CONFLICT Resolution

The Washington Times
Dear Teachers:

The newspaper gives you a unique opportunity to motivate your students. Language development, reading, social studies, math, and current events are just a few of the areas that can be taught with the newspaper.

To make your Newspaper in Education experience an enjoyable one, consider these suggestions:

- Before you introduce the section, read it through. Make note of activities that need advance planning.
- Each morning, familiarize yourself with the day’s newspaper and selected activities. Some activities can be completed quickly; others are designed to be finished over a period of time.
- Give students plenty of space when they’re using the newspaper. They can sit at tables or on the floor.
- When necessary, separate sections of the newspaper. Give students only the sections they will be using.
- Make sure scissors and tape or glue are available for activities that require them.
- Have fun with it! “Conflict Resolution” is designed to provide students with an exciting way to learn about cooperation and non-violent problem-solving.

References

- Violence in the Schools — Developing Prevention Plans, Center for Civic Education (student workbook and teacher’s guide)
- The Norway Channel — The Secret Talks that Led to the Middle East Peace Accord by Jane Corbin
- Getting Together — Building a Relationship That Gets to Yes by Roger Fisher and Scott Brown
- Creative Conflict Resolution by William J. Kreidler
- Psychology Today — An Introduction, edited by Arlyn Lazerson
- Peace on the Playground — Nonviolent Ways of Problem-Solving by Eileen Lucas
- Conflict Resolution: An Elementary School Curriculum by Gail Sadalla, Meg Holmberg, and Jim Holligan
- Conflict Resolution: A Secondary School Curriculum by Gail Sadalla, Manti Henriquez, and Meg Holmberg
- Creative Conflict Solving for Kids by Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (student workbook and teacher’s guide)
- The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution — Preserving Relationships at Work, at Home, and in the Community by Dudley Weeks
- World Book Encyclopedia

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What’s a Conflict, Anyway?

In this supplement, we’ll be looking at a subject we all know something about: conflict. We experience it often in our everyday lives and probably have many feelings about it. Before reading any further, think about what conflict means to you and how you would define it. Write your definition here.

My Definition of Conflict:

When you think about conflict, do arguments, loud voices, and confrontations come to mind? Compare notes with your classmates and you’ll probably find words like “fight,” “disagreement,” or even “violence” coming up frequently. Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary gives this definition of conflict:

1) fight, battle, war.

2) a. competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons); b. mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands.

3) the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction.

This definition expresses what people usually mean by “conflict”; your own definition probably sounds similar to it. If so, you probably think of conflict as something negative or uncomfortable. Most people do.

But is conflict always bad? If you look closely at the second part of the dictionary definition, you’ll see that conflict involves competing or opposing forces. The conflict may be about ideas, interests, or just differences between people.

If you’ve ever had a difference of opinion with your best friend about which rock group is best, what movie to see, or whether to study at her house or yours, you’ve had a conflict. You probably resolved this conflict without breaking up your friendship. In fact, if you’ve been friends for a long time, you’ve no doubt had many of these conflicts, although some were probably more serious than others.

In the following pages, we’ll be looking at conflict, the forms it takes, and the ways people handle it. We’ll also come up with some ways of looking at differences that could change the way you think about and resolve your own conflicts.

ACTIVITY

Look through your newspaper for pictures of people involved in conflicts. Can you tell from their expressions how they’re feeling? As a class, make a list of the emotions you see expressed. Can you think of any other emotions people in conflict might have?

Conflict Emotions:
In studying literature, you may have learned about the types of conflicts that occur frequently in stories.

Four Basic Types of Dramatic Conflict
In fact, it's hard to write a story that doesn't have any conflict in it. The plots of most stories usually involve conflict in one form or another. That's where the dramatic tension arises that moves the story along and keeps you interested.

Of course, these conflicts occur in everyday life as well as in stories. In interpersonal (person to person) conflicts — the type we'll focus on — the source of the conflict may be values, needs, or resources. People may have differences because they have opposing ideas or beliefs, because their emotional needs — for love, self-esteem, and so on — conflict (or seem to), or because they want the same material resource. In some conflicts, members of a group have differences among themselves or with another group.

