



Margarita's Conflict: Fight, Flee or Face?

People sometimes use avoidance (fleeing) to deal with problems because they are afraid to confront the other person, hate conflict, or have an unhealthy need to please others. Other people fight or attack by criticizing, insulting, blaming, bullying, spreading rumors, gossiping, or using violence. They would rather attack than admit they might be wrong. But some people learn to face conflict head on and try to solve their problems.

Let's see if we can recognize when people use the unsuccessful approaches and discover the third way—a way to address conflict positively. Read these scenarios and answer the questions.

1. Margarita has been working with Peter on a science project all semester. It is an important part of their grade. She is frustrated because several times Peter agreed to meet her after school to work on the project, but stood her up and went out with friends instead. He once joked that he wished the teacher had made him work with Tayisha instead because she is so good looking. Margarita has never talked to him about these things, or told him that she is frustrated and hurt by his actions. She acts as if everything is okay between them.

What approach is Margarita using? _____

Is this approach working? Why do you think so? _____

2. When Margarita invited Peter over to her house last week to work on the project, he was forty-five minutes late and offered no apology. He had not done the research he had agreed to do. Instead, he told Margarita, "You should probably do all the research, because you have more time." She lost her temper. "You are such a jerk! You haven't done anything to help with this project. If we fail, it will be your fault!"

How did Margarita deal with this conflict? What approach did she use? _____

Will this approach work? Why do you think so? _____

How can Margarita address this conflict in a healthier way? _____