

Saint Timothy's Episcopal Church \* Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Behaviors For Working Through Conflict**

1. Focus on issues, not on persons.
2. Speak for yourself, not for others (not "some people say...")
3. Describe behavior as you observe it, not as you interpret it.
4. Explore and respect differing experiences of the same event.
5. Sent "I" messages, not "you" messages ("when you say/do...I feel...")
6. State your feelings rather than acting them out or trying to disguise them.

(Remember that your own feelings and those of others are real, valid, and must be expressed and respected. Feelings are never "right" or "wrong" – they simply *are*.)

7. Acknowledge your share in creating the tension or conflict.
8. Use active listening:

Don't interrupt.

Respond by asking for clarification or showing understanding of the other before stating your ideas.

Show you hear and understand even if you don't agree.

9. Challenge other's behaviors or ideas, not their motives or their worth.
10. Don't blame, label or threaten others.
11. Ask, "What's the best thing which could come out of this? What's the worst thing?"
12. Evaluate in terms of "costs and benefits" rather than "good or evil".
13. Search first for and explore common ground instead of stating positions which polarize. What common interests and concerns do you have regarding the issue being discussed?