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There comes a times when everyone, no matter how nice they are, has to engage in some kind of confrontation with another person. Those confrontations usually aren’t comfortable and quite often leave someone feeling frustrated, angry, emotional, fearful, sad and/or surprised. Almost all combative confrontations are ineffective as they cause most people on the receiving end to shut down and become “invisible.” However, the concept of confrontation is necessary in some instances to address poor behavior or substandard performance, or to stand up to a bully.

If you have to deal with someone who confronts you in an aggressive or rude manner, it is best to find an internal mechanism you can rely on that enables you to stay calm, even if you disagree with the message at hand. Although a retaliatory, aggressive reaction may be justified, it is better to remain grounded and in control. Aggressive confrontations typically don’t end well when both parties lose their tops. During

## Confrontation done right

these encounters, use some restraint and give yourself a cool-down period to properly reflect on what happened and to determine how you can reengage in a positive way that leads to production rather than the grinding halt that often occurs while people’s feelings are being patched up.

If you’re in a situation requiring you to initiate the confrontation, then view the encounter as an opportunity for clarification rather than confrontation. This will put you in a better mindset and not cause others to feel like they have to fight you or flee from you. John Maxwell, one of the top leadership consultants in the world, issued these ten commandments for confrontations:

- 1) Do it privately, not publicly.
- 2) Do it as soon as possible.
- 3) Speak to one issue at a time. Don’t overload the person with a long list of issues.
- 4) Once you’ve made a point, don’t keep repeating it.
- 5) Deal only with actions the person can actually change. If you ask the person to do something he or she is

unable to do, frustration sets in.

6) Avoid sarcasm. Sarcasm may indicate you’re angry and it may cause them to resent you.

7) Avoid words like “always” and “never.” They usually detract from accuracy and make people defensive.

8) Present criticisms as suggestions or questions if possible.

9) Don’t apologize for the confrontational meeting. Doing so detracts from it and may indicate you are not sure you had the right to say what you did.

10) Don’t forget the compliments. Use the age-old “sandwich” technique: compliment--confront--compliment.

Try these techniques the next time you have to confront someone. Not only will your confrontation be more productive but you won’t come across as a mean-spirited bully who only cares about their own perspective. Confrontations gone wrong are a disaster. Confrontations done right can save relationships and solve problems.

~ The End ~