Would it surprise you to know that conflicts over resources are usually the easiest to work out? Conflicts over values and strongly held beliefs tend to be the hardest to resolve. People usually defend their beliefs vigorously and often become very emotional when challenged. People take conflicts over issues like religious beliefs much more personally than they do conflicts over material goods.

The tricky part is that conflicts over needs or values can sometimes be disguised as conflicts over simpler matters. You and a friend may get into an argument if you forget to pay him the money you owe him. But if he's really upset because you didn't keep a secret when he asked you to, paying back the money isn't likely to solve the problem. The money issue is covering up the real issue, which is trust.

ACTIVITY

Pick out a favorite short story and decide which type or types of dramatic conflict is the main focus of the story. Briefly describe the story to your class and point out the conflict involved. As a class, see if you can think of similar conflicts that have been in the news.

Look for examples of each of the four types of dramatic conflict in news articles. (You might want to divide the class into groups so that each group can look at a different section of the newspaper.) Circle or underline each example of conflict you find. In your own words, explain the conflict to the rest of the class.

Look for an article in your newspaper about each of the three kinds of interpersonal conflicts: resource, emotional needs, and value conflicts. Find one of each and share your findings with your class. Do this over a week or two and tally the results to see which type of conflict is most frequently in the news.

Look for a picture of someone in the news who's involved in a conflict over a value or belief. What emotions do you think this person is having? What value or belief is involved?

Expressions of Conflict
Arguments
Fistfights
Competitions
Debates
Taking a case to court
Wars
Protests
Strikes
Boycotts
Civil disobedience
Dyeing your hair purple
Committing a crime
Defending your ideas
Making a difficult decision
Controlling your temper
Acting out

Are all of these expressions of conflict bad? If not, why not? Does the way the conflict is expressed make a difference or is conflict itself the problem? Discuss.
When you look at this picture, what do you see? Do your classmates see the same thing? Perceptions may differ, but one point of view is just as valid as another.

A Carbon Copy World

Often we feel threatened by people who are not like us. The perception of threat is one of the ingredients of conflict. Sometimes we don’t stop to think how boring things would be if we were all alike. If everyone looked, thought, and acted exactly the same way, would there really be a point in ever getting to know anyone else?

Conflicts usually involve resources, emotional needs, values, or a combination of these. The basic elements of conflict can take several forms*.

1. Differences of opinion, outlook, and values. People come from different backgrounds and life experiences and, as a result, have different ways of thinking, believing, and acting. A parent who was brought up in a strict home will very likely have a different approach to raising her own children than a parent raised in a permissive home.

2. Needs that are denied or ignored or that seem to clash. If you need to study for a test, but your friend needs to tell you about something upsetting that happened to him, you’ve got conflicting needs. Both needs are legitimate, but it may take serious thought to figure out how to satisfy both.

3. Perceptions that differ and misperceptions. Even though you and a classmate may both be present during a fight, you may think that Joe started it, while your friend is certain that Tom did. Same fight — different perceptions. Many conflicts are based on differing perceptions.

4. Misuse of power, inequalities in power. Conflicts often happen when individuals have unequal power to affect what happens to them or when one person tries to control someone else. You may experience a conflict with your parents because they make the rules and you feel you don’t have any say in those rules.

5. Emotions. Feelings are often involved in conflicts. The stronger the emotions, the more likely it will be difficult! Emotions can affect conflicts in several ways. They can overwhelm you, so that it’s hard to deal with the conflict calmly. But if you try to cover them up, you may become even more upset. In addition, the other person may not understand where you’re coming from.

6. Internal conflicts. Sometimes your own confused feelings or perceptions can spill over and affect your relationships. If one of your parents has recently remarried and you aren’t sure how you feel about it, you might be moody and upset. Although your conflict is internal, you could find yourself at odds with your friends. This is especially true if they don’t know what’s happening.

*The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution by Dudley Weeks

Think of a time when you experienced a conflict like the ones described on this page. Briefly describe your conflict in one of the boxes provided. Underneath, write whether you think the conflict was over resources, emotional needs, values, or a combination.

Activity

Pick out a comic strip in which a character is facing a conflict like one you’ve had. Describe the conflict to your class and explain how the character deals with it. Do you like the character’s way of handling the conflict? What could he/she have done instead?

