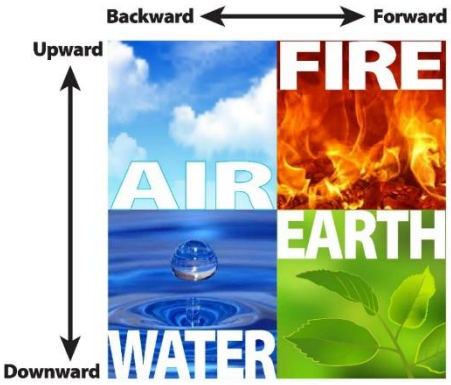
CONFLICT RESOLVER

"Choose reconciliation over retaliation."

Conflicts arise in every way, shape and form. For our purposes, this approach is specific to when it involves two individuals in which both parties are simultaneously not in agreement, or when the other person is the aggressor. In other words, those in which you are clearly the instigator is a different matter along with when they involve more than two parties. However, some of these techniques can be effective in those instances.

Our focus also remains within the Elements in Motion paradigm specific to how the element personas respond in conflict as well as how conscious choices can improve interactions, mitigate escalations and defuse situations.

There's another dimension to the Elements in Motion that align with some of what we covered about the Mind-Body Connection. That brings us to how conflict triggers our innate "Fight, Flight or Freeze Response." This causes the body to release stress hormones that can produce physical pain as well as inflict more upon us psychologically and emotionally.



How one reacts when experiencing fight, flight or freeze corresponds with the personas of the natural elements. In the event of a conflict, your primary element is surely Fire if you're prone to fight, though it may be Earth if you're just not one to back down.

If you are more likely to take flight, you're almost surely Air or Water. Fear-based flight is Water. Apathy-driven flight is Air. If your response is to freeze, then you're either predisposed to be Water or, if the reason for doing so has less to do with fright as it does to stand your ground, then you are more inclined to be Earth.

Of course, in addition to personas within the Elements in Motion is the cross-section among those we've also identified as being Spiders and/or Haters in our lives. Our Web Evader and Hater Handler provide a solid foundation for conflict resolution. Let's consider some scenarios and role play.

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Every conflict has a context. There are the proverbial three sides to every story, “He said, she said and the truth.” What makes this point valid is the variable between perception and reality. As discussed, two people can misunderstand or perceive the very same situation in completely opposite ways. There may be sensory discrepancies with what one person heard, saw or interpreted. There’s an emotional factor in terms of someone mood and its negative or positive impact. Mental fatigue comes into play. And then there’s ego. That’s the short list.

As we view a situation through the elements, it helps to know the personas and how they interact. It’s a simple concept to comprehend that Fire plus Fire makes more Fire. Two angry people hell-bent on being right are more likely to ignite something that blazes out of control. You also don’t have to be a fiery person to have yours stoked.

This is the moment to remain composed and think through **three all-important points**:

1) Perception being what it is, it’s entirely possible that both individuals are at least partially correct. Two “rights” don’t necessarily make a wrong. Is there a way to give the other person some benefit of any doubt? Can the Assumption Stopper come into play?

2) Play it out. Even if you know you’re in the right, is it really worth it to you to allow this brewing argument to spiral out of control? Here’s where you can imagine sparing yourself hours of angry emails, texts, social media comments and the like. Along with it, that fire can easily spread by “rehashing” whatever negativity among those you feel the need to retell and leading you to relive the events and emotions over and over again.

3) This forethought creates the opportunity to be the bigger person. Having the composure to know that it’s not worth wasting valuable energy makes it easier to empower yourself to opt for an alternative that will extinguish flames rather than add fuel. Yes, the other person may even be totally out-of-line but making yourself the priority is the key.

Motivated by the benefits of choosing not to argue will empower you to make a choice for the greater good, starting with yours. This also applies to effectively Managing Energy. Now, instead of letting ego get in your own way by focusing on being right about something, it becomes easier and better to diffuse a situation by making a conscious decision not to argue.

