



# Conflict Management Styles Assessment

Source: Reginald (Reg) Adkins, PhD, Elemental Truths

<http://elementaltruths.blogspot.com/2006/11/conflict-management-quiz.html>

We each have our own way of dealing with conflict. The techniques we use are based on many variables such as our basic underlying temperament, our personality, our environment and where we are in our professional career. However, by and large there are five major styles of conflict management techniques in our tool box. In order to address conflict we draw from a collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating or compromising style of conflict management. None of these strategies is superior in and of itself.

How effective they are depends on the context in which they are used.

Each statement below provides a strategy for dealing with a conflict. Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 4 indicating how likely you are to use this strategy.

**1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always**

Be sure to answer the questions indicating how you would behave rather than how you think you should behave.

1. I explore issues with others so as to find solutions that meet everyone's needs. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I try to meet the expectations of others. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I would argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view. \_\_\_\_\_
5. When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open. \_\_\_\_\_
6. When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person Need? What are the issues involved? \_\_\_\_\_
8. I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I try to accommodate the wishes of my friends and family. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right. \_\_\_\_\_
13. To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway. \_\_\_\_\_
14. I may not get what I want but it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself. \_\_\_\_\_

## How to score the Conflict Management Quiz:

As stated, the 15 statements correspond to the five conflict resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points in the respective categories. The one with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy. However, if you are a leader who must deal with conflict on a regular basis, you may find your style to be a blend of styles.

<u>Style</u>	<u>Corresponding Statements:</u>	<u>Total:</u>
Collaborating:	1, 5, 7	_____
Competing:	4, 9, 12	_____
Avoiding:	6, 10, 15	_____
Harmonizing:	3, 11, 14	_____
Compromising:	2, 8, 13	_____

## Brief Descriptions of the Five Conflict Management Styles

**Collaborating Style:** Problems are solved in ways in which an optimum result is provided for all involved. Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are minimized.  
Pros: Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitments.  
Cons: Time consuming; energy consuming.

**Competing Style:** Authoritarian approach.  
Pros: Goal oriented; quick.  
Cons: May breed hostility.






**Avoiding Style:** The non-confrontational approach.  
Pros: Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.  
Cons: Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.

**Harmonizing Style:** Giving in to maintain relationships.  
Pros: Minimizes injury when we are outmatched; relationships are maintained.  
Cons: Breeds resentment; exploits the weak.

**Compromising Style:** The middle ground approach.  
Pros: Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.  
Cons: No one is ever really satisfied; less than optimal solutions get implemented.

## Brief Descriptions of the Five Conflict Management Styles

Keep in mind that one style of conflict management is not necessarily better than another; each style has pros and cons, and each can be useful depending on the situation. This assessment is intended to help you identify your typical response to conflict, with the goal that when you encounter future conflicts, you will be aware of not only your instinctive reaction, but also the pros and cons of that reaction for the specific situation. Furthermore, you will also be aware of the other styles of conflict management that you could draw on to resolve the situation, if one of the other styles is more appropriate for the current situation.

	<b><u>Owl</u></b>	<b><i>Collaborating</i></b>	Owls highly value both their goals and their relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tensions between two persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem, and strive to resolve tensions and maintain the relationship by seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and the other person.
	<b><u>Turtle</u></b>	<b><i>Avoiding</i></b>	Turtles tend to value avoiding confrontation more than either their goals or relationships. They often find it easier to withdraw from a conflict than to face it. This might even include completely giving up relationships or goals that are associated with the conflict.
	<b><u>Shark</u></b>	<b><i>Competing</i></b>	Sharks typically value their goals over relationships, meaning that if forced to choose, they would seek to achieve their goals even at the cost of the relationship involved. Sharks are typically more concerned with accomplishing their goals than with being liked by others. They might try to force opponents to accept their solution to the conflict by overpowering them.
	<b><u>Teddy Bear</u></b>	<b><i>Accommodating</i></b>	Teddy Bears typically value relationships over their own goals; if forced to choose, Teddy Bears will often sacrifice their goals in order to maintain relationships. Teddy Bears generally want to be liked by others, and prefer to avoid conflict because they believe addressing it will damage relationships. Teddy Bears try to smooth over conflict to prevent damage to the relationship.
	<b><u>Fox</u></b>	<b><i>Compromising</i></b>	Foxes are moderately concerned with both their goals and their relationships with others. Foxes typically seek a compromise; they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of their goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something; the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals in order to find agreement for the common good.

Adapted from: Conflict Management Styles Descriptions. Docstoc, <http://mg.docstoccdn.com/thumb/orig/47081621.png>