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Separate the People from the Problem (People) It is important to “attack a problem” rather than “attack a person” in collaborative conflict resolution. We should perceive a conflict as an opportunity for joint decision making and problem solving and strive to protect our relationship with our partner. To remind ourselves of our collaborative orientation and to reassure our partner that we don’t view her or him as “the enemy,” we can tell our partner:

- “Working together will allow us to solve this problem in the best way possible.”
- “We can work this out even though we’ve never had to deal with this problem before.”
- “I’m sure that we can cooperate and eventually develop a solution that will benefit both of us.”