



Avoiding Conflict Newsletter

THE INDEPENDENT FORUM FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE

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Happy March!

March is a transition month between the cold depths of winter and the vibrant growth of spring. During this transition, the Open Grove will help you prepare for your own personal spring with a look at Risk. Our look at every day Risk begins with the risk of Expressing Yourself (March 7, 2006). Next, we look at avoiding conflict (March 20, 2006). We follow with ideas to help you increase your courage (March 25, 2006) and we finish out our series on Risk with a newsletter on Danger (March 28, 2006).



Avoiding conflict

We wish for a more peace filled world. We talk with our friends about our desire for world peace and the end of wars. We might even focus our attention on the end of tyranny and oppression in other countries and our own. We watch our children and hope that they live in a less violent world.

Yet, many of our lives are filled with aggression and conflict. We argue with our neighbors and co-workers. We rage at the drivers around us. We scream at the clerk who is too slow or stupid to really understand what we need. We continue age old arguments with our siblings. Our lives can be surrounded with small conflict and petty aggression.

World peace begins in our hearts and minds. It's time to learn to let go of the conflict around you and embrace peace in your life. 🌸

Standing up for yourself

Nothing is worse than feeling as if someone is taking advantage of you. Sometimes creating conflict can seem like the best way to avoid becoming a doormat to everyone else's problems and issues. Unfortunately, then you have to live surrounded by conflict.

There is an easier way to avoid becoming a doormat. Learning to say "no" is the easiest way to avoid becoming a doormat to everyone else's needs and desires. A simply "no" protects you from being used. 🌸

Conflicts to Avoid

Most of the conflicts in our lives stem from our

judgments of other people and their lives. As we learn to focus on our own lives and work to live without judgment, it's important to learn to consciously avoid conflict in our lives. Here are a few situations and skills to help you avoid the conflict in your lives.

Neighbors: In this busy world, it's frankly difficult to interact with our neighbors. Community and friendship tends to be created at our work place. Yet, if we want to live in peace, we must learn to embrace literally and figuratively, our neighbors. Take some times this spring to greet your neighbors. Ask them over for dinner. In modern life, simply saying "hello" to your neighbors by name can be a radical act of peace. Practice this daily!

Extended family: Stop fighting with your family. Give it up. You are an adult now. If you have unresolved issues with your extended family, work them out in therapy. You won't change them and they won't change you. If you can't deal with your extended family, pick some that you like and let the rest go. Life is too short for years of conflict with a relative.

Adult siblings: Sibling relationships are extremely powerful. Your siblings know more about you than any other people on the planet. It's time to stop fighting with them. Your siblings are doing the best that they can with the resources they have. Let go of your expectations and keep it really simple. You'll be surprised at how easy this is.

Coworkers: Everyone works with someone they simply cannot stand. Petty conflicts and judgments lead to job dissatisfaction. Learn to let things go. Remember the water off a duck. Whatever this person says to you just falls off you like water off a duck.

Other drivers: We have all been enraged at other drivers on the road. Other drivers seem selfish or stupid. Let it go. You weren't born to be the traffic police. Take a few deep breaths. Try sending positive thoughts to the drivers around you. You'll be amazed at how good this feels.

The Ex: The marriage is over but you still have to interact with your child's father or mother. There's no question that you might

have a million and one reasons to hate your ex. Get help. Don't live with this anger. These conflicts take years from your life and injure your children. Life is too short to spend it fighting battles that are long over. 🌸

Skills for Avoiding Conflict

Here are a few skills that will help you keep the conflict in your life to the bare minimum.

Agree to disagree: Every person is an individual with individual genetics and life experience. We will not agree on everything. Thus it is important to allow other people to have separate opinions from you. Agreeing to disagree means that your opinion differs from the other person. You don't have to change their mind. You can simply accept that you disagree. Disagreeing doesn't mean that your relationship is over or that you aren't close to the other person. Agreeing to disagree affords a tremendous amount of love, freedom and acceptance. Try it!

Win : Win: The basic premise of conflict is that one person wins while the other person loses. In a Win: Win situation both people walk away with something. As you approach a situation which might include conflict, think about what the other person might want. If you are unsure of what the other person wants, ask them. You get what you want when you insure that the other person gets what they want. People who enter situations with a win : win attitude tend to be more successful in life.

Know your limits: Often petty arguments and conflict arise because we do not realize that we have reached our limit until we are long passed it. Knowing your limits means that you can stop for a break, say "no", or simply state that you are at your limit prior to a conflict arising. This day to day maintenance will help reduce the amount of conflict in your life.

Every day conflict adds to your stress level and can cause physical symptoms such as high blood pressure as well as physical pain. Learning to avoid unnecessary conflict can reduce the overall pressure you have in your life thus creating the space to develop more calm in your life. 🌸

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