Resolving Conflict

1. Define the problem and stick to the issue.

Conflict resolution deteriorates when the issue that started the conflict gets lost in angry words or past issues.

2. Pursue purity of heart.

Before approaching others regarding their shortcoming, prayerfully face up to your own. Identify and confess any way you might have contributed to the problem. "First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matt. 5:5).

3. Plan a time for the discussion.

Plan a time when you are both rested and are more likely to respond in love to the other person's concerns. When you are tired, stressed, and distracted with other responsibilities, discussions will rarely go well.

4. Affirm the relationship.

Affirm the relationship before defining the problem. For example, "Our relationship is important to me, so ….(then state the concern)." Avoid blaming the other person. Instead, say, "When you do 'A' I feel 'B.'"

5. Listen carefully.

Once you share you feelings, listen carefully to the other person's perspective. Make sure your body language communicates that you are open to his/her side of the discussion. Be sure that what you heard is really what was said by asking, "I heard you say that ….Is that correct?" (repeat what you thought you heard)

6. Forgive.

Forgive others as Christ has forgiven you. Forgive with these promises in mind:
a. I won't bring this up and use it against you in the future.
b. I'm not going to dwell on it in my own heart and mind.
c. I'm not going to talk to other people about it.
d. I'm not going to let it stand between us and hinder our relationship.

7. Propose a solution.

Remember that your relationship is more important than the issue. When working toward a solution, seek those that further the health of the relationship, not either individual.