



**adelante**  
COACHING + CONSULTING

Communicating Constructively Using

# The 3x6 Model of Conflict Resolution



## CONFLICT IS NORMAL

While many of us don't always enjoy dealing with it, conflict in the workplace is normal. The fact that people have personalities, perspectives, and needs different from our own, enriches our relationships and the world we live in. As Miles Davis once famously stated, "If you understood everything I said, you'd be me." Thank goodness we are unique and different!

In today's collaborative and matrixed work environments, it is more important than ever to normalize the inevitable conflict that emerges from our differences and to reframe conflict from something negative to an opportunity for learning and growth.

**When we reframe conflict from something negative to an opportunity, what becomes available to us that wasn't before?**

## CONFLICT IS AN OPPORTUNITY

What if we viewed disagreements, misunderstandings, differences in workplace styles, and difficult conversations as a catalyst for improving and even strengthening our workplace relationships? When we shift our orientation to conflict and accept it as normal and natural it has the effect of immediately reducing the drama and stress. It becomes another opportunity for dialogue and collaborative problem solving.

For many of us, this may involve stepping outside of our comfort zone. It also means we have to learn how to park our ego at the door, leave the "I'm right, you're wrong" debate for the politicians, and seek to understand rather than win. When we can do these things, we can reframe and resolve conflict constructively.

**On the next page, we provide you with the 3x6 Model of Conflict Resolution to help facilitate the process for yourself and/or help mediate and resolve conflict for others.**

## THREE STEPS TO REFRAME & RESOLVE CONFLICT

To help you successfully engage in dialogue and collaborative problem solving, adelante coaching + consulting created the 3x6 Model of Conflict Resolution.

These 3 steps and 6 key questions serve as a guide to help you navigate your own conflict situations and when you find yourself mediating for others.

1

Check In  
With Yourself



2

Check In  
With The Other  
Person



3

Problem Solve  
Together





# 1

## Check In With Yourself



1. What am I feeling and how can I productively manage these emotions?
2. What assumptions might I be making and what has led me to make those assumptions?
3. What might be the other person's perspective/assumptions about me in this situation?
4. What do I want for myself, the other person, and the relationship?
5. Is this something I can and should address?
6. If yes, what is the best way to invite this person to dialogue with me in a constructive way that provides for honesty, mutual respect, and conversational safety?

# 2

## Check In With The Other Person



- 1. How are you seeing this situation?**
- 2. What do you wish I understood better?**
- 3. In what ways could our intentions not be aligned with actual impact and how can we re-align them?**
- 4. What assumptions might we be making that need to be cleared up?**
- 5. What do you need right now to be able to move forward?**
- 6. What else needs to be said right now?**

# 3

## Problem Solve Together



- 1. What are our shared goals?**
- 2. What can we agree to do differently to help meet each other's stated needs?**
- 3. What specific action steps should we write down?**
- 4. When should we check back in with each other about these agreements?**
- 5. What other agreements can we make to address any future issues that might arise?**
- 6. Individual Reflection: What learnings have I had from this experience, regardless of outcome?**



## DIALOGUE IS DEFINED AS...

A conversation where respectful inquiry, engaged listening, honest reflection and perspective-taking are used to develop the shared understanding and learning that enables collaborative problem solving.



## POWERFUL PRACTICES

For dialogue & problem solving to be successful, we need to:

<b>Be self-aware</b>	Engage in honest reflection of our actions and emotions
<b>Stay centered</b>	Know our hot buttons and have strategies ready to re-center ourselves physiologically, mentally, and emotionally
<b>Ask open-ended questions</b>	Use respectful inquiry to probe and seek to understand the other person's experience
<b>Listen actively</b>	Let the other person know we are truly hearing and understanding what they are saying
<b>Use non-blaming language</b>	Replace "you language" with "I language" to avoid putting the other person on the defensive
<b>Check assumptions</b>	Avoid filling in the blanks when we don't have all of the information
<b>Shift from judgment to curiosity</b>	By getting curious, we can stop ourselves from making assumptions and judgments
<b>Realign intent and impact</b>	Be aware of when our intentions and impact don't align, and seek to realign them with the other person



## **WE JUDGE OURSELVES BASED ON OUR GOOD INTENTIONS**

but we judge others based on the impact they have had on us. If the impact is negative, we often assume the intent was negative. Our goal? To assume the intentions of others are as good as our own.

- Inspired by Stephen Covey and Ian Percy

## **INTENT AND IMPACT**

At the heart of many workplace conflicts is a misalignment between intent and impact.

Have you ever been surprised that what you said to someone was not what they heard? Or perhaps you have found yourself trying to explain a behavior that someone else interpreted completely differently than what you intended? A misalignment between our intent and impact can harm the relationship and left unresolved, can snowball into a conflict situation.

Intent and impact issues are a challenge because:

**Every message must first pass through the filter of the speaker's clarity of expression and then through the listener's ability to hear what is said and their world view.**

**We don't actually know the intentions of the people we communicate with. Often we assume/judge their intentions based on their actions which may cause their words to impact us unfavorably.**

**Good intentions do not sanitize bad impact. In other words, even if we do or say something with the best of intentions, it is still possible for the other person to feel negatively impacted. We should seek to understand rather than discount the person's experience.**





## STEPS TOWARDS REALIGNING INTENT AND IMPACT

What can you do if you realize that there is a misalignment between your intent and your impact?

### First, ask yourself some questions:

- What just occurred?
- How is the outcome different from what I intended/expected?
- Where can I take responsibility?
- How do I clean this up?

### Second, take action to clean up mismatches of intent and impact as quickly as you can:

- Be honest about your intention.
- Discuss with the other person and get their perspective.
- How could you have handled the communication differently?
- Take responsibility for your actions.

The burden of responsibility for realigning intent and impact rests not only on one person. If you find yourself reacting to someone negatively and not being able to brush off what they have said or done, use the practices listed on page 6 to communicate constructively and let them know how you are feeling and what you are thinking.

We can't expect people to be able to read our minds. Sometimes we have to be the one to share how the other person has impacted us. Without this, there can be no realignment and the bad feelings will fester and grow.

Adapted from: Richard Magid, Sound Board Consulting, [www.soundboardconsulting.com](http://www.soundboardconsulting.com)

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### San Francisco-based adelante coaching + consulting:

Collaborates with executive leaders, team managers and People Operations/HR departments to create high performing and positive workplaces that meet the changing needs of today's workforce.

### What is adelante?

Adelante is the Spanish word for forward and truly embodies the spirit of adelante coaching + consulting, and its Founder and CEO, Alicia Santamaría.

As a learning and development coach and consultant, one of Alicia's core beliefs is that learning and action go hand in hand. She is committed to her clients seeing measurable forward results.

Alicia has worked as a conflict resolution practitioner for over 25 years, and is thrilled to share her 3x6 model with you. She is also a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach and certified in the Everything DiSC suite of learning and development tools.

When people have self-understanding and a common language to express their workplace styles, contributions, and needs it reduces judgement and assumption-making. People manage workplace conflict in new and better ways. Alicia uses these tools with individuals, partners, and teams.

### ALICIA SANTAMARÍA

For more information on how to use this model to mediate others or to explore bringing Alicia into to your organization to provide conflict resolution, mediation or other team-building services, please contact her at [alicia@adelantecc.com](mailto:alicia@adelantecc.com).