

# Conflict Mountain Trail Guide

## Conflict Mountain

### The two phases of a mediation session

The path from conflict to cooperation leads over the top of Conflict Mountain.



Information based upon Conflict Mountain Model developed by Eckert College's Mediation Training Institute. Training session developed by Stephanie A. Westmyer, Ph.D., Training Specialist, Experiential Learning Center, USC Marshall School of Business in 2019. Contact Stephanie at [westmyer@marshall.usc.edu](mailto:westmyer@marshall.usc.edu)



- Tommy and Helene co-lead a project team.
- When under pressure, their personality differences and work styles clash.
- The project is starting to suffer.
- Aaron Go-Bragh the Project contractor threatens to shut down the project.
- Tommy and Helene see the team's morale going down.
- They ask George Tirebiter for advice on how to reduce their conflict and increase the team's productivity and morale.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Who Did What?

Listen to the conversation and write the name **Helene** or **Tommy** next to the destructive behavior.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Avoiding** – Staying away
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Withdrawing** - Removing
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Withholding information** – Not share
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Not returning messages** – No call
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Giving silent treatment** – Don't talk
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Threatening** - Intimidate
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Pre-empting** - Prevent
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Get others to take sides** - Alliances
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Shouting** – Yelling

“Where are we?” – Helene

“I’m thinking of adding hiking to the dating app I’m using.” - Tommy

“If George were here, he would be on my side.” - Helene

“I do not care what George would say, we are doing it **MY** way. **Do I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?**” - Tommy

“Respond when I ask you a question. Talk to me!” - Tommy

“Quit poking your finger in my face.” - Helene

“Forget this I am leaving! – Helene

“Fine time to walkway!” - Tommy

## Who Said What?

Listen to the conversation and write the name **Helene** or **Tommy** next to the conciliatory behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Apologizing** – Express Regret

\_\_\_\_\_ **Owning responsibility** – Accept personal part

\_\_\_\_\_ **Conceding** – Admit

\_\_\_\_\_ **Self-disclosing** - Share own thoughts

\_\_\_\_\_ **Expressing positive feelings** - State good

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initiating both-gain** – Create win-win

“Tommy, I’m sorry for walking away and leaving you alone earlier.”  
- Helene

“I walked away when I wanted to; I needed to be in control of something because this trip feels out of control.” - Helene

“I did not have to be jerk. Sorry.’ - Tommy

“I needed to take a break, relax, and reflect to change my attitude and my actions.” - Helene

“We’ve reached the top of Conflict Mountain!” - Tommy

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## We Are In It Together

Let us work together and brainstorm for **2 minutes** phrases and ideas you can use later in the exercise.

1. What are three phrases that can be used in a mediation to establish the idea “we are in this mediation together to find a solution”?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are three nonverbal behaviors in a mediation session that can be used to communicate, “we are in this conversation together to find a solution”?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Conflict Conversation Checklist

Use the conflict conversation checklist to see what was included in their conversation.

## Welcome and Meeting Purpose

- Greeting: \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional welcome words or action: \_\_\_\_\_
- Business outcome at risk/ Concerns that: \_\_\_\_\_
- Evidence of Problem/Noticed that: \_\_\_\_\_
- Here to solve: \_\_\_\_\_
- Purpose of Meeting or problem to solve: \_\_\_\_\_
- Two Cardinal Rules and How to Treat each other with Respect:
  - No Power Plays include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - No Walk-Aways include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Rules of Respect: \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion

- Invite to share story:
  - Message content and key points: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Message emotion shared: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Listen actively points to repeat: \_\_\_\_\_

## Make a Deal

- Terms of written agreement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Balanced for both parties: \_\_\_\_\_
- Specific points of what each part will do now: \_\_\_\_\_
- Specific points of what each part will do in the future: \_\_\_\_\_
- Implementation Date of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting Conclusion

- Review contents of agreement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Confirm agreement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Set follow up meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Lessons from the Mountain



“So you hiked Conflict Mountain after all. Good for you.” -

George  
“We realized the hike up Conflict Mountain wasn’t so much about the destination, but the journey to learn how to self-mediate and resolve conflict.” - Tommy

“Sometimes using conciliatory gestures is the best move to reach an agreement.” - Helene

