How to Manage Interpersonal Conflict

1. **First, know what you do not like about yourself.**
   We often do not like in others what we do not want to see in ourselves.

   a) Write down 5 traits that really bug you when see them in others.

   b) Be aware that these traits are your "hot buttons."

2. **Manage yourself.**
   If you and/or the other person are getting heated up, manage yourself to stay calm by:

   a) Speaking to the person as if the other person is not heated up – this can be very powerful!

   b) Avoid use of the word "you" – this avoids blaming.

   c) Nod your head to assure them you heard them.

   d) Maintain eye contact with them.

3. **Move the discussion to a private area, if possible.**

4. **Give the other person time to vent.**
   Do not interrupt them or judge what they are saying.

5. **Verify that you are accurately hearing each other.**
   When they are done speaking:

   a) Ask the other person to let you rephrase (uninterrupted) what you are hearing from them to ensure you are hearing them.

   b) To understand them more, ask open-ended questions (avoid "why" questions – those questions often make people feel defensive).

6. **Repeat the above step, this time for them to verify that they are hearing you.**
   When you present your position:

   a) Use "I," not "you."

   b) Talk in terms of the present as much as possible.

   c) Mention your feelings.

7. **Acknowledge where you disagree and where you agree. Seek common ground.**

8. **Work the issue, not the person.**
   When they are convinced that you understand them:

   a) Ask "What can we do to fix this problem?" They will likely begin to again.

   b) Then ask the same question. Focus on actions you both can do.

9. **If possible, identify at least one action that can be done by one or both of you.**

   a) Ask the other person if they will support the action.

   b) If they will not, ask for a "cooling off period."

10. **Thank the person for working with you.**

11. **If the situation remains a conflict, then**:

    a) Consider whether to agree to disagree.

    b) Consider seeking a third party to mediate.