree because _____

2. Disagreeing on all sorts of things is normal.

I agree because _____

I disagree because _____

3. Meeting halfway can be just a quick fix to prevent an argument.

I agree because _____

I disagree because _____

4. Two heads are better than one.

I agree because _____

I disagree because _____

.....

Advice columns are found in newspapers, magazines, and on the Internet. Many advice columns are about relationships and money. Advice columns also cover topics such as health, pets, and taking care of plants.

The person who writes an advice column may be an expert. Or the advice may be based on personal experience. Many people read advice columns to get information. Others read advice columns for entertainment.

Ellie is a Canadian advice columnist.
Read Letter 1 to Ellie, and Ellie's advice.
Then answer the following questions:

1. Who is in conflict?

2. What does each person in the conflict want?

3. Which conflict style(s) do you recognize in the hairdresser?

4. Do you agree with Ellie's advice? Why or why not?



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►► Discussion

Read Letter 2 to Ellie, and Ellie's advice. Discuss the following questions:

1. Who is in conflict?
2. What does each person in the conflict want?
3. Which conflict style(s) do you recognize in the husband?
4. Do you agree with Ellie's advice? Why or why not?

Letter 1

My friend takes advantage of the fact I'm a hairdresser. She always begs me to cut her hair, saying she has no time for appointments. And she says that the salon where I work is too expensive.

I not only do it for free, but end up providing wine and dinner, since she turns the two-three hours into a social visit.

She's one of my few close female friends. But since she has a good job, I find this nervy and upsetting. Yet how do I stop a pattern that's been going on for a few years?

– *Scissors Friend*

Ellie's Advice to Letter 1

In a bad economy, we all must adapt. You can use logic to change how people act. And you need to insist on what you want.

Next time you chat, ask your friend how the bad economy is affecting her. (She is probably worried). Say that you're feeling the crunch, too, and need to make more money by cutting hair outside of work. Tell her how much you'll be charging and how eager you are for clients.

If your friend still begs for a free haircut, ask HER to bring the dinner and wine.

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Letter 2

Me and my wife always argue. She never admits a mistake or takes responsibility in any conflict. I've apologized many times. She believes my way of thinking is wrong and doesn't believe in talking to a counsellor.

To her, I wasn't generous enough. Then, when I spend more money, the problem is I don't spend enough time with her.

After being at home more, she said, "You don't love me enough." How can I possibly make her happy? What am I doing wrong?

We're in our 40s and have no kids. We both work and have no money problems.

What are a man's duties toward his wife and what are the wife's?

– *Confused*

Ellie's Advice to Letter 2

Both of you have the same roles. You are partners and you both make money. So, you have the same responsibilities: 1) to respect each other and be sensitive to each other's needs; 2) to share tasks and expenses; 3) to work at the marriage.

You two seem 0 for 0 in this useless game of "Who's At Fault." You're both avoiding real communication, but in different ways. Your wife criticizes you constantly. You are defensive.

Face reality – there's no joy or point to this marriage unless you find out what's really going wrong. Maybe you don't express love other than to jump at her barking. Maybe she's unhappy for deeper reasons than you two have been willing to discuss.

Going to counselling may be your only hope for staying together. Tell her.

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Word Attack

Read the paragraph.

Circle ten more words that have a suffix.

Each of us has our own ideas about the world and our place in it. Even in close relationships, the other person might not share all of our values and beliefs. Disagreeing on all sorts of things is normal. We handle these disagreements, which are called conflicts, in different ways.

Suffixes

Many words have more than one part. They have a base word and an end part.

idea ideas
relation relationships

The end part is called a **suffix**.

Read the paragraph.

Circle two compound words.

I listen to my partner. Then we talk and try to reach a compromise. We both give up something, but meeting halfway can be just a quick fix to prevent an argument.

Compound Words

Compound words are made from two or more little words.

Read the sentences.

Divide the bolded words into parts.

We talk and try to reach a **compromise**.

It takes time and energy to **collaborate**.

We must learn to make choices that turn conflict into a positive **experience**.

Divide and Conquer

Some words are hard to read because they are long. It is easier to read long words if you divide them into parts.

For example,

positive po / si / tive