

Conflict & Confrontation

Conflicts can be eased or worsened by the actions and attitudes taken up by those in the conflict. Study the table below of helpful and harmful influences in a conflict. Add some of your own if you can.

<u>Helpful</u>	<u>Harmful</u>
Willingness to listen <i>Avoiding jumping to conclusions</i> Not accusing unless there is strong evidence <i>Speaking in a quiet/normal voice</i> Allowing yourself to 'cool off' before confronting the other person <i>Trying to see the situation from the other's viewpoint</i> Avoiding using angry/threatening gestures <i>Avoiding labelling the other (that's typical of you, you're always like this, etc.)</i> Being willing to 'lose' the argument if necessary <i>Being willing to apologise if necessary</i> Trying to use reasoned arguments <i>Trying to explain why you're hurt/upset</i>	Stubborn sticking to a viewpoint no matter what the other says <i>Using insults</i> Wanting to 'win' the argument at all costs <i>Raising your voice</i> Unwillingness to listen <i>Flying off the handle</i> Using threatening gestures/pointing fingers <i>Making wild accusations 'in the heat of the moment'</i> Confronting the other when you're extremely angry <i>Taking offence at any possible opportunity</i> Jumping to conclusions <i>Trying to get others on your side</i> Making out as if you couldn't care less about the other person

Activities

- From each list (including additions by yourself) pick out the **top three** influences on a conflict - both for better and for worse.
Explain the choice you have made in each case.
 - Pick out from each list that influence or factor you consider to be least important.
Explain your choice in each case.
 - What is the difference between *conflict* and *confrontation*?
 - Use some of the insights gained from a) and b) to advise the teenage girl who wrote the letter on the next page. Remember to offer advice you consider sensible. A good guide is to ask yourself: *would you take your own advice if you were in a similar situation?*

Your answer should be neither so short as to be of little use nor so long as to be rambling and vague.

Dear Becky,

My mum and I argue constantly - it's driving me mad. If it's not one thing it's the other. She doesn't like my friends, especially my boyfriend, and yet she complains that I never invite them round. I know for a fact they'd be embarrassed. There's always trouble when I ask to go out, yet when I stay in we usually end up rowing and I say something I regret. What can I do to stop her nagging? Deep down I love my mum, but I'm frightened of what I'll say one fine day. Yours, Concerned.

2. Read the passage taken from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- a) Explain as best you can the meaning of the words and phrases underlined in the passage.
 - b) If people loved one another in this way conflicts would be settled as swiftly as they arise. Why is it that people find it so difficult to love in this way?
3. It is sometimes said that lots of little things are more responsible for conflict than a few big things.

Do you agree? Explain your answer.