“Walking through the conciliatory gesture creates the breakthrough that gets people to start working together toward an agreement.” - Tommy

“Thanks for your help George.” - Helene

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Treasures from the Trip

1. What tips about employee mediation did you learn from Helene and Tommy?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-

2. How will you avoid destructive behaviors during a mediation?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-

3. What conciliatory gesture could you see yourself using in a mediation?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-

4. What step of the mediation process would be easy for you?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

-

5. Which step would you like to improve?

Notes:

## Two Practice Conflict Conversation Sessions

1. Form teams with three to four people.
2. Rotate the roles during each practice session – two people mediating and one or two people listening.
  - a. People mediating will choose which scenario and role to play.
  - b. People listening will place jewels next to the person they are listening to speak when the person uses conflict mountain behaviors during the mediation.
    - i. Award **clear** jewels for conciliatory behaviors used.
    - ii. Award **dark** jewels for destructive behaviors used.
    - iii. Award **orange** jewels for “we are in it together” phrases and nonverbal behaviors.
3. Take **2-3 minutes** to individually complete the welcome, meeting purpose, and discussion sections of the conflict conversation checklist.
4. Take **5-7 minutes** to engage in the conflict conversation and listen for the responses.
5. Take **2-3 minutes** after the conversation to discuss the reasons for awarding the jewels.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Scenario 1: Helene, Tommy, and Listener

**Helene** is an action-oriented individual who makes things happen. She likes to take charge and get things done. She has an “I can do this” attitude and takes care of details to keep things moving forward. She wants a promotion from this project.

**Tommy** is an analytic thinker who takes time to think things through on a project. He spends time in process improvement. His thoughtfulness has stopped the team from making bad decisions on the project. He hopes he can have his own department because of this project.

**Listener** observes the mediation session and awards Tommy and Helene jewels for using conciliatory and other positive behaviors used during the mediation.

**Scenario** After meeting with Aaron, Helene and Tommy decide to mediate and resolve the conflict of how their different work styles contributed to a time management issue on developing an animated employee training video for Aaron and how to work together to meet the new deadline.

## Scenario 2: Mick, Reagan, and Listener

**Mick** works well at managing multiple projects and following up with details. Clients trust Mick who is driven, dependable, and hard working. People in the community and on campus respect Mick.

**Reagan** is personable and conscientious. Reagan seeks out ways to help people and accommodate their requests. Reagan is thoughtful and builds trust by following up with clients. Reagan is new to campus and to the community.

**Listener** observes the mediation session and awards Tommy and Helene jewels for using conciliatory and other positive behaviors used during the mediation.

**Scenario** Mick is the Program Specialist for the Campus Community Partnership Center. A professor received a large grant to develop an innovative community health and wellness program through the Center. The professor asked Reagan the Administrative Specialist to create a brochure with specific information to include in the brochure. Mick saw the brochure and asked Reagan to make changes to the parts of the brochure. When Reagan made Mick’s changes, the professor was upset. Reagan has put off making additional changes. Reagan’s procrastination delays the program’s deadlines. Mick asks Reagan to meet to talk about the delays on the brochure and the procrastination on other projects.

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Practice Conflict Conversation Checklist

## Welcome and Meeting Purpose

- Greeting: \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional welcome words or action: \_\_\_\_\_
- Business outcome at risk/ Concerns that: \_\_\_\_\_
- Evidence of Problem/Noticed that: \_\_\_\_\_
- Here to solve: \_\_\_\_\_
- Purpose of Meeting or problem to solve: \_\_\_\_\_
- Two Cardinal Rules and How to Treat each other with Respect:
  - No Power Plays include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - No Walk-Aways include: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Rules of Respect: \_\_\_\_\_

## Discussion

- Invite to share story:
  - Message content and key points: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Message emotion shared: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Listen actively points to repeat: \_\_\_\_\_

## Make a Deal

- Terms of written agreement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Balanced for both parties: \_\_\_\_\_
- Specific points of what each part will do now: \_\_\_\_\_
- Specific points of what each part will do in the future: \_\_\_\_\_
- Implementation Date of Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting Conclusion

- Review contents of agreement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Confirm agreement: \_\_\_\_\_
- Set follow up meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I hear and I forget.  
I see and I remember.  
I do and I understand.  
Confucius