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Think back for a moment to the definition of conflict you wrote down on page 3. When you defined conflict, did any negative words come to mind? Fights, arguments, and violence are the negative side of conflict, and, unfortunately, they are the only side many people know.

Many of us have been taught that conflict is something to be avoided, that any kind of conflict is bad. In fact, conflict is unavoidable. Anywhere differing needs, values, and perceptions exist, the potential for conflict exists, too. Even if you were the only person around, you’d still have conflicts — with yourself! If you don’t learn to handle differences constructively, it only increases the chances they’ll turn sour.

There are many benefits to be gained from conflicts. Conflict can bring issues out in the open and help improve a relationship. It can stir new thoughts and ideas and help you find better solutions to problems. Learning to accept and deal successfully with conflict will help you understand and get along with many different types of people, not just those you like.

Did you ever hear “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all”? What other messages about conflict have you heard? On your own, come up with a list of these messages and write them below.

Messages I’ve Heard About Conflict

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Compare your list with those of your classmates and decide what attitude each message reveals about conflict. Do you agree with the message? Why or why not?

Conflict Pros . . .

“Conflict is an outgrowth of diversity.” — Dudley Weeks, author of The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution

We Just Don’t See Eye to Eye

Does every conflict have a solution? Potentially, most conflicts do, if the participants really want to find one. But that doesn’t mean people will no longer have differences. There are times when, no matter what people do, they still can’t see eye to eye. In that case, it’s O.K. to “agree to disagree” — as long as it’s done peacefully.

Discuss: Can you think of an issue in the news that might require agreeing to disagree?

There have been many cases in the news in which someone who hurt someone else blamed the victim for “making me do it.” Can you think of any examples? Do you think this is a good excuse for violence? Discuss.

. . . and Cons

When a conflict results in someone getting hurt, either physically or emotionally, it’s a sure bet the people involved could have handled the conflict in a better way.

Even if you try to walk away from conflicts, you’ll probably have bad feelings. If you don’t like being teased but don’t say anything about it, you’ve avoided getting into an argument. But the teasing probably won’t stop, and you’ll still feel frustrated and upset.
Violence Isn’t Just Physical . . .

Violence is not limited to physical harm. Emotional abuse, name-calling, and yelling can hurt a person just as much as physical blows.

Read the following list and circle the items that could damage someone emotionally. Put a star by the ones that could help someone feel good.

- understanding
- using sarcasm
- mocking
- ignoring
- cooperating
- teasing
- yelling
- being patient
- stereotyping
- listening
- ridiculing
- gossiping
- staying calm
- being truthful
- making suggestions
- acting superior

If someone hurts you, you might be tempted to get even. But remember, violence leads to more violence, whether it’s physical or emotional. You don’t have to return abuse, but you don’t have to take it, either. If someone calls you a name or makes fun of you, tell them you don’t like it. If you stand up for yourself without copying the other person’s behavior, the behavior will often stop.

If someone says something that makes you really upset, take a time-out before responding. That way, you’ll have a chance to calm down and will be less likely to respond with violence.

We can all think of instances when conflict has resulted in violence. Two countries go to war . . . racial tension erupts in riots . . . two feuding classmates give each other bloody noses . . . members of rival gangs shoot at one another. Sometimes the initial reason for the conflict is major, but often it’s minor. What was initially a misunderstanding may end up with people getting seriously hurt.

How does this happen? Often, when someone says or does something that hurts us, we feel like getting even. When emotions are running high, we sometimes overreact or react without thinking. The trouble is, if you hit someone because he called you a name, it probably won’t make him sorry he did it. It’s likely to make him want to hit you back, since he doesn’t like being hit any more than you liked being called a name.

Many great leaders, from Martin Luther King Jr. to Mohandas Gandhi, have championed peaceful conflict resolution because they recognized that “violence begets violence.” Most conflicts don’t involve violence, but even the ones that do could be resolved peacefully.

