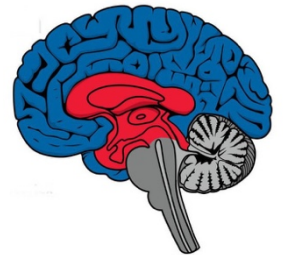


A Chameleon Guide to Handling Conflict & Difficult Conversations



🧠 Understanding Conflict: The Psychology Behind It

- Conflict often triggers a **threat response** (fight, flight, freeze).
- Emotions are contagious—your calm helps others regulate.
- People react based on **perceived threats to identity, fairness, or control**.
- Students are still developing emotional regulation and perspective-taking.



🚫 Common Pitfalls in Conflict

- Avoiding the issue
- Escalating with authority
- Over-explaining when emotions are high
- Taking things personally
- Matching the other person's energy

These often lead to:

- Damaged relationships
- Repeated behaviour patterns
- Increased stress
- Escalation to leadership



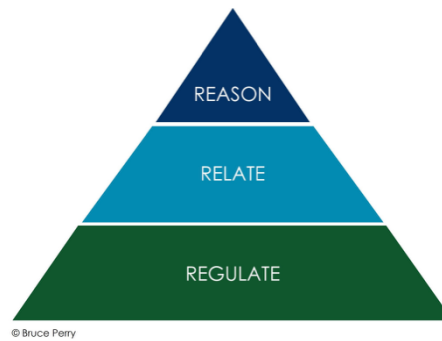
✅ What Works: Key Strategies

- **Regulate first:** Pause, breathe, speak calmly.
- **Be curious:** Ask open questions. “Help me understand...”
- **Validate emotions:** “That sounds frustrating.”
- **Separate person from behaviour:** Focus on actions, not character.
- **Collaborate:** Solve the problem together.
- **Set boundaries with warmth:** “I want to talk, but I need us both to stay respectful.”
- **Use restorative questions:**
 - What happened?
 - What were you thinking?
 - Who was affected?
 - What needs to happen now?



Quick Tools You Can Use

- 3-second pause
- “I notice... I wonder... I’m curious...”
- Regulate → Relate → Reason
- Traffic Light Model:
 - ✓ Red: Stop reacting
 - ✓ Amber: Gather info
 - ✓ Green: Move to solutions
- GROW Model:
 - ✓ Goal
 - ✓ Reality
 - ✓ Options
 - ✓ Way forward



Reflection Prompt

Think of a recent difficult conversation:

- What worked well?
- What would you do differently?
- What one strategy will you try this week?

