

CONFLICT: COMFORT CIRCLE GUIDE FOR THE LISTENER

Listener: Increase your self- and other-awareness by listening to the other and staying with their experience. Ask the questions below and follow directions within the [brackets]. Remember: the goal is NOT to fix or problem solve but to gain understanding. Speaker: Limit yourself to a few sentences at a time, and avoid blaming “you always, you never...” and other accusations. Stick with “I” statements.

1. **LISTENER:** Jot down notes on this page as the speaker gives you answers so you can review at the end.
2. **PROMPTING EVENT:** Share what the problem or conflict is from your perspective.
[SUMMARIZE: “I hear you saying that...”]
3. **IDENTIFY FEELINGS:** Using the list of soul words, please share with me the top three feelings you have regarding this problem or conflict. Please use more than one category on the list of soul words.
4. **RATE FEELINGS:** Rate the intensity of each of these 3 feelings, from 1 (low) to 10 (high). How often do you feel this way? [SUMMARIZE 1-3, and VALIDATE] *Reminder: Try not to judge the feelings you are hearing as right or wrong. As a listener you may not agree with or understand the feelings or behaviors. The goal is to keep listening to gain understanding rather than just reacting. The more we listen the more likely we will reach a resolution.*
5. **BODY REACTIONS:** How do you experience these feelings in your body (places of pressure, tension, pain) and what do you notice about your breathing (shallow, deep, fast, slow)?”
6. **BEHAVIORS / ACTIONS:** Did you express these stressful emotions? If so, what were your behaviors/actions?
7. **CONSEQUENCES:** When feeling and responding that way, what were the consequences, what happened next? [SUMMARIZE 4-6, VALIDATE FEELINGS]
8. **CHILDHOOD FEELINGS:**
 - a. Did you experience these feelings as a child? [If the answer is “no,” skip to question #10]
 - b. What was happening and how old were you? [SHOW APPROPRIATE EMPATHY]
 - c. How did you manage these feelings as a child? [SUMMARIZE , VALIDATE FEELINGS]
9. **CHILDHOOD BELIEFS:** If you had these feelings as a child, did you form any beliefs about yourself, others, or God as a result of these feelings? [SUMMARIZE , VALIDATE FEELINGS]
10. **RELATE PAST TO PRESENT:** What percentage of your current feelings and reactions might be *fueled* by and *intensified* by your past experience?
11. **RESOLVE:** From your perspective how would you solve the problem or conflict from question 1? How would you make things better?

Examples of Resolution: an apology, forgiveness, changed behavior, being heard, taking ownership, reassurance, negotiation, comfort, problem solving, agreeing to disagree.

12. **YOUR RESPONSE:** [SUMMARIZE] Listener: Summarize starting with question 1 to the end.
13. **Switch Roles of Speaker and Listener.**