



Break the Pattern During Conflict

When someone initiates conflict, their assumption is that we are going to respond in a similar manner to how they are approaching us. In other words – they think we’re going to become angry and defensive, just like they are.

The key is to break this expected pattern. It’s an expected pattern because that’s the typical response most people have when they feel attacked. When we deliberately act outside this expectation we cause people to pause and do a double-take.

This double-take helps us to deescalate the situation, calm the other person down and help them to think clearly instead of just reacting.

Here’s how we do it: ASK A COUPLE OF PROBING QUESTIONS.

Sounds a little too simple? It might be simple.... But it’s not easy!

Controlling our emotions and instead asking questions that cause the other person to have to think about something more deeply than they currently are, is absolutely critical. Here’s why: Whoever loses control of themselves first, loses.

Here are some samples:

- **What frustrates you the most about this situation?**
- **What is one thing I could do to help rectify the problem?**
- **What do you see as the best way for us to make this change?**

This is just one component from our ALUS tool for effective communication, but even this one piece gives you the ability to create the space for rational conversation in an otherwise irrational reaction from a coworker, resident or even a supervisor. Good luck as you apply it today!