

6 Conflict Management Skills from Coach Wooden

A popular doodle illustrating “What People Think Success Looks Like Vs. What It Really Looks Like” created some buzz online a few years ago. In the image, ideal success is portrayed as a straight 45 degree arrow, constantly and steadily increasing. The image of what success *really* looks like is still an arrow moving up, but it resembles a bird’s nest with twists, turns and knots along the way.

This twitter-popular image is simple, yet so true. The road to success is certainly not a straight upward arrow! There will always be knots to untie and challenges to overcome, that’s why **conflict management** skills are essential for success.

Legendary basketball player and coach John Wooden once said, “Things work out best for those who make the best of how things work out.” This quote perfectly illustrates how dealing with conflicts can effectively lead to success. If anyone knows about how to succeed, it’s Coach Wooden.

As a basketball player in the early 1930s, he was the first individual to be named All-American three times and won a national championship at Purdue University. During World War II he joined the Navy. In 1948 Wooden went on to become the head coach at UCLA and won 10 National Championships in a 12-year time period (from 1964-1975). Talk about success! So how did he do it?

Wooden lived by the motto, “Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do the best of which you are capable.” After his successful coaching career, Wooden went on to share his leadership skills around the nation and wrote a number of inspirational books. He passed away in 2010, but his success methods continue to inspire individuals of all ages and backgrounds worldwide.

Wooden shared his “Pyramid of Success,” which presents the 12 building blocks to winning. It applies to basketball as well as life and business in general. In leading to success, these 12 pillars go hand-in-hand with effectively managing conflict. To narrow it down, following these six philosophies from Wooden’s pyramid are essential for conflict management.

Cooperation – “**Have utmost concern for what’s right, not who’s right.**” Truth is an important element throughout Wooden’s Pyramid of Success. When managing conflicts, you need to be objective and look at the facts. When conflicts arise at work, remember you are all on the same team, it shouldn’t matter who is right and who is wrong as long as the team works together to achieve the organization’s goals.

Loyalty – “**Be true to yourself. Be true to those you lead.**” Being true to yourself is knowing yourself. Knowing your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of your co-workers and employees is important for the efficiency of team performance and helps tame conflict.

Enthusiasm – “Your energy and enjoyment, drive and dedication, will stimulate and greatly inspire others.” Smiles are contagious, even in the workplace. Have a positive energy and it will spread to the rest of the team, minimizing the opportunities or the scope of conflict.

Alertness – “Constantly be aware and observing. Always seek to improve yourself and your team.” There is always room for improvement, this is true with any team. When a conflict arises, take action and set out to improve the situation. Look for creative solutions and compromises that will, in turn, make the team stronger.

Poise – “Be yourself. Don’t be thrown off by events, whether good or bad.” The most important thing to remember when managing conflict is don’t lose your cool. Always think logically, be respectful and don’t let heated emotions get in the way of solving a problem.

Team Spirit – “The star of the team *is* the team. ‘We’ supersedes ‘me’. When your part of a team, there’s bound to be some conflicts – but remember the big picture and aim for success together as a team!

Source: Profiles International