



Reading Task 8103

Read the text and match the titles to each step. One title is extra.

1. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
2. BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS
3. COOL OFF
4. AFFIRM, FORGIVE, OR THANK
5. REMEMBER WHAT YOUR PARTNER SAYS
6. TELL WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU USING "I MESSAGES."

Five Steps for Resolving Conflicts

Conflicts can actually lead to increased understanding and creative thinking. It's how we deal with conflict that determines the outcome. Beyond that, conflict resolution skills can improve relationships and deepen understanding.

Step 1:

Conflicts can't be solved in the face of hot emotions. Take a step back, breathe deep, and gain some emotional distance before trying to talk things out.

Take a moment to think of ten things that make you feel better when you're hot under the collar. Consider some of the following: breathing deeply while making a calm statement, looking at the sky, clearing your desk, splashing cold water on the face or taking a quick walk.

Step 2:

By starting our sentences with "I" we take responsibility for the way we perceive the problem, "I-messages" are a tool for expressing how we feel without attacking or blaming.

This is in sharp contrast to "you-messages" which put others on the defensive and close doors to communication. A statement like 'You've left the kitchen a mess again! Can't you ever clean up after yourself?' will escalate the conflict. Now take a look at how differently an "I-message" comes across: "I'm annoyed because I thought we agreed you'd clean up the kitchen after using it. What happened?"

Step 3:

In the majority of conflicts, both parties have some degree of responsibility. However, most of us try to blame rather than look at our own role in the problem. When we take responsibility, we shift the conflict into an entirely different gear, one where resolution is possible.

Step 4:

Resolving conflicts is a creative act. There are many solutions to a single problem. The key is a willingness to look for compromises. Kindergarten teacher Connie Long describes how her students started having fewer conflicts when they learned how to brainstorm solutions: "My kids were constantly getting into arguments over crayons, erasers, toys. After introducing peacemaking my students started finding ways to solve the/ problem instead of just getting stuck in their own positions."

Step 5:

A handshake, hug, or a kind word gives closure to the conflicts. Forgiveness is the highest form of closure. Just saying thank you at the end of the conflict, or praising the person for working things out sends a message of conciliation (примирение) and gratitude. We preserve our relationships this way, strengthening our connections and working through.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5

