

Reducing Conflict 89 Care

By Bob Whipple MBA CPTD



In my leadership program, I do a segment on reducing conflict where care takes center stage. My program lists a dozen actions that can reduce conflict. The most important one is to show that you care for the other person.

In this article, I will share why care is such an important concept. I will offer some tips on how to be effective at showing care.

You are not going to have a conflict if there is mutual care between the parties. There are numerous obvious ways to show care (see below for examples). The real deal goes beyond those things.

Here are some mechanical things to think about to prevent a condition of conflict.

1. **Listen actively.** Show that you care about your coworker by being an active listener. Pay attention to what they say, ask questions, and show empathy.
2. **Show gratitude.** Express your appreciation for the work that your coworker does. This can be as simple as saying thank you or giving them a compliment.
3. **Check-in regularly.** Regularly check in with your coworker to see how they are doing. This could be through a quick chat, email or messaging them, or a coffee or lunch break.
4. **Offer help.** Offer your assistance to your coworker when they are struggling with a task or project. This could be as simple as offering to proofread a document or help with a presentation.
5. **Celebrate their achievements.** Congratulate your coworker on their achievements and celebrate their successes. This could be as simple as giving them a high five or writing a congratulatory note.
6. **Respect their boundaries.** Respect your coworker's boundaries and personal space. Avoid invading their privacy and be mindful of their time.
7. **Show interest in their life.** Get to know your coworker beyond work-related topics. Ask about their hobbies, family, and interests.
8. **Give constructive feedback.** Provide your coworker with constructive feedback that can help them improve their work. Be respectful and tactful when giving feedback.

9. **Offer to cover for them.** Offer to cover for your coworker when they need time off.

10. **Be kind and understanding.** Show kindness and understanding to your coworker in all situations. Treat them with respect and empathy, and be a good listener when they need someone to talk to.

That is a very good list of tangible things you can do to show care. I think it misses some profoundly important concepts. Here are a couple of additional things to think about.

Show care with your body language.

Care is not something like a mask you put on to get a particular reaction. You show that you care by thousands of silent cues that indicate what is going on in your heart. Your facial expression shows how much you care. It also shows in other ways you configure your body in relation to the other person. Avoid clenched fists and keep your hands open.

Be the kind of person you would want for a friend.

In all your interfaces be gracious and kind. If you are giving specific feedback, keep a sharp eye on the body language of the other person along the way. They will tell you if your coaching is appreciated or hurtful.

Conclusion

Showing you care for another person is the best way to avoid an atmosphere of conflict. Follow the tips and hints above to create that kind of relationship.

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