ACTIVITY

- As a class, look for articles in today’s paper that tell about violent conflicts. Identify the parties involved and the cause of the conflict. Divide into groups and have each group analyze one of the conflicts. With your group, make a list of other ways the parties could have handled the problem.
- Look for photos in your newspaper and/or magazines that depict violent conflicts.
- Pick an individual who has worked for peace and prepare a report on him or her to share with your class. Your subject could be someone in your community or someone you’ve read about. Why did he or she decide to work for peace? What has he or she done to promote peace?
Mother Teresa 1979
She was recognized for her work with the poor in India.

Lech Walesa 1983
He championed workers’ rights in Poland through peaceful means.

Desmond Tutu 1984
Recognized for his non-violent efforts to end racial segregation in South Africa.

The Dalai Lama 1989
Recognized for his peaceful efforts to end Chinese rule in Tibet.

Mikhail Gorbachev 1990
He promoted peace and better relations between Communist and non-Communist nations.
The Nobel Peace Prize is given every year to a person judged to have done the most effective work in the cause of international peace. Along with the other Nobel prizes, the Peace Prize is the result of a legacy from Alfred Nobel (1833-1896), a Swedish industrialist.

Nobel was the inventor of dynamite, a material with much destructive potential. He wanted the wealth it brought him to serve a peaceful purpose. In his will, he established a fund to reward people from various walks of life whose work helped humanity.

The Nobel Peace Prize shows how important peacemakers are. Ever since the award began in 1901, it has been one of the most prestigious honors a person can attain.

As an ongoing project, keep your eye out for peacemakers in the news. See if you can predict who the next Nobel Peace Prize winner will be. Hint: Watch for peacemakers who are in the news frequently. Write the name(s) of your predicted winner(s) here.

I predict the next Nobel Peace Prize winner will be:
Two, Four, Six, Eight, How Do We De-escalate?

When a conflict occurs, the way you respond will have one of two effects. It will escalate (increase or heighten) the conflict, or it will de-escalate (cool down and help resolve) the conflict.

These conditions can cause a conflict to escalate.

1. Emotions like anger or frustration are “acted out.”
2. One or both parties feels threatened by the other.
3. Other people get involved and take sides.
4. There’s a past history of negative conflict between the parties or a lack of interest in maintaining a good relationship.
5. Important needs are ignored.
6. The parties lack problem-solving skills.

On the other hand, these conditions can cause a conflict to de-escalate.

1. The people involved focus on the problem instead of each other.
2. Emotions are expressed but not “acted out.”
3. The participants choose non-threatening behavior and words.
4. The parties involved have handled conflicts well in the past.
5. Needs are acknowledged and discussed.
6. The parties know how to solve conflicts creatively.

Famous Conflicts

Hamlet — Although he’s fictional, Hamlet is probably the most famous example of a person at war with himself. His inability to decide how to respond to his father’s death and his mother’s speedy remarriage drives the action of Shakespeare’s play.

King John and the English nobles — The first glimmers of the idea of individual rights occurred in 1215 when a group of nobles forced England’s king to sign a document that limited his power. The Magna Carta was mainly intended to curb abuses the nobles objected to. In fact, it later became the model for constitutional government and democratic rule.

Galileo Galilei and the Catholic Church — His ideas on science (in particular, that the earth was a planet that moved around the sun) conflicted with the teachings of the Church. He was forced to publicly renounce his theories but continued to write about them. He laid the foundation for modern physics.

American Revolution — This rebellion against England resulted in the birth of a new nation based on democratic ideas. Americans achieved their independence, but many lives were lost in the process.

French Revolution — This uprising introduced democratic principles to France but only at the cost of much bloodshed. The revolution led to sweeping changes, including the end of supreme rule by the French monarchy and the rise of the middle class.

Henry David Thoreau — He refused to pay taxes he considered unjust as an expression of his views against slavery. His doctrine of passive resistance influenced thinkers such as Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi, and leaders of the American civil rights movement.

Civil War — Because of this struggle, the Union was preserved, but great loss of life, material damage, and social upheaval was the price.

Woman’s suffrage — The suffragists in the early 1900s had to overcome widespread beliefs that women were less intelligent and capable than men. By organizing, marching, picketing, and being sent to jail, the suffragists drew attention to their cause and eventually achieved voting rights for women.

The Civil Rights movement — African-Americans and their supporters worked to achieve full civil rights for all Americans, regardless of race, in spite of much hostility toward their cause.

