

Conflict or Combat?

Exercise

Which Conflict-Resolution Style Is Yours?

INTRODUCTION: There are four conflict-resolution styles: Avoidance, Competition, Adaptation, and Cooperation. Each of these four styles may work in different situations, but people are generally more comfortable using one style over another. This exercise is an opportunity to determine which style you are most comfortable with.

WORKSHEET

The four conflict resolution styles to be used in the worksheet are identified as follows:

Avoidance—where people withdraw to avoid conflict. They believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflict, and easier to step back from a conflict situation. The avoidance style leads to a “lose-lose” approach.

Competition—where one disputant tries to overpower another disputant by forcing his or her own solution on the other person. This style is considered a “win-lose” approach.

Adaptation—where people feel that the relationships are more important than their own goals. They want to be liked and accepted, and harmony is the most important thing. These people are choosing a “lose-win” approach.

Cooperation—where disputants highly value their own goals and relationships. They consider conflicts as problems to be solved, and want both parties to achieve their goals. These disputants are not satisfied until an acceptable solution is found for both parties. They have chosen a “win-win” approach.

The following worksheet contains 23 statements and a score sheet to help you identify your predominant conflict-resolution style.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WORKSHEET

Read each statement and indicate on the scale how typical each statement is of your feelings about conflict.

1	2	3	4	5
Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often

1. I try to get along with the person I am in conflict with.
2. For me, conflict situations are either win-win or win-lose. I plan to win.
3. I try to stay away from situations that might be confrontational.
4. For me, it is important that both parties' needs are met. I look for ways to make that happen.
5. I use whatever tactics are necessary to win.
6. I believe it is hopeless to try to resolve conflict.
7. My goals are more important to me than the relationship.
8. I want to be liked and accepted by others.
9. To me, conflict is a "lose-lose" approach.
10. My goals are important to me, but so is the relationship.
11. Acceptance by others is not important to me. Winning is.
12. I will do whatever I can to ignore issues that might lead to conflict.
13. I try to find things we both agree on.
14. I try to be with people I get along with and avoid relationships I think may result in conflict.
15. My goal is to find a solution where both parties win.
16. I often find I am trying to smooth things over for the sake of the relationship.
17. I am unwilling to change what I want.
18. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings.
19. I'm willing to go along if it makes you happy.
20. I am not satisfied until an acceptable solution is found.
21. Not only do I not like to engage in conflict, I don't want to be around others who might engage in conflict.
22. I am direct about what I want, and I expect to get it.
23. I am willing to give up if it makes the other person happy.

SCORE SHEET

List below the ranking that you selected for each statement. Then total the numbers in each column. The column with the highest score indicates your predominant style.

Avoidance	Competition	Adaptation	Cooperation
3 ____	2 ____	8 ____	1 ____
6 ____	5 ____	16 ____	4 ____
9 ____	7 ____	18 ____	10 ____
12 ____	11 ____	19 ____	13 ____
14 ____	17 ____	23 ____	15 ____
21 ____	22 ____		20 ____
Totals			
_____	_____	_____	_____

SUMMARY

The score sheet above can help you determine which style might be your strongest. Of course, most people are comfortable with more than one style, so use the above questions and chart to think about your predominant style and those occasions when another style might be more appropriate.