



News & Announcements

Newsletter News

There will be no January issue of The Smart Connection. We'll be back in February after a long winter's nap with a series on building study skills.

Island Parent Education Fair

Sunday, February 8, 2004

11 am - 4 pm • Holiday Inn, Victoria, 3020 Blanshard St. (south of Mayfair Mall)

• Free Admission and Parking

Looking for information on schools and educational programs? From preschool through to post-secondary, Education Fair 2004 provides a broad outlook on education and career opportunities in Greater Victoria, on Vancouver Island and in BC.

Silly Jokes Anyone?

Q: What kind of chair does the school band sit on?

A: Musical chairs.

Q: What did the calculator say to the student?

A: You can count on me.

Q: What kind of school does the king run?

A: A knight school.

How You Can Communicate in Conflict

By Nichola Watson and Dahlia Miller

Nichola Watson has worked in Toronto and Ottawa coordinating activities and programs meant to help alleviate youth conflict. She has relocated to Victoria and is now a Smart Tutor Referrals tutor.

"[We] must evolve, for all human conflict, a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

Martin Luther King (1929-1968)

Have you ever disagreed with one of your teachers or parents? Has someone that you know ever said something or acted in a way that made you feel uncomfortable? Pretty silly questions! No one escapes conflict. It is a part of every person's life.

Better questions to ask might be: What did you do? Were you satisfied with how the two of you worked through the conflict?

Since we all experience conflict, it seems like a good idea to learn some respectful ways to communicate during periods of conflict. Imagine how peaceful the world might be if everyone understood some fundamental steps to working through conflict effectively. Let's use youth conflict as our focus as we consider how to approach conflict.

Some Conflicts Youth Are Facing Today Derive From:

- ▶ Inappropriate language, whether it is verbal (swearing, name calling, discrimination) or non-verbal (body language);
- ▶ Peer pressure;

- ▶ Boyfriend/girlfriend relationships;
- ▶ Misunderstanding of information;
- ▶ Differences (cultural, gender, socio-economic, opinion, understanding);
- ▶ Negative attitudes, dislike;
- ▶ Irresponsible behaviours (bullying, unprotected sex, abuse of any kind, being neglected, etc.);
- ▶ Going against institutional regulations;
- ▶ Non-cohesiveness with authority figures;
- ▶ Lack of attention from teachers, parents, and peers.

Conflict can be good. It opens up space for change. Let us all remember that conflict is a part of our everyday lives. It is our positive responses to conflict that continue to mold us into responsible citizens.

However, conflict that is ignored or dealt with inappropriately can be damaging to all those involved. Some view conflict as a competition that warrants a winner and a loser. But, when one person's needs are not met, there is no true resolution.

Strategies for Conflict Resolution:

- ▶ evaluate yourself first;
- ▶ be respectful of others feelings;
- ▶ communicate honestly and openly;
- ▶ maintain some level of emotional control;
- ▶ be prepared to compromise – the focus should be on everyone interests.

When you are communicating, it is important to remember that humans want to be understood and loved.

About Us

Our Mission Is:

► To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

Superior private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs *and* stimulating, small group classes.

► To enhance students' skills and increase their learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.

► To improve quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. All of our tutors are carefully screened.

We will help you to reach your goals, no matter your level.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at: www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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We all want to communicate and share our experiences. We all must work together to solve our problems and conflicts.

I have learned that when one is faced with a conflict one first must **evaluate oneself**. It is each person's responsibility to analyze the problem objectively. This is potentially quite difficult. This approach begins with objectively examining the level of threat one is feeling toward ones beliefs and values. With an objective approach we are able to begin restoring our sense of equilibrium and well-being.

As difficult as this is, we all need to practice stepping back from the conflict to really listen to what we are feeling and thinking. Once we understand what our needs and feelings are, it is much easier to communicate those without over-reacting, and to hear others' needs and feelings.

It is important that all parties involved **actively listen to each other**. To listen actively, listen to the words and feelings that you hear from the other person. Can you hear the need behind the words? You are listening for what the person is communicating to you (verbally and non-verbally) about their feelings of dis-equilibrium (i.e. they feel out of balance).

Once you have a sense of what the other person is saying, tell her your version of what she just told you. **Repeat your understanding of her message**. This way you can confirm that you understand the other person. People need to feel heard. Just by listening

and feeding back your understanding of someone's words, you will help that person to relax and be more open to compromise.

When you understand where the other person is coming from, you'll be better able to understand his behaviour and suggest a solution that appeals to him.

Express what your experience is, what your needs are, and what solution would work for you. If you can give this information calmly, it will help the other person to understand your needs. More than calmly, especially in conflict situations, we need to remember to communicate as gently and lovingly as possible. Even if you are expressing that you would like not to be spoken to in a certain way again, you can say this lovingly with words like, "When you say things like that, I feel hurt. It is important to me that we act respectfully toward each other. Please don't speak to me this way again."

Next you'll need to **work together to find a solution**. Once the parties understand each other's needs, it is much easier to reach an effective compromise. Begin by working together to find out exactly what the problem is. Try to find all sources of the problem.

Thus, one must listen, negotiate, and communicate. With that in mind, we can all model proactive approaches, which will minimize conflicts.

"You must reflect on your emotions, transform them, and then be willing to listen to the other person. Then you must take Right Action to eliminate the causes."

Thich Nhat Hahn