

# Afraid an action will lead to conflict

Doing something that could create conflict is scary — but it's not something to be avoided. Doing so can make you undervalue yourself, limit your success at work and even impede your organization's goals.



## What could be going on?

- You are building up the potential effects of a conflict in your own mind.
- Your workplace punishes those who create conflict. You fear change.
- You have dealt with conflict poorly in the past.

## Ways to handle it:

### 1. Analyze how you typically deal with conflict.

You might be hesitant because past conflicts haven't gone well. Assess what went wrong in the past. Seek help from a friend, mentor, or your manager, if needed. Just because past conflicts have not gone well doesn't mean this time will be the same.

### 2. Practice negative visualization.

The Stoics used to vividly imagine events and situations they feared. When the consequences were framed rationally, things didn't seem that bad. Try it yourself: Imagine the worst-case scenario that could result from a conflict. Now ask yourself: Would that really be the end of the world? What are some things I can do to prevent that outcome, or achieve a less bad outcome?

### 3. Role-play the conflict with a friend.

Encourage your partner to overdo it. Act exactly how you would in an actual conflict. Practicing aloud in a safe environment can reduce fears of taking action. For help with phrasing, see our worksheet [10 things to say when you disagree](#) and [23 phrases to help you navigate emotionally charged conversations](#).

#### **4. Take a look at your work/life balance.**

Fear of conflict can be caused by spreading yourself too thin at work or at home. Start pruning personal commitments and work overflow. Prioritize your day so you focus on what matters. Always build “me” time into your day to do something relaxing and enjoyable. Once you have some breathing room in your own life, conflict becomes easier to face. For more guidance, see our [Stress Management](#) topic.

#### **5. Bolster your confidence.**

Write down a list of all the things you’ve accomplished or like about yourself. Post them in a visible place at your office or work area. Surround yourself with colleagues and friends who appreciate you. Remind yourself that conflict doesn’t change all the good things present in your life.

#### **6. Assess how your work environment may be contributing to your feelings.**

Have others been punished for speaking up or making waves? Is constructive criticism discouraged? If your workplace doesn’t value people speaking up, then you’ll need to think through how to navigate that, or whether it’s time to look for a new workplace.