



## Keep small differences small...

Unresolved conflict—it feels like trying to climb a mountain but, each time you try, the summit moves a little farther out of reach because the small differences grow bigger. To keep small difference molehills from becoming conflict mountains, resolve conflicts early.

**Give people the benefit of the doubt** – rather than assuming the worst about your co-workers (they're lazy, irresponsible, stupid, unfriendly, incompetent, etc.) when something goes wrong. Assumptions are rarely accurate and almost always negative. Go to the source to get accurate information—ask questions in the spirit of inquiry and understanding, not judgment.

**Listen more, talk less** – Conflict resolution is 80% listening, 20% problem solving. Effective listening requires your full attention so eliminate distractions, including interruptions. Concentrate on what's being said and allow the speaker to finish before formulating your response. Restate what you heard, in your own words, to avoid misunderstandings.

**Take responsibility** – Skip the finger pointing and blaming. Holding yourself accountable for what you have done to contribute to the conflict, sends the message that you are willing to constructively confront and address the issues. Focus on what you can do together. Apologize, if appropriate—a sincere apology opens the door to productive dialogue.

**Accept people for who they are** – imperfect human beings who, for the most part, are trying to do the best they can. When people feel accepted they can stop trying to prove themselves and concentrate on *im-*proving themselves.

**Avoid labeling** – Studies show that we treat people as we label them. The label we give others becomes our belief about them and determines how we interact with them. Have a positive attitude about *all* of your co-workers—that means treating “Crabby Cathy” as respectfully as you treat “Susie Sunshine.”

If you manage the molehills, you don't need to be a mountaineer.

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## Words to Live By...

“There is a difference between waiting and procrastinating. Waiting is choosing the right time, procrastinating is not choosing at all.”

Anonymous



## A BRIGHT IDEA

### Learn to say “no”...

People often say “yes” because they want to help or don't want to be rude. Saying yes when you shouldn't creates unhealthy stress for you, your family and your co-workers. It can damage relationships if you resent the demands on you or can't fulfill your commitment. Give yourself permission to say “no”. It's OK. No explanation needed. A respectful “Thank you for asking, but I need to decline” will do. If you feel compelled to give a reason, valid reasons include not enough time to do a good job or lack of experience in the particular area. Saying “no” is a way of respecting yourself, your time, and those who have asked you to help.

## Training Corner

Leveraging the “soft skills” of employees is the key to gaining that competitive edge in a challenging global economy. Fill your toolbox with the skills that drive individual and organizational success. Learn to listen effectively, to be assertive without being confrontational, to problem-solve collaboratively and to build top notch performance teams. Learn more at [www.alternativeresolutions.biz](http://www.alternativeresolutions.biz) or contact us at 920-993-1490 to tailor training to your specific needs.

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