

CONFLICT

is an opportunity

By Philip Stevens

Conflict: it's not just limited to one nation being aggressive towards another, but on a smaller scale can involve spouses, parents versus children, employers against employees—the list can go on.

But whatever the scale, the results are detrimental to long-term well-being.

However, let's consider the possibility that conflict can be viewed as an opportunity—both for helpful self-examination and personal development. But beware, this approach does demand courage.

Let's face it, in any conflict it's all too easy to blame the other party for starting the dispute, and to pass on that view to anyone who will listen. But it takes a brave individual to ask: "What have I done or said that may have been inappropriate, even thoughtless?"

Maybe, just maybe, that is the cause of the conflict. And it takes a big person to go to the other party in the conflict and say "sorry". But it is worth the effort.

Now, let's reverse that situation. Supposing we are on the receiving end of that apology. Is that a positive opportunity? Absolutely!

Instead of responding: "I wondered how long it would be before you apologised", how about exercising grace? (Yes, that is a religious-sounding word, but it means showing favour and forgiveness

that is underserved—the way God readily forgives us when we do something wrong.)

If someone has been big enough to apologise, then it presents an opportunity for us to change an aggressive attitude into one of

reconciliation. It's a classic win-win situation.

This article was first published in the December 2017 issue of *Because* magazine (www.because.uk.com). Reprinted with permission.

