

## Reducing Conflict 7 The Root of Conflict

by **Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



There is a common denominator for nearly all interpersonal conflict that I call the “Root of all Conflict.” When we have an opinion on any topic, we believe it is true. The opinion was formed in our brain, and we look for supporting facts to bolster that opinion.

### **I AM RIGHT Button**

It is like we each wear a button with the words “I AM RIGHT” printed on it. If you come up with a different opinion, then you will be wrong according to me, because I believe in my opinion. If you agree with my opinion, then there is no conflict, but if you disagree, then we are in for some conflict.

At home, at work, or in social situations, the phenomenon is easy to spot on a daily basis. It is probably the most frequent cause of conflict between people. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if there was a mechanism for reducing the problem? Well, there is, and I am going to share it.

### **How to Avoid Fighting**

First of all, you need to recognize that you are wearing the button (figuratively, not literally). Then, if someone has a different view, rather than becoming defensive or belligerent, try to imagine the other person is wearing an invisible button too.

Take the time to really listen to the other person's opinion before trying to defend your position. Ask open-ended questions that are genuine and seek to find out how the other person came to that realization. You can share that you have a different opinion on this topic, but try to avoid getting into an argument.

### **Use Body Language**

Be careful how you word your own opinions. Use phrases that indicate there may be other possible interpretations. Keep in mind that your body language says a lot about your attitude when listening to the other person. Try to project that, while you do have an opinion, you do not have a closed mind on the topic.

### **Free Bonus Video**

Here is a video that contains more information on the root of all conflict including additional tips on how you can break the cycle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7PTp1aSB6g>

*Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.*

