
7 Steps to Resolve Conflict (Without Making It Worse)

Conflict isn't the problem.
How it's handled is.

Use these steps **in order**. Skipping steps is how fights turn into patterns.

1. Regulate First

If emotions are flooding, stop.

- Pause the conversation.
- Calm your body before using your mouth.
- You cannot “communicate better” while in fight-or-flight.

Rule: Calm first. Talk second.

2. Name the Real Issue

Most arguments aren't about what they look like.

- It's rarely the task, tone, or timing.
- It's usually about feeling **unimportant, unsafe, dismissed, or alone**.

Say the *deeper* issue, not the surface complaint.

3. Own Your Side

This is about responsibility, not blame.

- What you felt
- What you did
- What you needed but didn't say

No “you made me”.

No character assassinations.

4. Listen to Understand

Listening is not waiting to respond.

- Reflect what you heard.
- Focus on **impact**, not intention.
- You don't have to agree — just show you understand.

Being understood calms people more than being right.

5. Repair the Hurt

Repair is where resolution actually happens.

- Acknowledge the impact.
- Apologise where appropriate.
- Don't minimise or explain it away.

A real repair sounds simple:

“I can see how that hurt. I'm sorry.”

6. Make a Clear Request

Insight without change doesn't help.

- Be specific.
- Be realistic.
- Focus on *next time*, not the entire relationship history.

Example:

“If you need space, tell me — don't disappear.”

7. Reconnect

Conflict isn't finished until connection is restored.

- Talk is not enough.
- Reconnection can be touch, humour, time together, rest.

Your nervous system needs closure, not just logic.

Important Truths

- Healthy relationships still have conflict.
- The difference is **repair**, not perfection.
- You're not failing because this is hard — *it is* hard.

The goal isn't to win.