

# Activity 8

## Resolving Conflicts

At some time or other, you almost certainly have disagreed with a parent, sister, brother, teacher, coach, classmate, and even your best friend. Disagreement is inevitable because each person is unique, and everyone has different values. A disagreement does not have to turn into a serious conflict, however. Without compromising your values or beliefs, you can take steps to *resolve* conflicts.

**Part I Directions:** Read the information below on ways to deal with conflict situations. Then respond to the questions or statements that follow.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listen carefully.</b> Make sure that you understand what the other person really <i>means</i> to say. If necessary, ask him or her to explain in different words.</li> <li>• <b>Pay attention to other people’s body language.</b> Watch their expressions. Awareness of others’ emotions can help you understand what they are saying.</li> <li>• <b>Respect other people’s opinions.</b> Other people have had different experiences in life than you have.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use “I” messages.</b> Focus on the conflict itself. Avoid put-downs or attempts to blame the other person.</li> <li>• <b>Try to work out a compromise.</b> Don’t forget, however, that it takes two people to compromise. Consider several possible solutions, and look for middle ground.</li> <li>• <b>Remember that everyone makes mistakes.</b> Sometimes a little forgiveness can go a long way.</li> </ul>
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1. Describe a possible conflict. Avoid using real names if you are describing an actual event.

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2. Based on the guidelines above, what steps might be most important in resolving that conflict?

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3. Write in your own words a plan you might use to prevent conflicts like this one.

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**Activity 8** *continued*

**Part II Directions:** Read each situation and respond to the questions or statements that follow.

Mario gets along with his little brother most of the time, but sometimes Danny makes him very angry. Mario and Danny share a room. Mario has asked Danny to give him some peace so that he can study for his science exam. Danny brings his friend Paul into the room, and they begin wrestling and making a lot of noise. Mario is getting angrier and angrier as he tries to keep studying.

4. How could Mario try to resolve this conflict and avoid making it worse? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What decision could Mario make that might lead to a greater conflict? \_\_\_\_\_

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Rebecca and Heather are partners on a social studies assignment. They have to produce an oral presentation on Thailand in three weeks. Rebecca is the type of person who likes to set up a schedule and finish a little bit of the project at a time. Heather is the type of person who waits until the last minute to do assignments, although she always does finish them on time. The girls are already having arguments about when to get started and what to do first.

6. Name several options the girls have to avoid conflicts as they prepare their report.

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7. Which option would you choose, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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