

# 6 ways to Resolve Conflict

An interview between psychologists  
Eve Ash & Peter Quarry

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Resolving conflict is one of the most important, yet elusive people skills needed. Conflict occurs in all types of situations and can have an enormous effect on productivity and morale. Learn 6 practical techniques you can implement immediately to help you achieve effective results.

## 1. Look inwards

- Identify your own personality style in a conflict situation
- Ostrich – sweeps everything under carpet but fumes later
- Lion – roars, gets angry
- Sheep – just baas and says yes
- Owl – tries to resolve conflict cooperatively

## 2. Identify other's style

- Work out how the other is behaving
- Consider appropriate ways of responding
- Ostrich – ask questions, probe
- Lion - avoid arguing back, show empathy
- Sheep – encourage to articulate issues
- Beware of slippery sharks!

## 3. Use communication skills

- Rapport building - eye contact, nodding, 'we' and 'us' words
- Listening – regularly summarise what has been said
- Display flexibility – offer creative suggestions, avoid rigidity

## 4. Use reflective questions

- Throw to the other person for ideas
- Use open questions
- Ensures active involvement
- Encourages ownership

## 5. Use positive reinforcement

- Praise, reward the other – eg displays flexibility, has good idea
- Encourages behaviour you want in the other person

## 6. Use a logical approach

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- Achieve clarity on differences between you
- Choose an appropriate approach – eg stepped agreements
- Consider need for more information
- Consider whether others can assist

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