

Confrontation Techniques

1. Identify and Clarify Differences

Assumption: Communication is improved if right/wrong polarity is minimized.

Examples: “It sounds like we disagree on this.”
“I see it differently; here’s why.”
“I think we need time to try to understand our differences.”
“What you seem to be saying is that you disagree with my observations.”
“Let me tell you how I see it, and then you tell me whether you disagree.”
“I think we need another opinion.”

2. Directly, openly, and matter-of-factly, let the person know when you’re confronting him or why.

Assumption: “Direct” is quicker and better in the long run than “indirect.”

Examples: “I’m going to ‘push’ you a little on this matter. Let me tell you why.”
“I’m trying to make it clear what I think you need to do differently because in a few weeks I’m going to be asked to evaluate you and make a recommendation; I want to be able to make a good one. I couldn’t do that at this point.”

3. Diffuse anger by not taking it personally

Assumption: a. The other person’s word and behavior tell you about that person, not about you.
b. Everyone is doing the best they can (to feel good about themselves).

Examples: “I can tell you think I’m the bad guy in this situation, but I can’t accept that.”
“I’m willing to take some of the blame for what’s happened, but it seems to me that you want me to take it all.”
“You’re reacting like I’m ‘out to get you’ rather than just trying to help you be a better _____.”
“I’d be happy to listen to your criticisms of the program, but at the moment, our purpose is to consider your feedback from various sources.”