

A Step by Step method to Reduce Conflict in Companies and Other Organizations.

1. **First Meeting: Ask two people who are having conflict to a meeting** where you will be their facilitator and give them two documents. For the following we will use the names John and Jane with any gender, race, or responsibility.

The First Document asks them to respond in writing to three requests within three days. Tell them their document will be kept private from other employees. Placing their document into their employee file is optional.

- Describe what they are doing that creates conflict.
- Describe why they are doing what they do that creates conflict.
- What they will do to reduce conflict.

Second Document: Ask each person to create a second document that:

- Lists what they would like to request that the other person starts doing, or stops doing, that will reduce conflict.
- Ask that they give this document to you with the first document.
- Tell them that the list they create can contain as many requests as they wish to make.
- Tell both parties that there will be a meeting where they are to go through each request, and verbally make their requests to the other person and agree to a mutually acceptable response.
- Give them a CommunicateForever App and or Card deck with the 48 communication skills and tell them they are to memorize and use SKILLstarter statements in the second meeting and in all future communications.

2. **Second meeting:** Have Jane make all of her requests of John, and then have John make his requests of Jane, where they seek agreement for each request. As the facilitator be ready to interrupt John and Jane's conversation and make statements similar to the following for any of the 48 communication skills.

- Excuse me John, do you want to ask Jane to please stay on 'One Subject'? It's difficult to solve one difficulty while introducing many different difficulties.
- Excuse me Jane, do you want to ask John for a 'Do Over'? You may not like the way you spoke to John. Or, you may feel uncomfortable with the way he spoke to you.
- John, do you want to ask Jane 'Is your sarcasm helping this conversation'?
- Jane, do you want to ask John, 'Please tell me what you are 'Angry' about?
- John, do you want to ask Jane, 'May I 'Summarize what's been discussed to try to calm and clarify'?
- Jane, do you want to ask John to either 'Just Listen, or Listen and provide a solution'?
- John, do you want to ask Jane to say, 'This is a safe place, I won't be speaking harshly or yelling'?
- Jane, do you want to ask John to 'Tell me what you heard me say'?
- John, do you want to ask Jane to reduce what she wants to a 'Simple Brief Request'?
- Jane and John, please keep a journal about which skills have and have not been used and what the results are.

3. **Results**

- Employees need to be told that management is serious about functional teamwork and collaboration and that effective interpersonal communication skills are necessary for continued employment.
- Repeat this with any two other people. Some may appreciate what they are learning. Ask them to keep a journal of skills used or not used, and of improvements in creating effective communication and teamwork.
- Document results as best you can for turnover, absenteeism, sick leave, health care costs, your people's opinion of the quality of their culture, teamwork, and collaboration. Survey employees, seeking to learn if employees are proud of their culture, and if the culture is helping to attract more capable employees.
- Some people may decide to make no effort to improve their communication skills. Document these results and ask for their signature on the document.
- Collect and *share* positive stories, and share the stories, or have encouraging stories shared in lunch and learns.
- Some may continue to be disruptive and even blame others. Factually, without emotional words, document their conduct. You may find it beneficial to replace such individuals, it being not as difficult and as expensive as having continuous tension and conflict.

4. **Training a Facilitator:** By using this document a person may become a self-taught facilitator, and then train others. Or contact CommunicateForever for on-site facilitator training while working with people having real conflict.