Glasl’s Stages of Conflict Escalation

Conflict is normal. It becomes a problem if it spirals out of control. Friedrich Glasl’s model can help you figure out, what stage each conflict party is on and what type of involvement might help. The model applies to all kinds of conflicts such as fights at work, divorce, and wars.

- **Tension**: Conflict isn’t voiced at this stage as it’s often not recognized as conflict yet.
- **Debate**: Parties start to talk, trying to convince each other. Black and white thinking.
- **Actions replace words**: No more discussions. Actions underline each parties’ stance. Empathy shrinks.
- **Coalitions**: Parties look for supporters. Original issue became unimportant. It’s about winning now.
- **Loss of face**: Opponents are disparaged, including exaggerations and lies.
- **Threats**: Parties try to gain control with threats.
- **Limited destruction**: Opponents not seen as human. Damage them! Own losses okay if they lose more.
- **Annihilation**: Opponents and their supporters are annihilated with all means.
- **Abyss**: Personal annihilation acceptable as long as opponents go down too.

Model created by Friedrich Glasl
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