



Comfort with Conflict Scenarios

Watch or read about the four scenarios and write out what you would be feeling if you were in these situations. How comfortable would you be as someone involved in the conflict? What about someone helping the people in the conflict resolve it? Why?

SCENARIO I: THE JOURNAL

I want to tell you about something that happened to me in class today. Mrs. Brommer was doing a presentation about photosynthesis and we were supposed to be taking notes, and I was paying attention, but I was writing in my journal real quick about the fight I'd had with my parents that morning. My dad's been drinking a lot recently and things have been really bad. I feel stupid writing a journal about that stuff, but my therapist wants me to try so that's what I was doing.

Anyway, Mrs. Brommer sees that I'm not writing notes and she takes away my journal and starts to read it aloud to the class! I asked her to stop, but she said if what I was writing was more important than her lecture then everyone might learn something from it. I told her it was none of her business and I got so mad that I started crying and I said some stuff I probably shouldn't have. Then I grabbed my stuff and left. Now I don't know what to do. I'm too embarrassed to go back. I don't know what to do.

Reaction to Scenario I:



SCENARIO 2: THE DINNER

I want to tell you about something that happened at dinner last night. I was at my friend Elijah's house and his mom made dinner so we all sat down to eat. I've known Elijah for a long time, and I knew sometimes his family went to church, but I didn't think they were very religious. Well before anyone were allowed to touch our food, his mom asked us all to hold hands and say grace. I didn't know what to do. I've never had to say grace before, since my family is atheist. I felt very uncomfortable and on the spot.

I held hands but didn't know what to say. I didn't know the prayer, or the motion everyone did afterward. I felt like I was being outed as a non-Christian and at the same time I felt like I was being untruthful to my own upbringing and religious views by having to participate in grace. I like Elijah a lot and his parents are nice, but now I feel very uncomfortable going over there for meals. He asked me to come over again tonight. I don't know what to do.

Reaction to Scenario 2:



SCENARIO 3: THE RELATIONSHIP

I want to tell you about something that I'm struggling with. Recently I've been going through a rough time after my boyfriend Diego broke up with me. My friends know I've been miserable and they've been pretty good about it, coming over to visit me and encouraging me to vent. My friend Paul comes over the most and we talk about all sorts of things. A few days ago, he asked me for relationship advice. He said things aren't going well with his girlfriend and he's been wondering if it means he should break up with her.

When he told me that I felt really angry. I feel miserable dealing with my break-up, and I wouldn't want anyone else to feel the same way. I started to feel angry at Paul the same way I felt angry at Diego. I began to blame Paul for problems in his relationship, rather than listen to him. This experience has made me feel like men are always the problem in straight relationships. I don't want my problems to make other people miserable, and Paul is one of my best friends, but this is hard for me. I don't know what to do.

Reaction to Scenario 3:



SCENARIO 4: THE PROJECT

I want to tell you about something that happened to me at school yesterday. Our teacher put us into pairs to do a project about a current news topic. At first, I was excited, but a little nervous about the news topic I got assigned. I am supposed to cover the topic about police brutality in urban areas of the country. It's an issue that I'm interested in and I know it's important, but I don't really know much about and haven't experienced it first hand, which I know might have to do with me being a White male.

Then my teacher paired me with Lou, an African American student on the football team. To me, Lou seems strong and intimidating with lots of one-sided opinions about the topic. Every time I try to bring up the opposing side of the issue, because we're supposed to present all viewpoints, Lou gets very angry and irritated with me. I've begun to feel like I'm not allowed to be talking about this issue at all, and I think Lou judges me for my comments. The truth is, I know I can never understand where he's coming from, but I'm too scared to ask him to help me learn. I don't know what to do.

Reaction to Scenario 4:



ACTIVITY

Write about a conflict you have witnessed or been a party to where you were uncomfortable. Identify what made you uncomfortable and describe your feelings.

Think about what types of things generally make you uncomfortable in a conflict, and write them down.

Write down some ways you can possibly work through this discomfort in order to resolve conflicts productively.