Discuss: Is violence ever justified? What other options might be used?
There's More Than One Way to Solve a Problem!

You already know some ways of handling conflicts. Let’s take the example of an argument during recess about who gets to use the only baseball mitt. If there are two different groups competing for the mitt, they may react to the conflict in one of several ways:

1. One of the groups may give in. This group may be afraid that it can’t win the conflict with the other group, which may have bigger and stronger members. Or the group may decide that getting to use the mitt is not worth an argument. This group is using avoidance to cope with the conflict.

2. The groups may get into a shouting match or a physical fight over the mitt. They probably see the conflict as a win/lose situation. In other words, only one party can win, which means the other group must lose. The groups are using aggression or conquest to deal with the conflict.

3. The groups may appeal to someone else to solve the conflict for them. This could be a teacher, a playground bully, or a friend of one of the groups. This way of handling conflict is called appealing to another authority. The parties in the conflict decide that they can’t or don’t want to work out the problem by themselves, so a third party is called in to help.

4. The groups may try to work through the situation together. If they take this approach, they probably think it’s possible for everyone to have a good outcome. They may decide to take turns using the mitt. Or they may decide to play together. This approach to conflict is called problem-solving or cooperation.

There may be times when one or the other of these approaches seems best. If both parties in a conflict are really angry, you may decide that asking someone else — like a parent or teacher — for help is the best way to avoid a fight. If the conflict is over something unimportant — if you don’t care who uses the bathroom first — avoidance may prevent a needless argument.

The problem is that many people rely on one of the first three methods to solve all or most of their conflicts. Always avoiding conflict can be just as bad as always getting into a fight. If you always depend on someone else to resolve things for you, you’ll never learn how to do it yourself. That’s why problem-solving is such an important skill to learn.

Want to Hear Something Funny?

Many peacemakers have found that one of their most powerful tools is a sense of humor. Being able to laugh and make others laugh can dissolve tension and bring people together when nothing else can.

When Israeli and PLO representatives began the talks that led to 1993’s peace accord, their Norwegian host told them that he would wait outside the meeting room unless they got into a fistfight. Because everyone knew he was joking, they all laughed.

A good joke makes people feel good. It doesn’t hurt anyone or interfere with problem-solving.

Look for an example in a news article or a comic strip of someone using humor in a positive way during a conflict. Explain why you think the humor works in that situation.

ACTIVITY

Take a minute to think back over conflicts you’ve had recently. Which conflict resolution method do you use most often? In the space below, describe how you handle most of your conflicts.

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Find a comic strip that shows a character dealing with a conflict. Paste or tape the strip in the space below. In the next column, describe the method the character is using to deal with the conflict.

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Searching for Peace in the Middle East

In September 1993, the world watched as history was made on the White House lawn. Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization president Yasser Arafat signed a peace agreement after many months of negotiations.

The road to the agreement was long and difficult. The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has involved bitterness, hatred, and violence on both sides ever since the Israeli War of Independence in 1948. Many Palestinians who lived in the area were displaced by the war. The PLO, which officially represents these people, never recognized Israel’s right to exist. To make matters worse, Arabs and Jews in the region had had conflicts before the war even happened.

How did the Israelis and the PLO get past their differences? A more complicated conflict is hard to imagine. That’s why it’s interesting to note that the parties used many of the same skills we’ve been discussing.

A neutral party helped bring them together. Norway, a friend to both countries, arranged the peace talks. The Norwegian hosts provided comfortable, secure meeting places and a relaxed atmosphere that helped the process along.

Even these bitter enemies realized they had much to gain by making peace. Both sides would feel safer if the fighting ended. Also, each could spend more time on economic development and social issues.

Because of their mutual needs, the parties reached an agreement on disputed territories. The agreement provided for a gradual shift to Palestinian control in areas occupied by Israel. That way, both sides can assess how things are going.

The differences between the two sides were so great that at times they nearly gave up. There were sometimes quarrels and angry words. But because the participants knew they had common ground, they kept trying.

The agreement was the first step. Israel and the Palestinians have a long way to go to resolve all of their conflicts. But the fact that they achieved an agreement this time proved it could be done.

☛ Follow the news on the Arab-Israeli conflict and keep a scrapbook with news articles describing its progress.

