



CONFLICT 123

“How do you deal with it?”

One thing you can count on for sure is when you bring together people with different backgrounds and personalities, **conflict is bound to occur**. Some people thrive on conflict and create tension when things get too calm and peaceful. Other people hate to make waves and avoid conflict at all costs. Some people pretend conflicts don't exist and act as if there is nothing wrong. Although God created each one of us with a different background and with different personalities, most people have a preferred way of dealing with conflict. We either take charge, we let others be in charge, or we negotiate who is in charge of what. For the purpose of our Health Talk, we'll call those three styles of dealing with conflict

Container 1

Aggressive

**“My Way
or
the highway”**

Container 2

Assertive

**“Let's talk
about it”**

Container 3

Passive

“Go ahead”

The GOOD NEWS is that **we have three different options for how we can deal with conflict**. The BAD NEWS is that we don't often consider which container we will put conflicts into that determine our response. We are creatures of instinct who usually dump most conflicts into Container 1 or into Container 3. If we stop our Health talk for a few minutes, can you identify your favorite, instinctual Container?

The GOOD NEWS about Container 1 is that it works very well when you have people pleasers around you. The BAD NEWS is that most people don't like to be told what to do, and demanding your own way could lead to lots of blow ups. So you may want to limit what you put in Container 1, because you may have a fight on your hands.

The GOOD NEWS about Container 3 is that when you give in to others, there's an immediate decrease in tension and conflict. However, if you develop a pattern of giving people around you what they want, when you decide to say “no” to them, you may have created BAD NEWS monsters that blow smoke back at you. So you may not want to overload Container 3.

The BAD NEWS about Container 2 is that it requires a lot of time, energy, and good communication boundaries to talk out conflicts and work to negotiate a solution. This can be a difficult process learning to be assertive with people who are used to getting their own way, or used to giving everyone else their own way. The GOOD NEWS is that through the process of talking things out, you both learn to communicate, get more of what you want, and develop useful negotiation skills necessary for dealing with conflicts that occur later in life.

Before we do some conflict container work as a group today, we probably should check in with the group. The Container 1 people here are probably only seeing 1 option: MY WAY! They need you Container 3 people (whom they may dehumanize into “sissies”) to give in to their need to control. Container 3 people hate conflict and they avoid making waves with Container 1 people (whom they may dehumanize into “bullies.”) Container 1 and 3 people don’t have much tolerance for Container 2 people because they don’t have the patience to deal with how long it takes to reach an agreement, or it could get way too messy and too stressful, or it could get too “touchy feely.”

Let’s spend some time applying what we are learning from our health talks, and what we are learning about ourselves.

Describe the conflict:

- Who is aware of the problem?
- How are you most inclined to deal with conflict?
- How are people responding to your way of handling this conflict?
- Who is being affected by this problem?
- What container would you like to put this conflict in?
- What do you think will happen?

<p>1-Aggressive (Take Control)</p>

<p>2-Assertive (Talk It Out)</p>

<p>3-Passive (Give Control)</p>
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What **feedback** can your group give you that could help you learn to resolve conflict?

“Health Talks” are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.