

NEGOTIATING

Dealing with other people can be difficult at times. The difficulty may arise with a spouse, a friend, a parent, a child or a coworker. The difficulty may involve making a request of the other person. It may be saying “no” and setting a limit. It may involve resolving tension in the relationship.

It can be challenging to maintain a balance between expressing your viewpoint clearly and doing so in a respectful and caring manner. Learning to negotiate constructively with others can reduce tension and stress and strengthen important relationships. Here are some suggestions to help with this:

1. Affirm the other person (his/her viewpoint or his/her importance to you).
Ex: “I know you care about me.”
2. Describe the problem neutrally. (Don’t use pejorative, evaluative language.)
Ex: “But when you were upset with me, you hung up the phone on me.”
3. Tell your reaction to the problem.
Ex: “And that really hurt my feelings.”
4. Request a behavioral change.
Ex: “In the future, please tell me what has upset you and don’t hang up on me.”
5. Affirm any effort the other person makes to show he/she understands what you have said.
Ex: “I appreciate your apology.”