You Can’t Always Get What You Want . . .

When you’re trying to resolve a conflict, it helps to remember the difference between needs and wants.

Needs are conditions essential to your well-being. Wants are things you’d like to have.

Even though you might really want something, it isn’t a need unless doing without it would really harm you in some way.

Conflict resolution doesn’t mean that everyone always gets what they want. People’s wants often conflict with what’s good for them or someone else. It’s easy to confuse needs and wants. A good way to tell the difference is to remember that when your needs are met, you’ll feel secure, well, and at peace with yourself and others.

A psychologist named Abraham Maslow theorized that our needs explain most of our behavior. He organized needs in a pyramid with the most basic needs at the bottom. The higher needs (growth needs) can be fulfilled only when the basic needs (the four lower levels) have been met. Our actions are attempts to meet one or the other of these needs.

Maslow’s Pyramid

- **Self-Fulfillment** — the need to fill your creative potential as a person.
- **Self-Worth** — the need to feel important, respected, worthy, and capable.
- **Love and Friendship** — the need to have love and a sense of belonging.
- **Safety** — the need to be safe from threats, to have trust.
- **Physical** — the need for food, water, shelter, recreation, etc.

☛ Search your newspaper advertisements for examples of things that meet needs and wants. Label each one with an “N” or a “W.” If you’ve labeled it a need, which need is it on Maslow’s pyramid?
Cooperation, peacemaking, and problem-solving are all names for a way of resolving conflicts so that everybody wins. It probably won’t be possible for everybody to get everything they want. But a good resolution will do several things.

To be a peacemaker, you have to be willing to work at it. This may sound simple, but it’s not. You have to be willing to look at your own behavior honestly. You have to see how your actions affect other people, in good ways or bad. You have to be willing to change behaviors that aren’t effective.

The two skills that are most important in conflict resolution are listening and communicating. A peacemaker learns to listen even when he or she doesn’t like what’s being said. A peacemaker also learns how to express needs and feelings directly, in a way that doesn’t threaten other people.

What a Good Solution Will Do

- It will improve the relationships among the people involved.
- It will make people feel better about each other and themselves.
- Everyone will benefit from it — their needs will be met.
- And it will work: It’s not a good resolution if it can’t be put into practice.

Looking at Peace

Try to find an illustration in your newspaper or a magazine of a peace symbol. Paste it in the space provided, or create your own peace symbol.
No matter what conflict you’re involved in, no matter how difficult it seems, there’s usually a way to resolve it. To solve a conflict cooperatively, you have to:

1. Define the problem. You have to figure out what the conflict is about — in other words, what needs, values, or resources are involved. It’s important to focus on the problem, not the people.

2. Find your common ground. Figure out the needs you have in common and outcomes that would benefit everybody.

3. Think of as many possible solutions as you can. At this point, you’re not worried about which ones are best. You’re simply brainstorming to come up with options.

4. Pick a solution or a combination of solutions and try them out. If the solution works — congratulations! You’ve done a great job of resolving the problem. If it doesn’t work, you’re still in good shape, because you’ve already thought of other options. Simply go back, pick another solution, and try again. You haven’t failed if the first solution doesn’t work. In fact, it may take several tries before you find the one that works best.

Let’s take an example of a conflict and see how cooperative conflict resolution might work in an everyday situation.

Let’s say you and your best friend have been assigned to work on a class project together. The project is due at the end of the week, but you’ve spent so much time arguing that you haven’t gotten much done.

You complain that your friend isn’t devoting enough time to the project. Your friend says the time would be more than enough if you didn’t spend most of it complaining. You’re getting nowhere, and the deadline is getting closer.

You decide to try a cooperative approach to the problem. The first step is to define the conflict — to decide what it’s about.

You realize that it’s best to pick a time and place when you won’t be rushed or distracted. You decide to go for a walk in the park and talk things over there.

You both agree at first that the conflict is about the amount of time you need for the project. It seems to be a conflict over a resource — time. But you know there’s more to it. You’ve been angry with your friend for hanging around with a new student at school. You’re really afraid of losing your friend, and that’s why you’ve been complaining.

