

## Positions and Interests

*The #1 mistake that keeps people fighting and problems unresolved is focusing on positions instead of interests.*

**POSITION** = What you think you want.  
= A statement of what you want or demand. (This project has to be done before Friday.)  
= A stated solution identified prior to collaborative problem solving.

**INTEREST** = What you really want. (I want to have my vacation without having to worry about this project.)  
= Your true needs underlying any stated position.

**A POSITION:**

- is just one of many possible solutions to a problem.
- feels comfortable to the one holding the position.
- feels uncomfortable to the one being told the position.

**AN INTEREST**

- is the why behind a position.
- is not a solution and therefore can feel uncomfortable, by itself without a position, to the holder of the interest.
- feels more comfortable to the other than a position stated because the solution isn't fixed.

When your POSITION and their POSITION are in conflict,

look for your INTERESTS and their INTERESTS

and then find a solution (a POSITION)

that will satisfy both your INTERESTS.

*A position is a solution stated at the beginning. In collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution, we want to end with a solution, not begin with a solution.*