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HOW YOU ACT IN CONFLICTS

The following proverbs can be thought of as descriptions of some of the different strategies for resolving conflicts. Proverbs state traditional wisdom; these reflect traditional wisdom for resolving conflicts. Read each carefully, and using the following scale, indicate how typical each proverb is of your actions in a conflict.

- 5 = very typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 4 = frequently typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 3 = sometimes typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 2 = seldom typical of the way I act in a conflict
- 1 = never typical of the way I act in a conflict

- _____ 1. It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel.
- _____ 2. If you cannot make a person think as you do, make him or her do as you think.
- _____ 3. Soft words win hard hearts.
- _____ 4. You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.
- _____ 5. Come now and let us reason together.
- _____ 6. When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.
- _____ 7. Might overcomes right.
- _____ 8. Smooth words make smooth ways.
- _____ 9. Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
- _____ 10. Truth lies in knowledge, not in majority opinion.
- _____ 11. He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.
- _____ 12. He hath conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.
- _____ 13. Kill your enemies with kindness.
- _____ 14. A fair exchange brings no quarrel.
- _____ 15. No person has the final answer, but every person has a piece to contribute.
- _____ 16. Stay away from people who disagree with you.
- _____ 17. Fields are won by those who believe in winning.
- _____ 18. Kind words are worth much and cost little.
- _____ 19. Tit for tat is fair play.
- _____ 20. Only the person who is willing to give up his or her monopoly on truth can ever profit from the truths that others hold.
- _____ 21. Avoid quarrelsome people, as they will only make your life miserable.
- _____ 22. A person who will not flee will make others flee.
- _____ 23. Soft words ensure harmony.
- _____ 24. One gift for another makes good friends.
- _____ 25. Bring your conflicts into the open and face them directly; only then will the best solution be discovered.
- _____ 26. The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
- _____ 27. Put your foot down where you mean to stand.
- _____ 28. Gentleness will triumph over anger.
- _____ 29. Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
- _____ 30. Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains.
- _____ 31. There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.
- _____ 32. There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
- _____ 33. When one hits you with a stone, hit him or her with a piece of cotton.
- _____ 34. When both give in halfway, a fair settlement is achieved.
- _____ 35. By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.

Scoring

Withdrawing	Forcing	Smoothing	Compromising	Problem Solving
___ 1.	___ 2.	___ 3.	___ 4.	___ 5.
___ 6.	___ 7.	___ 8.	___ 9.	___ 10.
___ 11.	___ 12.	___ 13.	___ 14.	___ 15.
___ 16.	___ 17.	___ 18.	___ 19.	___ 20.
___ 21.	___ 22.	___ 23.	___ 24.	___ 25.
___ 26.	___ 27.	___ 28.	___ 29.	___ 30.
___ 31.	___ 32.	___ 33.	___ 34.	___ 35.
___ Total	___ Total	___ Total	___ Total	___ Total

The higher the total score for each conflict management strategy, the more frequently you tend to use that strategy. The lower the total score for each conflict management strategy, the less frequently you tend to use that strategy.



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: WHAT ARE YOU LIKE?

Dealing with conflicts of interest is like going swimming in a cold lake. Some people like to test the water, stick a foot in, and enter slowly so that they can get used to the cold gradually. Other people like to take a running start and leap in so that they can get the cold shock over quickly. Similarly, different people use different strategies for managing conflicts. Usually, we learn these strategies in childhood, so that later they seem to function automatically on a preconscious level—we just do whatever seems to come naturally. But we do have a personal strategy, and because it was learned, we can change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts.

When we become engaged in a conflict, we have to take two major concerns into account (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b):

1. *Reaching an agreement that satisfies our wants and meets our goals.* We are in conflict because we have a goal or interest that conflicts with another person's goal or interest. Our goal can be placed on a continuum ranging from unimportant to highly important.
2. *Maintaining an appropriate relationship with the other person.* Some relationships are temporary; some are permanent. Our relationship with the other person can be placed on a continuum between being of little importance to being highly important.

The dual-concern model of conflict resolution has its origins in Blake and Mouton's (1964) managerial grid and has been articulated by several theorists (Cosier & Ruble, 1981; Filley, 1975; Johnson, 1978; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Rahim, 1983; Thomas, 1976). Other labels are sometimes given to the two concerns, such as *concern for self* and *concern for other*. In conflicts of interest, how you behave