Without accusing or threatening your friend, you tell him/her how you feel. You agree that the conflict is really about your need to feel that your friend cares about you. You have to find a solution that meets your need, that meets your friend’s need to keep your friendship and have fun with other people, and that lets you get your project done on time.

The next step is to brainstorm for possible solutions. Take a minute to think about ways to solve this problem. Write your options here.

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Now, discuss the options you listed with your classmates. Did anyone have a good idea that you didn’t think of?

As a class, choose one or more options that you think will work best. Remember the things a good solution does: It allows everyone’s needs to be met, it strengthens the relationship, and it works.

Discuss as a class: What could have happened to make the conflict escalate? Think of things each person could have said or done to make the conflict get worse. Write them here.

_____________________________________________________________
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Discuss: What could you do to keep the conflict from escalating if the other person said or did things that weren’t helpful?
What If They Won't Play Fair?

Resolving conflicts peacefully can be hard enough if everyone involved wants a peaceful solution. But what if you want to resolve the conflict and the other person doesn’t? Or what if the other person doesn’t think there is a conflict?

Often, it takes just one person who’s committed to solving the conflict to make that happen. The other person or people may not have the same conflict resolution skills you have. But once they see you focusing on the problem, not on them, and looking for a solution that works for everyone, they will often follow your lead.

If you’ve tried to use conflict resolution and the other person won’t cooperate, you may have to try something else. Ask a teacher, parent, or some other trustworthy person to mediate (help you reach an agreement). It’s usually best to solve conflicts on your own, but there may be times when you can’t. If you think there’s a danger of you or someone else getting hurt, ask for help.

Try to think of conflict situations in which you might need to use avoidance or get help from someone else. Make a list of them here.

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Activity

Find an example of a conflict in the news that resulted in someone getting hurt. Can you think of ways the conflict could have been handled so that no one was hurt? Discuss as a class.

Most societies have ways of handling conflicts covered by laws. What are they? Find an example in your newspaper of someone handling a conflict in this way.

Role Playing

Divide into groups and pick one of the following situations to act out in front of your class. Your group should decide ahead of time how to handle the conflict. Then have the class discuss how well the conflict was handled. Ask the class to suggest other ways the conflict could be resolved.

1. Two classmates have a conflict because there’s only one copy of Jurassic Park in the library and they both want to take it home.
2. A mother and daughter have a conflict because the daughter wants to wear makeup and the mother doesn’t want her to.
3. Two friends get into a fight because one made the basketball team and the other one didn’t.
4. A teacher and a student have a conflict because the student loves to talk in class and the teacher wants a quiet classroom.
5. The class bully tries to get a new student to give him the candy bar from his lunch box.
6. One person is being treated badly by his/her friends because he/she doesn’t want to do something dangerous.
7. One student confronts other students who were making fun of his/her best friend, who is absent that day.
8. You get into a fight with your younger brother or sister because he/she told your parents about something you did wrong.
9. A student who belongs to a minority group is walking down the street when a group of older students starts calling him/her names.
10. Two rival gangs are out to get each other because members of both gangs have been injured and each gang blames the other.
Character Education Lessons

I. Thinking about problems: Moral reasoning

Famous child psychologists, Piaget and Kohlberg, discovered that the way we think about moral problems develops throughout our lives. As we get older, our moral development becomes less self-centered and more complex, taking into consideration many factors. Thinking about problems at higher stages means that you take longer-term consequences seriously. Even though you may wonder if the actions will impact your character or integrity, you begin to consider your actions’ effects on others. Since you are thinking about morality both for yourself and others, you are beginning to think about the different values that exist.

Question: Alice has family chores to do on Saturday morning, but she wants to go shopping. She knows her parents will say no. What should Alice do and why?

Stage 1 Reasoning

Alice should stay home and do her chores. Since she has a schedule that her parents could find out that she didn’t obey their rules and probably won’t do them. But if she is really busy and she is sure that they wouldn’t even notice, then she could do whatever she wants.

Stage 2 Reasoning

Parents work all day and give their children, clothes and shelter, or food. Also, they put some work to know of the peace. It is only that least she can do for them.