It takes practice to size up people and situations in real time. But the Elements model offers multiple options to deftly manage conflicts even with those less in your nature.

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Let's continue with grounding yourself in that moment to overcome any natural aggressive reaction. One option is to behave like Water to douse the flames:

> "*Listen [person], I certainly see where you're coming from, but there's more than one way to view this situation. I just see it differently. You're absolutely entitled to your own opinion, just as I am. It's clear we don't agree about this and would be best to just leave it at that. I surely respect your position. There just doesn't seem to be any benefit to going on any further about it.*" This sounds like a fiery person getting out of their own way.
>
> An alternative way to say the same thing is, "*You know, I understand and respect your point. I simply have a different perspective. So, let's leave it at that.*" This matter-of-fact approach aligns more with Earth by smothering the Fire or putting it out with Water.
>
> An even shorter option is to say, "*You know, I have no need to debate that point,"* which is basically an Airy way to just blow it off.

The result in every case is, well, what are they going to do? You've either hand-cuffed them with kindness, stood your ground or diffused the situation. So How did that feel? Aren't you glad you kept your cool?

Here's a bonus example that works especially well in personal relationships. Are you ready for this? Ok, here it is: "*I accept full responsibility for what happened*."

All of these options also work the same when it comes to combating Spiders. In fact, if your ego allows, you can go even further by simply telling them, "You're right." Remember that manipulators and haters feed on drama, so agreeing with them will shut them down. Of course, you know they were in the wrong, but you can take pride in being coyly respectful and keeping your peace of mind. Again, this tactic is specific to Spiders.

There's something to be said about, "picking your battles." There's even more to gain from choosing reconciliation over retaliation. Keep in mind that the best way to handle a crisis is to prevent it. If a heated argument can turn into something of an "Energy Cancer," then prevention is the cure.

Remember to make the practical choice to come to your senses. You will take more pride in maintaining your composure and making a conscious choice to stop an unnecessary argument instead of getting hung-up on winning it. Just remain calm, plant your feet and reach for the fire extinguisher!

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Here's one last role play. Let's say your boss is giving you a hard time for no good reason. They're the ones who are out of line for creating a problem out of thin air, but they're still your boss or a person with some level of authority. You feel helpless being in these traps.

Here's where to keep your shields up to prevent that person's negativity from getting through and inflicting emotional distress and mental duress. Your responses essentially need to follow the "sticks and stones" mentality. No matter who you are or where you're from, it's a pretty sure bet that you know that expression.

This also may be when you're half daydreaming of how awesome it would be to have this person occupy a smaller part of your life. Don't hesitate to use your Spider repellent when you are consistently, involuntarily, and environmentally exposed to some energy-sucker.

With that said, remember to stand up for yourself in that very moment when combating Spiders! You are entitled to have your own opinion of any given situation or person, provided it does not jeopardize your current job security. Of course, they are equally entitled to think the same of you.

On the flip side of this circumstance, maybe you're the one being the only jerk in a particular case, hopefully unintentionally, or you're not acting inappropriately but they are just misperceiving and misunderstanding you. We all have that in us, even if it is something misinterpreted by the other person in a conflict.

These may be situations when it can be illuminating to shine the light back on yourself.

ACTIVITY 1: REVIEW CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS (TIME: 5-7 MINUTES)

Review the section supplement, "Conflict Resolution Tips."

ACTIVITY 2: PRACTICE CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS (TIME: ONGOING)

You're caught off guard by a brewing argument. This is an Earned Confidence moment. Be Earth. Plant your feet. Hold your ground. Wait them out. Don't interrupt. Stay poised. Take pride in your self-respect in not letting them get a rise out of you. Avoid internalizing anyone else's judgment. Think through the three all-important points. View perception objectively. Decide that you're worth more than allowing something to spiral. Convince your ego to choose your elemental approach. Prevention is the cure. Nice going!

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