

What is Conflict?

- a fight, battle, or struggle, especially a prolonged struggle; strife, controversy; quarrel
- discord of action, feeling, or effect; antagonism or opposition, as of interests or principles

Conflict occurs regularly in our daily lives. Is it possible to say that conflict in and of itself is either "good" or "bad?"

In Chinese, the word for conflict is a combination of the word for "danger" and the word for "opportunity."

The way that we handle conflict determines whether the outcome will be negative or positive. In this way, conflict is like fire – it can be useful for cooking or for creating warmth, and at the same time, if it gets out of control it can also be harmful and burn you or cause a lot of damage.

When we deal with conflict effectively, it is possible to see the positive aspects of it; we can learn a lot about ourselves and others from it, we can come up with creative ways to deal with problems, and we can even get closer to people through conflict. When we deal with conflict ineffectively, it can escalate quickly and lead to physical and/or emotional violence.

Conflict is normal, natural and necessary.

Despite the pervasive tendency to see conflict as negative, mediators and peacemakers see conflict as an opportunity for growth and development. It is important to learn how to deal with conflict and how to respond to it.