Stage 3-4 Reasoning

Alice should just do the work. She needs to show appreciation for the things she has, and work hard to take care of her. She should be grateful to them and get her chores done before meeting her friends. Besides her conscience would really bother her if she didn’t and she would have to deal with all that guilt when her parents come home and are disappointed. She will feel better about herself if she just gets it done quickly. It’s a basic duty. She is trying to do it.

Stage 5 Reasoning

If Alice made a promise to her parents then she should keep her word. Otherwise people lose trust and more importantly, they lose her own integrity. It’s so important to keep your word and be responsible. Then you become really trustworthy and have a sense of self-respect that your friend would understand. The mall will be open all day.

Stage 6 Reasoning

What if everybody just did…

II. How is love like ice cream?

6 qualities of true love

We experience many different kinds of love: the love you have for your parents, the love you have for your friends, sisters, or friends, the love that your parents have for you, and so on. Each of these kinds of love is different. It is also the love we have for animals, especially pets, and feelings. No matter what the degree, each of these kinds of love stems from our essential needs - but especially they reflect the deepest desires of our heart. There are so many things to say about love but one of the most important is the curiosity of love. If the love we experience hurts our conscience or our hearts, it is not healthy, true or sincere. Everybody wants to experience the most he can of the different qualities of love. True love is long-lasting, sincere and unselfish.

1. True love is for the best interests of others.

It is the love that ensures the other’s welfare is the primary concern. The what’s in it for me thoughts are minimal. For example, parents live to benefit their children, doing what ever they can to help their children grow up safely and make the most of their talents.

2. True love is unconditional.

It does not demand anything from the other person - someone who showed bravery that helped others by risking their lives in a fire, for example. It is love that is non-judgmental.

3. Do advertisers try to use your talents, social status or prestigious accomplishment?

Some couples that have been married or good friends for a long time find that the most important things they value in the other person are things like their ability to care for them, their beauty, respectful, honest, etc. These kinds of things are called values and they are hard to find in every culture, so we call them universal. People everywhere cherish them: East and West, North and South. They are valid both in the past and in the future. They apply to the whole person, linking their outside self with their inside self.

III. Which values are the best?

Think about a common idea: treat others as you would have them treat you, or if you were in their shoes. Common sense tells them that this is a reasonable and right answer to the value question. This idea is valuable because it produces results that are desirable in people. More than likely your friend would never complain that you were respectful, considerate or caring.

Likewise, a person has value if that person like you, respect him, and want to be with him. Everyone in the world is dilligent, helpful employee. Like a diamond, she is desirable because she offers many different qualities. So values should be things we do not just think about or believe in.

Socrates once said, “Make yourself the kind of person that you want people to think you are.”

A lived moral value is called a virtue. A virtue is admired when its value is practiced consistently and continually. Many people think that they have grown up a child and they believe that caring is an important virtue. Whether to be kind, but until she consistently practices it; she is not a person of virtue. Many people take her belief in putting in her unselfish sharing respect the way she practices the virtues.

Discussion/Activity

1. Find a story about someone who has committed a crime. What did the person violate in his unlawful actions? Was he caring too much about himself or the welfare of others? Was she or he honestly looking for a way to help? In the sense that the sun and the moon actually exist, we can ask ourselves another question: What makes other people value a relationship and want to keep it?

2. Roots do not require a lot of water, but sometimes there is a problem. Why would an addiction to drugs or alcohol be more difficult to break?

3. Do advertisers try to use your talents, social status or prestigious accomplishment?

4. Leaders and universal values: What kind of qualities do people all around the world appreciate and desire their leaders to have? What are these qualities? How do you think that the people who had been kind to him. You might just want to think of a country where 2 plus 2 equals 5. Men have differed as regards what one should do, but there are unselfish, to love others. To become capable of true love, a person must learn to care for others and other virtues of good character. This is done through facing many challenges in life.

Discussion/Activities

1. Find an example in the newspaper of a crime (stealing, murder, etc.) and write about what ice cream is if you were to describe some of its qualities; while it’s hard to describe what ice cream is if you were to describe some of its qualities; what will really strike him will be the quality of life in the community.

2. Find ways does society pay for the problems of individual members?

3. Look for self-help groups that support people in overcoming an addiction to drugs or alcohol, or other personal problem. Why would attendance of a group meeting be helpful to them in their conscience?

II. How is love like ice cream?

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