8 phrases to smooth conflict resolution

Few people enjoy conflict, but it's an inevitable part of life and business, so if you want to succeed, you need to become skilled in managing it.

A few phrases can help you to resolve conflicts when they arise, says author, speaker and consultant Barry Moltz.

1. **The last thing I want to say is no.** This shows consideration for the other person's feelings and you take her perspective into consideration.
2. **Having no secrets between us is critical. If we can't talk to each other, we will never be able to be productive.** This recognizes the importance of clear, open communications and can help break the ice before a difficult discussion.
3. **It seems things are not running as smoothly as they have in the past.** This is a nonthreatening way to open a tough conversation that shows you want to explore the problem, not assign blame.
4. **I really appreciate your input into our team.** This tells people they're valued and worthwhile even when you aren't using their ideas.
5. **We may have a misunderstanding, since I may not have been clear about my expectations.** Again, this avoids assigning blame and also opens the door to you being the problem. This approach helps the other person feel less threatened and defensive.
6. **What held you back from meeting your commitment?** Sometimes there's a good reason people don't get things done on schedule.
7. **What can I do to support you?** This is a great phrase for a manager or team leader to use and can help you find out how to help your team do its best.
8. **You're saying one thing and doing another.** This points out a discrepancy between intentions and actions and makes someone think about where he or she may be going wrong.

— Adapted from "10 Phrases That Can Resolve Any Conflict," Barry Moltz, OPEN Forum.