

Don't Avoid Conflict, Treat it Like an Adventure

By [Doug Fields](#) - Thriving Marriages Blog - October 25, 2021

Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. –1 Peter 3:10-11 (NLT)

Personally, I hate conflict. Even the word *conflict* sounds painful! It has a harsh ring to it. The etymology of the word involves the prefix *con-* and the suffix *—flict*. *Con-* is from the same source from which we developed the word constipation. And *—flict* is the origin of afflicted, as in, *What a drag! I'm afflicted with constipation.* (Okay, I haven't really fact-checked all that, but that's the image I get when I think of conflict—constipated affliction.)

I can't stand the feeling I get when I experience tension with others. Conflict causes me more bodily stress than anything else. People think it's stressful to speak to crowds and it can be. But I'd rather speak to a million people than experience tension with just one—especially someone I care about.

Believe it or not, conflict can be part of God's strategy to transform us into the people He wants us to be. God can use the conflict in our lives for His glory. In brief, conflict can be part of God's adventure for us.

So how can relational conflict possibly be an adventure? Think of it this way: the one factor present in all adventures is conflict. In order to have an adventure, you need some sort of obstacle to overcome.

Whenever we're involved in a conflict, we're forced to overcome an obstacle, and in dealing with that obstacle, **we're invited to seek Christ more intensely.** That's when the adventure begins—when the conflict drives us to our knees. While in a conflict, we encounter a situation that is so unclear, difficult, and tension-filled, that we need a good Guide to navigate the path. This is where Jesus comes in. Smack-dab in the middle of our battle, He joins us and offers us a clear light to the other side. Think of Jesus walking out on the water to Peter in the midst of a storm (*Matthew 14:22-33*). With water raging all around him, Peter is offered a new glimpse into a life of faith. He would never have received that opportunity if he had not been out in a storm.

That's our invitation in the middle of relational conflict: to see any such struggle as an invitation to Christ's adventure in transformation. Christ extends His hand to us and invites us to walk with Him through the storm. As we seek Him, He transforms us into deeper, richer, and more meaningful people. Conflict is the catalyst that God uses to show Himself to us and to cause new growth to happen in our lives.

GOING DEEPER:

1. How have you allowed Christ to walk with you in the storm of a recent conflict?
2. In what ways can a current conflict (or one that is brewing) give you opportunities to trust God in shaping and transforming your life?

FURTHER READING:

Matthew 14:23-33; Romans 12:9-21