



Dear Sirocco Friends,

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Mary Ellen and I have spent years on a leadership journey learning how to inspire and mobilize others to get excellent results and find fulfillment in business and personal life. Now, we are helping other leaders do the same, whether they lead an organization, a practice, a team, an idea or their family. All of us practice leadership in one way or another and strive to have a sense of well-being in our business and personal lives.

Today, we will start a short Leaders Journey series on conflict management, something we deal with in our relationships and work, and personally feel in our body sensations and emotions.

A Leader's Journey: "6 Steps for Resolving Confrontation"

Have you ever been involved in a tense meeting with a team member, customer, or supplier, etc. or had a stressful encounter that kept you awake at night? Here are some tips on how you can move past the discomfort; confront the difficult issues in behavior and performance and create positive change.

I had a customer that owed us \$365,000 due to the poor performance of a supplier that my company partnered with. I was extremely angry with the supplier and made some stringent demands on them. My legal counsel helped me to see that there was a better way. We brought the supplier in and followed the following steps and successfully worked out a solution. As a result, we were paid what the customer owed us.

Conflict can occur whenever two or more people see things differently, begin to think from an emotional point of view, and are unwilling to see the other person's perspective. This is a common

scenario and can easily be avoided by following this 6-step process. Follow this simple formula and you will find that problems can be easily solved with everyone feeling heard and respected.

Step #1: Use the “We’re on the same team” approach

Generally people desire harmony, so when approaching a conflict, remember that just like you, the other person wants to resolve the situation in a mutually beneficial way too. Therefore, you want to approach it with a collaborative, “we’re on the same team” approach.

Start off on the right foot by telling the other person that you desire to come to an agreeable solution. Control your emotions, use “I” statements, and avoid blame or judgment. Encourage the other person to do the same. This is an important step as it will make the rest of the conflict resolution process MUCH easier.

Step #2: Seek to identify the problem collectively

Openly discuss the issue so you can understand both sides of the problem. The objective is to state clearly your thoughts, feelings and desires. Then quiet your internal and external voice and truly listen to what the other person has to say.

Step #3: Find a mutually agreed upon goal

By determining what it is you want out of the situation; you can then begin to work toward finding a solution. After identifying the problem, have each person share what outcome they would like to see.

Step #4: As a team, work to determine the best solution to the problem

Start by brainstorming potential solutions together. At this stage, there is no right or wrong. Instead, generate as many ideas as you can. Then, narrow the list down to the best solution that is acceptable to everyone.

Step #5: Cooperatively implement the solution together

Next, lay out a step-by-step plan of what each person will do and when. Discuss what to do if you encounter some difficulty or there is a breakdown in the plan. It is helpful to put the agreement in writing so that each person understands their role and can go back and review the steps.

Step #6: Follow up and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

Some conflicts cannot be solved in one fell swoop. If the resolution will take time to implement, you may need follow up, communicate about progress, and make necessary adjustments. Sometimes new challenges arise and you must continually be engaged in a cooperative dialogue throughout the entire process. Do not neglect this step. Not following up is how conflicts go unresolved, resentments build, and the conflict ensues again.

We hope you have found this information valuable. Be sure to remember these steps the next time you have a challenge with a colleague, customer, supplier, family member, or friend. "

Here's to peace and success!

Warm regards,

Joan Starkowsky

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Joan Starkowsky is a Board- Certified leadership, engagement and life coach, consultant, teacher and speaker. She inspires people to maximize their potential and find passion, energy, performance and fulfillment in life and work. Joan uses her extensive business, leadership and coaching experience to cultivate growth, expansion and engagement in others.

Joan is the former president and founder of Roadway Reverse Logistics, Inc. She is an entrepreneur and inventor holding a patent for an innovative business process. She has held multiple leadership positions in business organizations for over 30 years. She has been in executive management, marketing, operations and sales management in transportation, logistics and retailing. Her extensive coaching and mentoring proficiency began as a rehabilitation counselor and has continued throughout her business career where she has helped many people find direction and success in their lives.

Joan has worked with cross-functional groups, diverse industries and market segments in companies of all sizes on a national and international basis bringing richness and expertise to her work.