Whether you are a pro at working from home this time around or not, non of us were completely prepared for the changes forced on everyone at the start of this pandemic and still going through the motions 9 months later?? Should we know what we are doing this time around? Increased quarantines and closures happening all over again. Did you master all the ins and outs of working from home, virtual learning for the kids, virtual meetings that require hands-on interaction and facetime or zoom chats with family and friends??? NO??!

Yeah, me neither. Maybe you did..which is great! Please feel free to share the things that have worked for you, your family or co-workers. We can all learn from each other.

So, now what? Is there anything we can do differently this time? Maybe, maybe not. One thing is different this go around…it is the holiday season. So add the stressors of gift giving remotely and virtual Christmas parties to the everyday essential travels to the grocery store, mandated mask wearing and washing hands constantly life we live and TAKE A DEEP BREATH! There is no amount of worrying or stressing that can make this all go away, so take a deep breath and control what you can in your life: your attitude approaching each day. This and how you make others feel are going to be what determines your everyday holiday spirit. Remember the books “Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff (because it’s all small stuff)”? Not saying that this is the answer to living a happy life during COVID but it is worth a shot, right?

How about conflicts...because there will be conflicts. Even in our before Covid19 life, we had conflicts. Now, we may find ourselves with increased fears and stress that is making more everyday conflicts happen. Let’s approach them as a chance to learn something new for better communication, for a dialogue about issues that matter or a chance for self-growth. Before this pandemic, those of us who worked outside the home spent more time with our co-workers than our families. Now those numbers are reversed (again!) and we find ourselves maybe feeling a little remorseful about wanting to go back to work away for the chaos of home life. Some of us just returned to the office! Now here we are...again figuring it out from home. Remember, it’s okay to go through the rollercoaster of emotions!! It’s okay to not be ok all of the time. It makes you human and we are all learning to adjust as needed.

Remember that the first thing you need to do when you find your stress and/or anxiety growing...SELF-CARE! Because if you are feeling stressed out, most likely others in your home are also. Kids get stressed out too! And you will be of no use to them if you don’t take care of yourself first.

So remember to reach out to talk when you are starting to feel the emotions rise. You can call me at 315-772-2597.
Conflict Help — Perspective Triangle Strategy
Sometimes taking that step back and looking at everyone’s perspective works!

**Step #1: Your Own Perspective**
This step requires you to achieve a higher degree of self-awareness. You do so by asking yourself what’s really bothering you. What pain are you trying to avoid? What are you protecting yourself from? Through the emotions and the behavior you are displaying, what needs are you trying to satisfy? Inquire, go deep into yourself, and clarify what the conflict is really about.

In fact, chances are that while the fight is about a specific issue, in reality, you are after something that lies at a deeper level. What is it? Get clarity, and you will be able to come up with different options on how you can get what you really want.

**Step #2: The Other’s Perspective**
This step is fundamental! It requires you to have empathy and through empathy to widen your understanding of what’s really going on. Put yourself in the shoes of the other. For a moment, suspend your own judgment and do your best to see the situation you’re confronting from the perspective of the other.

What might influence the position taken by the other? What experiences shape his or her understanding? What’s going on in the life of the other? What needs is she or he satisfying with a particular behavior? Is it a way to feel secure? What’s the real intention of the other party?

Go deeper and ask yourself: How might the other interpret my own words and behavior? What can I do differently to meet the underlying needs of the other and at the same time satisfy my own?

When you combine the insights you gained from considering your own perspective as well as that of the other, you can have a better understanding of the issue at hand and the ways in which you can resolve it.

**Step #3: The Third Party’s Perspective**
Often, someone from the outside can give us a fresh perspective about a problem you are trying to resolve. In this step, you put yourself in the position of a third party observing the situation you are involved in.

Imagine you’re sitting in a movie theatre, watching your conflict projected on a screen as if it were a movie. What is it all about? What does the spectator tell you about your own behavior and judgment? What is he or she seeing? What advice does the third party give you? What would she or he tell you about the other’s real intention? And so on.

**Virtual Classes and Talks available! Just give me a call — 315-772-2597**

**Meet our SFRD Team Member!!**

Here is one of our Financial Readiness Program (FRP) staff members, Robert (Bob) Clark.

With a total of 35 years of combined military and civilian federal service, Bob is no stranger to the financial workings of military life. The Army brought Bob and his wife, Laurie, of 31 years, to Fort Drum 23 years ago. He retired 7 years later and decided to stay in the North Country continuing his service as a DA Civilian with the last 8 years being in the FRP. He highly recommends taking a trip to Lake Placid while you are in the area. “It is only three hours away, a great international destination and has good food and activities year around”.

Bob was born and raised in Altoona, PA. When asked what his favorite season is here in the North Country, he says Fall and Spring due to the lack of crowds. :-) But he does enjoy snow sports in the winter as a hobby. Another favorite past time is doing taxes! Yes, this financial wiz also works at H&R Block for fun. What some of us dread each year, he looks forward to like a kid at Christmas. He reminds everyone to start saving for retirement as soon as you start getting paycheck with 10% of basepay and it is never too late to start your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) which he can give you a wealth of information about.

Bob’s motto — “Knowledge is Power.” And Bob definitely has tons of financial management power so make sure you set up an appointment with him as soon as possible! Call him at 315-772-0050 or email robert.j.clark30.civ@mail.mil.