



Cases to Examine: Dealing with Conflict

Read the following cases of interpersonal conflict. In the space after each case, write a response that the main character could give to begin dealing with the conflict. In the response, use at least one of the eight strategies suggested on pages 277–278, and 280 of your textbook.

Case 1: Jon

At age fifteen, Jon is quite short compared with his classmates. He has always had a lot of fun with his friends, and his height never was much of an issue until the last couple of years, when his pals rapidly outgrew him. Now Jon’s friends constantly razz him about what a “shrimp” he is, and they keep up a steady barrage of jokes about his height. Because Jon has always liked these guys and wants to be known as a good sport, he laughs along with the joking and even adds his own humor to poke fun at his shortness.

Lately, however, the remarks seem to be getting pretty old. Jon is tired of being the butt of all the jokes, and he realizes that even though he has been laughing along, the remarks do sting. He wonders if he dares to do anything about the situation.

Then one day after English class, where they had been studying *Gulliver’s Travels*, one of Jon’s friends cracks, “Hey, Jon-boy, I’ve got an idea who you could take to the prom—one of those Lilliputians that Gulliver ran into. At six inches, you wouldn’t have to reach up so high to dance with her! How about it?”

- Jon’s response:

Case 2: Rick

Rick has been on difficult terms with his parents over a lot of things—his girlfriend (whom they don’t like), his poor grades, and his repeatedly coming home after curfew.

Rick has decided to make a big effort to bring up his grades and to get home by curfew. His parents seem skeptical that this new resolve will last, but they are glad he is trying.

One night in February, heading home after a movie, Rick and his girlfriend have a flat tire with her car. Because there are no phones around where they got the flat, they cannot call home. Rick comes in the door a half hour late.

His parents are waiting for him in the living room. They are angrily pacing the floor. His mother says, “I doubted that this big conversion was permanent. You let us down again, Rick. Okay, if you can’t be trusted, you’ll just have to take the consequences. You’re grounded for the rest of the school year. Maybe *that* will get you to study.”

- Rick’s response:

Case 3: Sherri

Sherri and Ken have gone together for six months. Sherri loves the attention Ken gives her and feels special around him, what with his thoughtful gestures like surprising her with flowers and coming over to help her clean the house on Saturdays.

Sherri is very attractive, and she likes to look terrific when she goes out—wearing flattering makeup, classy jewelry, and the latest fashions. Ken, however, gets upset when he sees her looking particularly stunning. In his words, he doesn’t want her “showing off” around other guys. When she greets him in her new earrings, Ken says, “Who are you trying to impress? Not me, I know that. Take those earrings off. And get rid of that eye shadow. I don’t want my friends drooling all over you.”

- Sherri’s response:
