THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The ability to address and resolve the contradictory interests or values of two or more parties in a high-emotion, low-trust environment.

LEADERS LEAD OTHERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MATTERS

Conflict Management is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG CONFLICT MANAGEMENT LOOKS LIKE

- You resolve disputes so every party is satisfied with the outcome
- You prevent the frustration and lost efficiency that unresolved conflict creates
- You settle differences without damaging the relationships

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Conflict Management matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

THE DEFINITION

The ability to address and resolve the contradictory interests or values of two or more parties in a high-emotion, low-trust environment.

Like any skill worth mastering, Conflict Management rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **Objectivity under emotion**

Becoming objective and non-emotional during difficult discussions. This is the precondition for everything else, and the hardest part.

2 **Active listening**

While someone else is talking, don't think about your own viewpoint. People yearn to be heard, and when they are, they're far more likely to listen in return.

3 **Finding win-win**

Most conflicts run on a win-lose dynamic. Seeing each disagreement as an opportunity for mutual satisfaction, even in a different shape than you imagined, changes the outcome.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I look for differing values or interests in conflicted parties to understand why the conflict exists.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I view conflicts as opportunities to gain deeper insight into others that may result in stronger cooperation.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

When addressing conflict, I take time to understand and respond to emotions before addressing the facts.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I do not ignore or avoid conflict, and I seek to use it as a positive opportunity to strengthen relationships.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I stay objective when the people involved in a conflict are emotional.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I address conflict early, while it is still a disagreement rather than a breakdown.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?*

SECTION 04

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 — 30 min

Listening in the Meeting

Practice hearing positions rather than preparing replies. Use one real meeting.

TRY IT

1. In your next meeting, summarize in brief phrases what each person is saying, as if taking minutes.
2. Don’t record your own reactions; try to understand why each person takes their position.
3. Afterward, review your notes and write what you can now interpret about each participant’s perspective.

ACTIVITY 02 — 40 min

Anatomy of a Workplace Conflict

Take a real conflict apart to see how it actually worked.

TRY IT

1. Choose a recent workplace conflict and write what caused it and what occurred during it.
2. Note how it was resolved, by whom, and whether the resolution satisfied everyone.

3. Write honestly about your own reaction: did you concede, mediate, or push your view aggressively?

ACTIVITY 03 15 min

Track Your Reactions

Your conflict style becomes visible once you record it several times. Record each conflict across two weeks.

TRY IT

1. Over the next two weeks, note each new conflict situation you encounter.
2. For each, record the cause, what happened, and how you reacted.
3. Look for the pattern in your responses.

ACTIVITY 04 30 min

Improving Your Technique

Turn what you observed about yourself into specific changes.

TRY IT

1. Based on your tracked reactions, write resolutions for making your style more constructive.
2. Identify a peer or boss whose conflict management you admire.
3. Name what about their technique, style, and approach you want to incorporate.

ACTIVITY 05 30 min

Surface the Real Cause

Discussing the underlying reasons behind a disagreement reveals the actual problem.

TRY IT

1. In a current disagreement, ask directly about the underlying reasons for the other party's position.
2. Search hard for a common goal you both genuinely agree on.
3. If tensions rise, suggest meeting later once both parties have cooled off.

ACTIVITY 06 25 min

Close With Action Steps

A resolution without assigned steps tends to unravel.

TRY IT

1. When a conflict reaches resolution, write specific, attainable action steps.
2. Assign each step to a specific individual.
3. Arrange a follow-up meeting for once the steps are complete.

SECTION 05

COMMON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Trying to win the argument**

Treating disagreement as a contest forecloses the mutual satisfaction that was available, even in a slightly different form than you pictured.

02 **Listening while formulating your response**

In conflict we routinely skip listening to compose our reply. That's precisely when being heard matters most.

03 **Avoiding it**

Ignoring conflict doesn't resolve it; it converts it into frustration and lost efficiency that surface elsewhere.

04 **Addressing facts before feelings**

In a high-emotion, low-trust moment, facts don't land until the emotion has been acknowledged.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Conflict Management over the next 90 days?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1 _____

Q2 _____

Q3 _____

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

_____

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

_____

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Conflict Management with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 3.9: Conflict Management**	The full framework and examples behind conflict management.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast**	Episodes 29, 43, 75 & 76 explore conflict management.
ONLINE	**Conflict Management competency library**	Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS

As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Conflict Management?

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Conflict Management is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.